

Mental health in the medical profession



An examination of the risk factors, availability and efficacy of current support relating to the **wellbeing & mental health** of doctors.

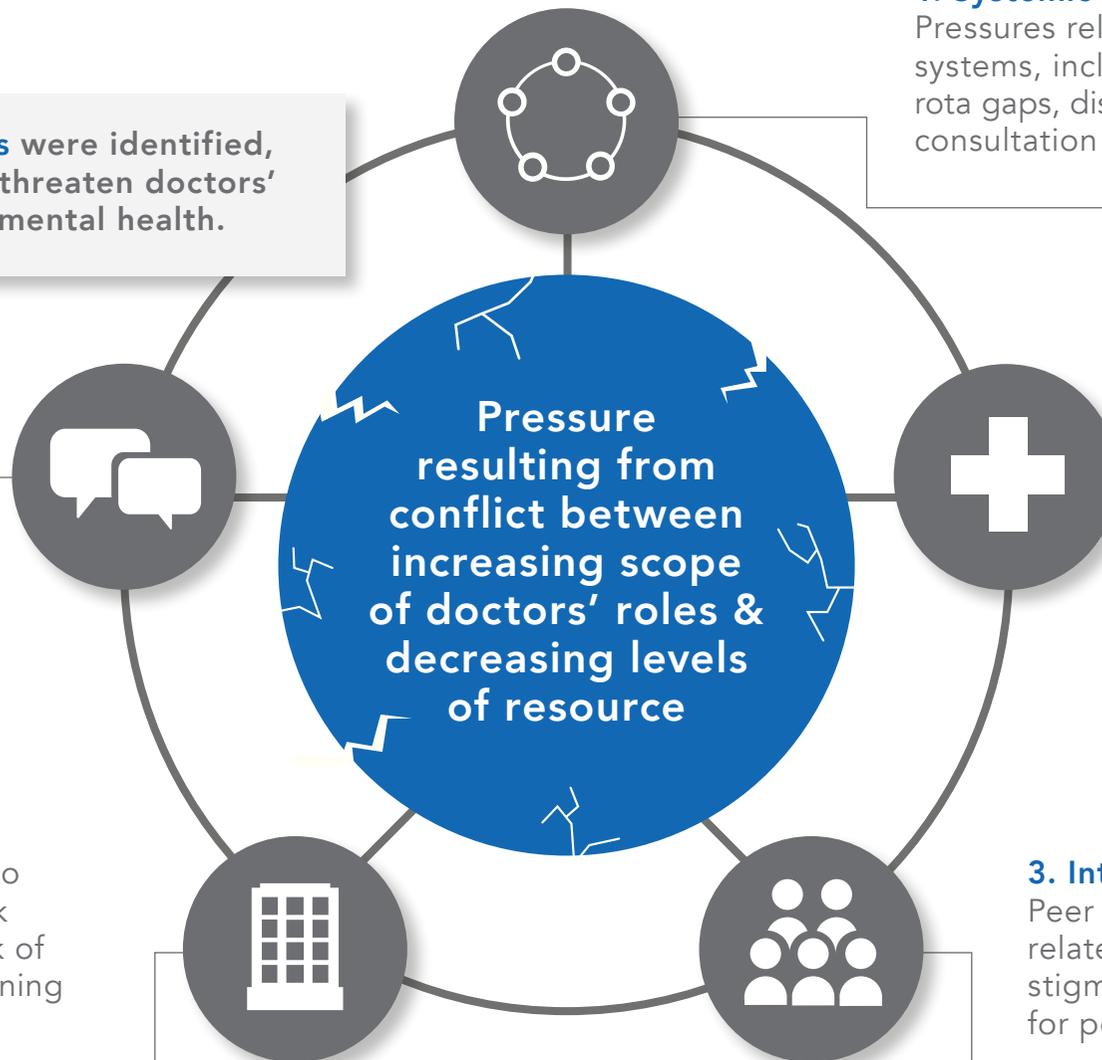
Five groups of **risk factors** were identified, that in combination, may threaten doctors' wellbeing and even their mental health.

5. Sociocultural factors

Wider contextual factors including increasing patient expectations and the rising trend in self-diagnosis.

4. Environmental factors

Practical issues, often linked to the workplace including a lack of workplace amenities, a lack of breaks, and the impact of training rotations on junior doctors.



1. Systemic factors

Pressures related to processes and systems, including understaffing, rota gaps, discharge targets or consultation times.

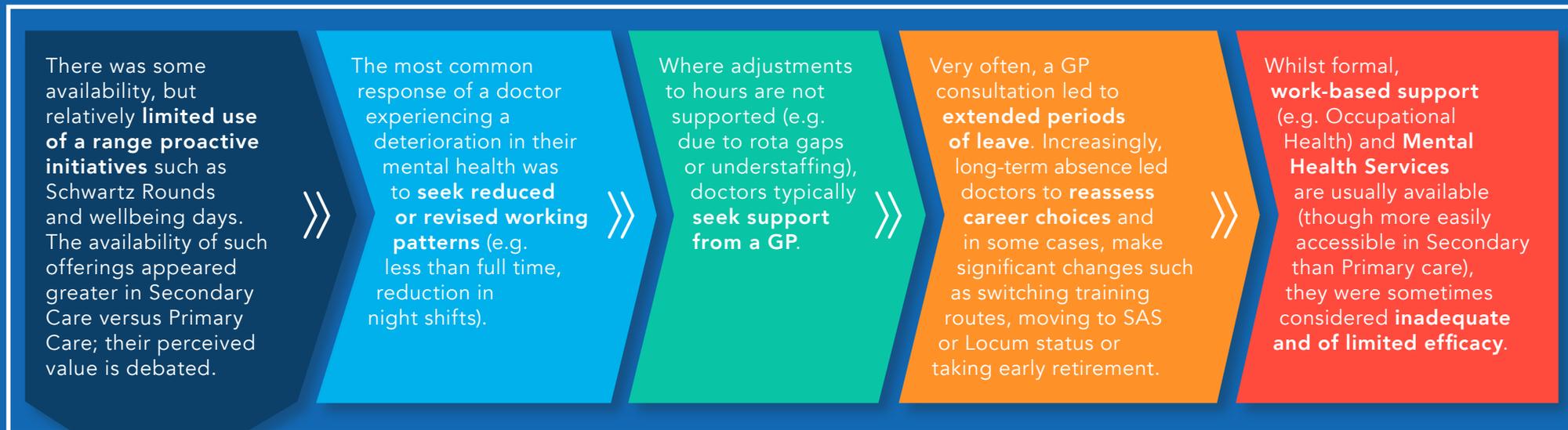
2. Endemic factors

Issues stemming from the reality of a job in medicine, including managing clinical risk, traumatic events and unexpected outcomes.

3. Interpersonal factors

Peer relationships including issues related to hierarchy and bullying, stigma, erosion of opportunities for peer interaction and support.

Doctors' experiences of services for maintaining good mental health follow similar pathways across the profession, but there are differences between Primary and Secondary care...



Barriers to seeking support

Doctors experiencing a deterioration in their mental health often put off seeking support, though this reluctance was less likely among younger doctors and students who often appeared more engaged in issues surrounding mental health.

Practical barriers to seeking support included...

- Lack of awareness
- Lack of time
- Access in remote areas

Perceptive barriers to seeking support included...

- A sense of pride and/or guilt
- A tendency towards 'superhero' syndrome
- Underlying stigma and fear that seeking help would be interpreted as lack of competence or resilience.

Making improvements in the future

The most radical improvement to life as a doctor is expected to come from systemic changes, driven by revised government and NHS priorities and policy. The BMA will continue to lobby government to protect the long-term interests of doctors.

In the shorter term, doctors seek improvements to environmental factors to improve morale. Enhanced awareness of and access to available support services, especially in Primary care was also considered a priority. The BMA will publish and promote a wider wellbeing charter to gain commitment to improved working conditions for doctors, and continue to signpost support services, especially in Primary Care and remote areas.