Dutch patients are warned against stem cell treatment

Tony Sheldon

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Notes
Consultants’ pay goes up, but productivity goes down, MPs told

UK consultants are being paid more as a result of their new NHS contracts, but productivity has probably diminished, the House of Commons health select committee, examining workforce planning, heard this week.

Professor Alan Craft, chairman of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, explained that the contract had helped highlight the huge amount of overtime most consultants were working.

“Most consultants were probably working 60 hours a week. The standard has now gone down to 56, which is less than 40 hours. Employers have been working towards reducing everybody to the minimum number of contracted hours. So probably as a result productivity has gone down.

In the long run it will be safer for patients because more consultants will be doing that work, but each of them will be doing fewer hours than they did in the past.”

Implementing the contract had also, he said, exposed the “myth that consultants were abusing the system by spending a lot of their time on private hospital work.”

Andrew Cole London

Doctors’ faith in the GMC falls, while that of the public rises

Doctors’ trust in the UK General Medical Council is falling, while public confidence in medical regulation is at its highest point in years, says a new survey that shows a shift in the GMC’s public profile.

A year ago, 39% of doctors and about one half of patients lacked confidence in the way that medicine was regulated. In 2006, two thirds of patients say that they are happy with the way medicine was regulated. In 2006, two thirds of patients say that they are happy with the way medicine was regulated. In 2006, two thirds of patients say that they are happy with the way medicine was regulated.

Professor Andrew Cole, chairman of the BMA’s General Practitioners Committee, said that many doctors felt that the GMC had “over-reacted” to media criticism, “bending over backwards” to shed its image as a cosy doctors’ club.

Madeleine Brettingham London

WHO calls for registration of all clinical trials

The World Health Organization is calling for all medical research involving humans to be registered at the earliest possible stage of its development. It is also calling for 20 key features of each research project to be made publicly available.

WHO made the recommendation as part of the world’s first international clinical trials day. The event was held in Brussels on 19 May. Organised by the European clinical research infrastructures network, the European Commission, and WHO, the annual event is designed to raise awareness about the methods of such research.