

1 April 2025

MPS Foundation funds appointment of research fellow to review menopause support for NHS staff

The University of Exeter's *The Impact of Menopause* research project has – with funding from the MPS Foundation - appointed research fellow Dr Fatma Sabet, to undertake a review into the effectiveness of menopause support for healthcare professionals working in the NHS.

In 2022, Medical Protection Society (MPS) called on leaders and managers in the healthcare sector to consider adapting working environments to help women experiencing menopause continue to perform at their best for patients and stay in the workforce. MPS's survey of female doctors in the UK revealed that 19% had considered early retirement due to menopause symptoms and the impact on their wellbeing.

Since then, interventions including NHS England guidelines, policies, menopause clinics, flexible working, cooler uniforms and training for staff have been introduced across the NHS, however the effectiveness of these measures is unknown.

Dr Fatma Sabet's role in the research project, funded by the MPS Foundation, will develop an understanding of which interventions work, why and in what settings and set out recommendations for the most effective interventions. The work will be supported by a project advisory group which includes senior leaders in the menopause field, healthcare professionals with experience of the menopause and those designing and providing support interventions.

Fatma was awarded a doctoral scholarship in 2019 and subsequent postdoctoral fellowships by the Economic and Social Research Council. This enabled her to pursue a doctoral study that culminated in the creation of a planetary health framework for school food in England. Fatma also established the Devon County Council School Food Task Group and served as a member of the National Advisory Board for Public Food Procurement. She is also a volunteer consultant and advisor for The Nest community enterprise in Exeter, supporting women's health across the four Ms: menarche, menstruation, motherhood, and menopause.

Commenting, Dr Fatma Sabet, said: "I am absolutely delighted to have been offered the role of menopause research fellow. I am truly excited about the opportunity to contribute to this important field, advancing knowledge and raising awareness about the gender health gap and the critical need for adequate support for healthcare professionals navigating menopause."

Dr Jessica Scott, Principle Investigator of the project, Devon Partnership NHS Trust and University of Exeter, added: "This is a vital research project which will greatly benefit from Fatma's experience and passion. Understanding which menopause support interventions work, which do not, and why will help to ensure all healthcare workers experiencing menopause are better supported in the future."

Professor Gozie Offiah, Chair of the MPS Foundation, said: "We are proud to be supporting the appointment of Fatma to progress this important research. Over 50% of doctors in the UK are female, and of those almost two in five are aged between 41-60. It is essential that we do all we can to ensure the menopause support provided is appropriate and effective.

Getting this right will alleviate additional stress for female doctors, and enable them to continue to perform at their best for patients.”

END

Notes to editors

For further information or a photo of Dr Fatma Sabet, please contact pressoffice@medicalprotection.org

- Fatma will start on 1 April 2025.
- Fatma will be embedded within The Impact of MENopause (TiME) research group, which is linked to the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR)-funded Care Under Pressure research programme at The University of Exeter. This group includes:
 - Dr Jessica Scott, lead researcher, is an academic clinical fellow in medical education. She is a child and adolescent psychiatry higher trainee with 25% protected time for research funded by the NIHR.
 - Professor Karen Mattick has extensive experience in leading research including large NIHR-funded projects (including recruiting, employing and supervising research fellows) leading to high quality research and publications.
 - Dr Jason Hancock is a consultant psychiatrist, Director of Medical Education and workforce researcher.
 - Jacqui McBurnie is the Menopause Transformation Lead at North East North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, formerly founder and Chair of the NHS England national menopause network.
- Members of the project advisory group currently include:
 - Dr Deborah Bruce is a consultant gynaecologist, lead for menopause services at Guys and St Thomas', member of British Menopause Society Council and Senior Clinical Lecturer in Medical Education and Deputy Dean of The School of Medicine at the University of Surrey.
 - Abeda Mulla, a managing consultant at the Strategy Unit who led on a project in 2023 titled Menopause in the NHS workforce.
 - Sheni Ravji-Smith is the assistant director of OD and Good Employment at NHS Greater Manchester ICB
 - Annie Broadbent is the ICS Retention and Regional People Promise Exemplar manager at NHS Devon ICB
 - Dr Kathryn Patrick is an NHS GP in Somerset, Director of Primary Care, Somerset Foundation Trust and Menopause specialist.
 - Dr Ruth Abrams is a Senior Lecturer in Workforce, Organisation and Wellbeing, University of Surrey
- The MPS Foundation is a global, not-for-profit research initiative that aims to shape the future of patient safety by investing in research, analysis, education, and training. The MPS Foundation is part of Medical Protection Society (MPS) - the world's leading protection organisation supporting more than 300,000 doctors, dentists, and healthcare professionals around the world. [The MPS Foundation](#)

- The MPS survey of UK healthcare professionals was undertaken in September 2022 and obtained 261 respondents.
- The General Medical Council (GMC) [register summary](#) shows that 50.04% of registrants are female. 38% of female doctors are aged between 41-60. Menopause is likely to occur between the ages of 45-54.