Q&A: Probity and Health

QUESTION

Why can’t practising GPs be registered as a patient within their own practice?

The RCGP Guide to the Revalidation of General Practitioners (available [here](#)) states that GPs will be required to sign a standard statement on probity, health and use of health care confirming that …the GP is in a position to receive independent, impartial healthcare advice (for example is not consulting a family member) and that he or she accesses that health care appropriately. Unless there is a good reason (such as working on a military base in the Defence Medical Services, or geography) it is best practice for a GP to be registered in a practice in which he or she does not work (or, in the case of a locum, rarely works)’… The GMC in its *Good Medical Practice* says that doctors should be able to access ‘independent and objective medical care’ and the College fully supports this best practice measure.

SCENARIO

My GP has started me on antidepressants as I have been having a stressful time at work. Do I need to share this information with my appraiser? I am not sure how confidential the process really is and I would rather nobody else knew about this?

The appraisal discussion is a confidential meeting. Your appraiser is there to listen to what you say and to allow you to consider how you safeguard your health. That you have a GP that you consult about your work stress shows good practice. Your appraiser may want to discuss whether there are any problems at work that could be helped in other ways.

Provided you take medical advice appropriately and are working safely the detail of the discussion does not need to be shared with anyone else and need not be recorded in your appraisal documentation. You will, however, need to make a declaration in your appraisal sign off that you do not have any medical condition that could pose a risk to patients. A statement that you have a health condition which is being treated adequately and that your doctor has no concerns could be added if you wish.