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Background

Research globally has shown that individuals working on PCC experience high rates of burnout, compassion fatigue and PTSD symptoms.¹⁻² There are unique challenges for Consultants; having to support a team and make vital decisions

Aims

To understand the wellbeing experiences of PCC consultants.

Method

Online interviews were conducted from April to June 2021
Interviews lasted between 30-90 mins

Sample (n=19)

- 11 consultants; 5 male, 6 female
- Years of experience ranged from 4 to 23

Results

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to analyse the experiences of the consultants, and highlight commonalities.

- Many participants had the view that PCC consultancy is not a career forever; as one ages it is harder to work shift patterns and be on call
- A change in work culture e.g. rota for consults was highlighted
- These provide a pathway to improve consultant wellbeing.



Themes

1. Positive & negative impact of working during COVID-19
2. Job satisfaction & scrutiny in PCC
3. Ageing workforce and shift work
4. Support and recognition from the Trust
5. Successful coping strategies are personal and adaptive
6. Importance of civility & staff retention for good team work
7. Recognition of the cumulative effect of stressors in & out of work
8. Future solutions to enhance wellbeing: being heard, seen, supported and personal growth

"I think that's something that needs to be looked at ... planning for all the older and more experienced consultants and how you can use their skills within a department."

"I don't think they [the NHS] know how to manage the older senior colleagues [in PCC]."

"I think at 55 onwards there should be a ... process to tapering services"

"A rota that doesn't include a 24-hour shift ... I could kill someone at hour 23, and you'd feel bad about it"

Discussion & Future Recommendations

The study highlights the critical areas to be addressed. Addressing these will allow consultants to thrive at work. Greater attention needs paid to ageing workforce and consideration of their needs, without devaluing those who are an integral part of the team. Greater awareness of moral distress among consultants, and support to be put in place.

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Butcher I, Saeed S, Morrison R, Donnelly P, Shaw R. **A qualitative study exploring the wellbeing experiences of Paediatric Critical Care consultants working in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic.** BMJ Open; In press.