

RCGP Medical Appraisal Survey: Key Findings

On 6th April 2022 all members were invited to complete a short survey on their views of medical appraisal. The survey was open until 27th April and in that time 1,633 responses were received. This paper provides an overview of the responses to each question in the survey and a summary of the two free text questions.

Demography:

- There was good representation from all levels of experience
- Most responders were either 'principal', 'sessional', or 'locum' GPs
- The vast majority were 'clinical' GPs (88%) working in the NHS (92%)
- There was a relatively even split between part and full time
- Responses were received from across the UK. The most represented areas were London and South (23%) and North (23%)
- Most responders had had their most recent appraisal in either 2021 (66.5%) or 2022 (30%)
- Three quarters said their most recent appraisal was based on the Appraisal 2020 model.

My appraisal was a useful chance to discuss my work confidentially with someone who understands the challenges:

	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	556	34.05%
Agree	643	39.38%
Neither agree or disagree	241	14.76%
Disagree	128	7.84%
Strongly disagree	62	3.80%
Don't know	3	0.18%

- Those who's most recent appraisal was the new Medical Appraisal 2020 model were more likely to agree and strongly agree (77% compared to 64%)
- Regionally, all areas were in the 70-77% range for agree and strongly agree except Northern Ireland which was at 57% for the two combined
- Those at the beginning of their careers were least likely to disagree or strongly disagree with this statement (only 8%).

The time needed to prepare for my appraisal was proportionate to the benefit:

	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	259	15.86%
Agree	493	30.19%
Neither agree or disagree	238	14.57%
Disagree	376	23.03%
Strongly disagree	261	15.98%
Don't know	6	0.37%

- There was a difference in responses from those who stated that their most recent appraisal had followed the Medical Appraisal 2020 model and those who hadn't (52% agree and strongly agree compared to 30%)
- Responders from the Devolved Nations were least likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement (Northern Ireland 14%, Scotland 26% and Wales 40.5%).

Any discussion of my health and wellbeing at work was appropriate and comfortable:

	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	502	30.74%
Agree	777	47.58%
Neither agree or disagree	230	14.08%
Disagree	81	4.96%
Strongly disagree	36	2.20%
Don't know	7	0.43%

- Again, there was a big difference between those who had had Medical Appraisal 2020 and those who had not, with 82% agreeing or strongly agreeing compared to 68.5%
- Regionally, the only faculty which was markedly different to the overall responses was Northern Ireland at 60% agree and strongly agree
- Those at the beginning of their career (0-5 years) were most likely to agree with this statement (85%) with mid-career GPs (11-20 years) least likely (73%).

My appraisal was an appropriate vehicle to demonstrate that I continue to meet the principles and values set out in Good Medical Practice, and inform the responsible officer's revalidation recommendation to the GMC:

	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	307	18.80%
Agree	674	41.27%
Neither agree or disagree	319	19.53%
Disagree	209	12.80%
Strongly disagree	114	6.98%
Don't know	10	0.61%

- Responses from those whose most recent appraisal followed the Medical Appraisal 2020 model were at 64% agree and strongly agree compared to 49% of those who had used the old model of appraisal
- At least 60% of responses from all the regions agreed or strongly agreed with this statement except for Northern Ireland (38%) and Scotland (49%)
- Locum GPs were least likely to agree with this statement with 54% agreeing or strongly agreeing compared with 60+% of the other role categories
- Mid-career GPs (6-10 years and 11-20 years) were least likely to agree (56% each) and those at the beginning of their career were most likely to agree (65%).

I would prefer a way, other than appraisal, to show that I remain up-to-date and fit to practise, for the purpose of revalidation:

	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	255	15.62%
Agree	299	18.31%
Neither agree or disagree	530	32.46%
Disagree	340	20.82%
Strongly disagree	142	8.70%
Don't know	67	4.10%

- There was a relatively even split between those who agreed, disagreed, and neither agreed or disagreed with this statement
- Appraisees who had received the Medical Appraisal 2020 model were more likely to disagree at 32% compared with 26.5% of those using the old model of appraisal
- Those from Wales and South West England were least likely to agree with this statement with 38% and 37% respectively answering disagree or strongly disagree compared with an average of 29.5%
- Later-career GPs were most likely to disagree with this statement with 41% of those who had been practising for 31+ years disagreeing and only 15% of those practising for 6-10 years disagreeing.

If applicable, please specify what this process should be?

- 430 responders commented on this question
- The most common response centred around a suggestion that putting together a portfolio of evidence or collecting CPD should be sufficient without the appraisal discussion (57)
- 38 responders simply wanted fewer requirements
- 36 felt that self-certification/declaration should suffice
- 31 thought the process should be in-house, either through a peer review, employer report, or observed practice
- 29 wanted to replace appraisal with an exam/MSQ
- 18 thought the new Medical Appraisal 2020 model should be kept.

What is your view on the optimum frequency for medical appraisal?

	Total	Percentage
Less than once a year	747	45.74%
more than once a year	78	4.78%
once a year	808	49.48%

- Responses from those who had received Medical Appraisal 2020 were most likely to want to keep annual appraisals (52%) of responders compared to 44% of those who had used the old model

- The only regional difference was in Northern Ireland where 76% of responders thought appraisals should be less than annual
- Locum GPs were most likely to want to reduce the frequency of appraisal at 50%
- Later-career GPs were most likely to want to keep annual appraisals at 54% each for those practising for 21-30 years and 31+ years.

Do you have any further comments?

- 768 responders provided a further comment
- The most common comment was that the new Medical Appraisal 2020 model was better than the previous model, with encouragement to maintain the new model (140 comments)
- Separately, 34 other comments listed reasons why appraisal was beneficial
- Of those comments most critical of appraisal, the most common reasons given were that it doesn't serve its purpose (46); it is too time consuming (53); appraisal is a waste of time (34); it is too 'tick box' (34); it is stressful (22); and that it leads to early retirement (22)
- Suggestions for how to improve the appraisal process included that they should be less frequent (45) and that the requirements should be reduced (25)
- There appears to be a need for greater clarity on the purpose and requirements of appraisal. For example, there was a minority of doctors angry at the requirement to collect 50 CPD credits each year; that it wouldn't stop another 'Shipman'; and that the RCGP somehow profited from the appraisal process.