

Mobbing of trainee doctors in Slovenia: prevalence and impact on their health in 2009

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Mobbing is common in educational and health sectors. It is especially common in workplaces in which work tasks are not clearly defined or are frequently changed. Research shows a high incidence of such behaviour among trainee doctors in various parts of the world. Mobbing affects health. There are several definitions of mobbing. For the purpose of this research, mobbing is defined as experiencing at least one of 45 Leymann's (1990) forms of mobbing behaviour at least once a week over a period of at least six months.

In order to assess the frequency of reported mobbing and the association between mobbing and chosen symptoms in Slovenian trainee doctors, in April 2009, all 1164 Slovene trainee doctors in aforementioned period were sent an adapted LIPT (Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terrorization) questionnaire, together with questions about gender, age, sick leave, working experience, educational status of the possible perpetrator and chosen symptoms. The respondents' anonymity was assured.

A 27% response rate was achieved. Six questionnaires were not valid, so a total of 312 questionnaires was analyzed (26.8% of the population was covered), 77.2% of respondents were female which is in accordance with the population structure of all Slovene trainee doctors in 2009. A total of 70.8% of trainee doctors reported being subjected to mobbing during training; 40.0% were still experiencing mobbing at the time of completing the questionnaire. The most common form of bullying behaviour were withholding important information, verbal aggression in relation to work assignments, work assignments far below his/her capacity, spreading rumours and work assignments far above his/her capacity. Trainee doctors who were still mobbed during the time of this research reported symptoms of illness more frequently than the remainder of the sample ($p = <0.001$). The most common symptoms were anxiety and irritability. The educational status of perpetrators was higher than that of the doctors in question.

Key words: mobbing, victim, perpetrator, consequences, health, family medicine, trainee doctor

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