

NEW ZEALAND

Junior doctors report bullying and harassment in the workplace

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One in five junior doctors have either experienced or witnessed inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. Photo / Thinkstock



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One in five junior doctors have either experienced or witnessed bullying, sexual harassment or inappropriate behaviour against other resident doctors in the last two years, a new survey has found.

The New Zealand Resident Doctors Association, which represents house officers and registrars or junior doctors, conducted the survey involving its 3000 members earlier this year.

Seven in 10 of the incidents were reported as coming from more senior doctors; 10 per cent for sexual harassment, 47 per cent for bullying and 43 per cent identified as "inappropriate behaviour".

A group of representatives, including employers and unions, met last month to discuss reform processes and a way forward.

"Unfortunately, bullying and harassment are not problems isolated to one part of the health system or the medical profession," said association national secretary, Dr Deborah Powell.

"Addressing these issues comprehensively requires a whole of profession approach, including strong collaboration between employers, unions, and professional bodies."

Dr Powell said there was a perception that making a complaint can result with negative consequences for a complainant's career and that the perpetrator will face little or no penalty.

"That perception must be abolished," she said.

"We must provide a secure and safe environment to enable affected individuals to raise concerns, including ensuring retribution or negative career consequences do not arise as a result of raising an issue."

The Herald revealed last month that the Auckland City Hospital's department of critical care medicine was [stripped of its training accreditation](#) because of concerns of bullying, harassment and a lack of adequate in-house training