



EMERGENCY MEDICINE TRAINEES' ASSOCIATION

Emergency Medicine Trainees' Association Statement in response to Court Ruling of GMC v Dr Hadiza Bawa-Garba

The death of Jack Adcock was tragic and our deepest sympathies remain with his family at this time. No parent should ever have to experience loss of this kind.

The public reports of the resulting medical and legal investigations into Jack's death and, particularly, the punishment of Dr Bawa-Garba have shaken the medical community. We all recognise the circumstances of that day. Emergency Medicine trainees across the country are currently working in conditions that represent the worst since time-based targets were introduced and modern Emergency Medicine training was designed. Understaffing, remote supervision and deficiencies of induction and information technology are unfortunately familiar to many of us and magnify risks to patients.

Patient safety is best served by a well-staffed and resourced NHS which is able to learn from errors and mistakes when they occur. All clinicians must be able to discuss, reflect on, and learn from their experiences without fear.

As a result of recent high-profile cases such as this, trainee doctors now fear being held legally and personally accountable for systemic inadequacies and failings in the provisions and management of the Health Service, whilst paradoxically facing punitive and career-ending consequences for speaking out and raising concerns when such systemic shortcomings exist. This is an untenable position which jeopardises the advancement of quality and safety in healthcare.

In the immediate aftermath of this awful case we would urge our colleagues to take extreme care with records of reflective practice and ensure they follow guidance from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (1) regarding this.

The Government and all national bodies concerned with the delivery of healthcare in the United Kingdom must recognise the significance of the conclusions of this case. The ongoing work and recommendations by the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, other Royal Colleges and associated trainee bodies must be acknowledged, with the gravity and due diligence they deserve in order to prioritise patient safety at this time. Individual clinicians are responsible for their actions but system failings require system-level interventions and accountability.

EMTA Executive Committee
@EMTAcommittee

Dr Katie Archer
Dr Gladys Arlidge
Dr Jon Bailey

Dr Bethany Barrett
Dr Anna Blackwell
Dr Matt Edwards

Dr Michael Harrison
Dr Amar Mashru
Dr Carrie Thomas

Dr Kirsten Walthall
Dr Paul Stewart
(President)

29th January 2018