Q&A: Colleague and patient feedback

Index
Questions ..........................................................................................................................2

How often do I need to participate in colleague and patient questionnaires for revalidation? ...................................................................................................................2

Which colleague and patient questionnaire tools should I use? .........................................2

I have not collected colleague feedback for appraisal before, how many responses do I need for the survey to be acceptable for revalidation? ................................................................2

Will feedback data I obtained two years ago suffice for revalidation; it’s a five year cycle isn’t it? ............................................................................................................................3

Will feedback data I obtained two years ago suffice for revalidation; it’s a five year cycle isn’t it? ............................................................................................................................3

In our practice we usually ask our practice manager to run our colleague survey, but my appraiser says we should be using an outside company to do this; which is correct? ..............................................................................................................3

Which questionnaire should I use for colleague feedback so it is fit for revalidation? ..........................................................................................................................Error! Bookmark not defined.

I won’t have my colleague feedback survey done in time for my appraisal this year and my revalidation date will be before my next appraisal, what can I do? ............................................................................................................................3

Can I use the postal survey of my practice done by the PCT for revalidation? ..........................................................................................................................3

What should I do if I can’t get the required number of colleagues to provide feedback? ..........................................................................................................................4

SCENARIOS .........................................................................................................................4

I work in a practice in the day and also do two sessions a month for our local OOH provider. Will my in-hours colleague survey suffice for revalidation, after all I’m the same person? ........................................................................................................4

I usually get my appraiser to collate my patient survey replies but this time my appraiser was a bit cross and said she wouldn’t do it. Is she being unreasonable? ........................................................................................................4

I have just completed several months on a GP induction and refresher scheme, can I use the PSQ done in the training practice for revalidation? ........................................................................................................4

I have just received my patient feedback and there were a few patients who did not rate me highly, how will this affect my ability to keep my licence to practise? ........................................................................................................5
Questions

How often do I need to participate in colleague and patient questionnaires for revalidation?
Doctors are required to collect feedback from colleagues and patients once every revalidation cycle. We recommend that GPs collect colleague and patient feedback within the first three years of a five year cycle to allow for a follow up survey if any problems are identified.

Which colleague and patient questionnaire tools should I use?
You should check whether or not your Responsible Officer recommends any specific colleague feedback questionnaire. If not, it is important that you use a validated colleague feedback questionnaire that has been developed in accordance with Good Medical Practice and the GMC’s guidance on developing, implementing and administering colleague feedback questionnaires.

I have not collected colleague feedback for appraisal before, how many responses do I need for the survey to be acceptable for revalidation?
The number of responses depends on where you work, it’s helpful to gain as many responses as you can so that you have more data on which you can base your assessment of your ability to work with others. “The GMC is not prescribing the number of colleague and patient responses you are required to collect. We recommend that you check with your employer or questionnaire provider, as each questionnaire will have been piloted to determine the appropriate number of respondents required to provide an accurate picture of your practice.”

The GMC patient questionnaire requires a minimum of 34 responses and advises 45 and the colleague questionnaire requires 20 responses. Other questionnaires recommend different respondent numbers, this is because the questionnaires have been validated and benchmarked using these sample sizes. It’s worth checking this when you chose your questionnaire, if you work in an area of the UK which allows you a choice.
Will feedback data I obtained two years ago suffice for revalidation; it’s a five year cycle isn’t it?

Yes, if you are working in the same roles as when the feedback was obtained this will suffice. If you have changed your work pattern since the last survey you will need to repeat the surveys. For example if you had been working as a nine session GP two years ago and did a 360° colleague survey then, but retired and gave up the GP partnership and took up occupational medicine for six sessions a week, just doing the occasional GP locum, then the MSF two years ago would not be considered valid.

You may find your appraiser a useful source of advice if you are unsure about whether a survey is appropriate to your current context of practice.

If you have made changes as a result of prior feedback you may wish to repeat the surveys to check that you are now performing as you would wish. You may also wish to check that the surveys were carried out according to the GMCs guidelines and repeat them if they were not. (http://www.gmc-uk.org/Supporting_information100212.pdf_47783371.pdf)

In our practice we usually ask our practice manager to run our colleague survey, but my appraiser says we should be using an outside company to do this; which is correct?

It may be better to consider using an outside agency to administer and collate the results of your surveys. It is important that your feedback is anonymised, collected, inputted, collated, analysed and benchmarked independently, unless there are very good reasons why this could not be done.

If your practice manager is your employee there is a risk that the data will be biased, so any survey not done by an outside company should be accompanied by a note explaining who collated and fed back the data, to make it clear that you were not in an employer / employee situation when this was done.

It is useful to find out which electronic portfolios will analyse feedback information for you.

I won’t have my colleague feedback survey done in time for my appraisal this year and my revalidation date will be before my next appraisal, what can I do?

This situation may occur in the first group of GPs selected for revalidation as the system becomes established. The Responsible Officer may select their own mechanism for this, and it may be possible for the information to be reviewed by your appraiser as soon as it is available. A mini appraisal with a brief report summarising the colleague survey with reflections and a note of a discussion about any future actions will be likely to be sufficient.

Can I use the postal survey of my practice done by the PCT for revalidation?

These surveys do not provide information about patients who have seen you so do not provide the information you need for revalidation. “You will need to seek the views of the patients actually consulting you – practice-based surveys of the registered population will not be acceptable” from the RCGP Guide to the Revalidation of General Practitioners, available from http://www.rcgp.org.uk/revalidation-and-cpd/new-revalidation-guidance-for-gps.aspx
What should I do if I can’t get the required number of colleagues to provide feedback?

We do not anticipate that this will be a problem for the majority of GPs. The colleagues you select can be those you interact with (students/trainees, managers, consultants etc) on a medical basis in any part of your scope of work. If you feel you really can’t collect the required number of responses for whichever tool you are using, this should be recorded as an ‘exceptional circumstance’ in your portfolio and discussed with your appraiser.

SCENARIOS

I work in a practice in the day and also do two sessions a month for our local OOH provider. Will my in-hours colleague survey suffice for revalidation, after all I’m the same person?

It would be helpful if you could obtain feedback from as many colleagues as possible as most GPs vary their performance in different circumstances, so do try to include your OOH colleagues in your survey. “The selection of colleagues will depend on the nature of your practice. We recommend that you ask as wide a range of colleagues as possible and this might include colleagues from other specialties, junior doctors, nurses, allied healthcare professionals, and management and clerical staff.” (http://www.gmc-uk.org/Supporting_information100212.pdf 47783371.pdf)

I usually get my appraiser to collate my patient survey replies but this time my appraiser was a bit cross and said she wouldn’t do it. Is she being unreasonable?

Finding a skilled third party to collate your patient feedback data is essential as it will allow you to have unbiased information which will stimulate your thoughts on how you might improve what you do. Many e-portfolios include functionality to support the administration, collation and analysis of patient feedback. In some areas your appraiser will give you the feedback on the surveys but elsewhere appraisers prefer the GP to have reflected on the feedback before the appraisal discussion; your appraiser may expect you to have some ideas about any changes you would like to make and will help you to formulate action plans if the feedback isn’t as good as you would like. “You should be able to demonstrate that you have reflected on the feedback. Your appraiser will be interested in what actions you took as a result of the feedback, not just that you collected it.” (http://www.gmc-uk.org/Supporting_information100212.pdf 47783371.pdf)

I have just completed several months on a GP induction and refresher scheme, can I use the patient survey undertaken in the training practice for revalidation?

Timing of your first GP appraisal after a period of retraining is not standardised, and your responsible officer may be happy for you to submit data obtained while training. Information gained in your current practice rather than in your training practice is to be preferred as your performance in your present role may well be different and more characteristic of your independent practice.
I have just received my patient feedback and there were a few patients who did not rate me highly, how will this affect my ability to keep my licence to practise?

Your appraiser will guide you through your own ideas about how to change this situation, however most GPs have some patient feedback sometimes which is not ideal. Thinking about the implications of the feedback and what action might be needed is far more important than worrying about the survey itself. “The most important aspect of doing colleague surveys is reflecting upon the results and, if appropriate, implementing changes.” From the RCGP Guide to the Revalidation of General Practitioners, available from http://www.rcgp.org.uk/revalidation-and-cpd/new-revalidation-guidance-for-gps.aspx.