

# The Impact of COVID on Wellbeing - A Buddy Up Project

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## Background:

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented challenge for doctors and other members of staff. During this time, the emotional impact has been multifaceted, with an increase in burnout and psychological distress in doctors, many with undiagnosed anxiety and depression.<sup>[1,2]</sup> A survey was done in Wexham Park Hospital to assess the wellbeing of doctors during this time, whether it improved, and if so - what improved it. Based on the results, an intervention was proposed.

## Methods:

Wellbeing was assessed with the 14-item Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEBWMS):

Done at two points in time:

- The period of redeployment
- The period where lockdown was relaxed, when doctors started returning to their original departments.

There were a total of 60 responses, with the demographics of the participants shown in Figure 1.

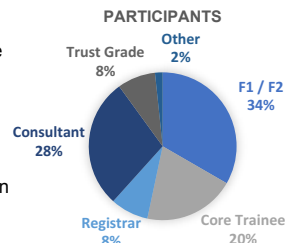


Figure 1: Demographics of the 60 participants.

## Results:

Mean wellbeing score: 45  
Mean individual change in score: +0.5.

The wellbeing scores during redeployment, and in June, when lockdown rules were being relaxed are shown in Figure 2.

52% of participants showed an improvement in their wellbeing score in early June, as seen in Figure 3.

Of note – this was depicted as a decrease in individuals with "below average" wellbeing scores and an increase in "average" wellbeing scores.

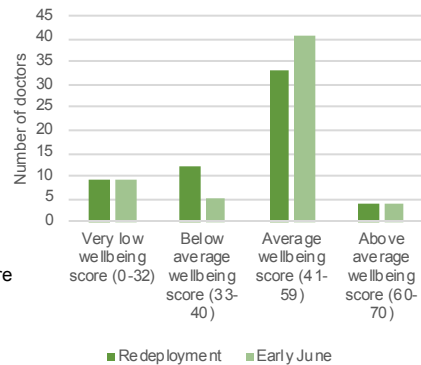


Figure 2: Wellbeing scores before and after lockdown regulations were relaxed

## CHANGE IN WELLBEING SCORE

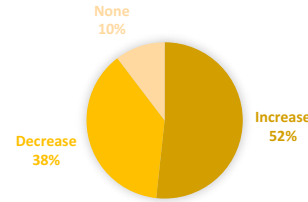


Figure 3: Whether wellbeing score differed before and after lockdown rules were relaxed

## What was helpful?

Free text responses were also obtained during the survey.

Of note, **68% of participants cited support from colleagues**, and teamwork as being helpful for their wellbeing during the pandemic.

## Proposed Intervention - The Buddy Up Project

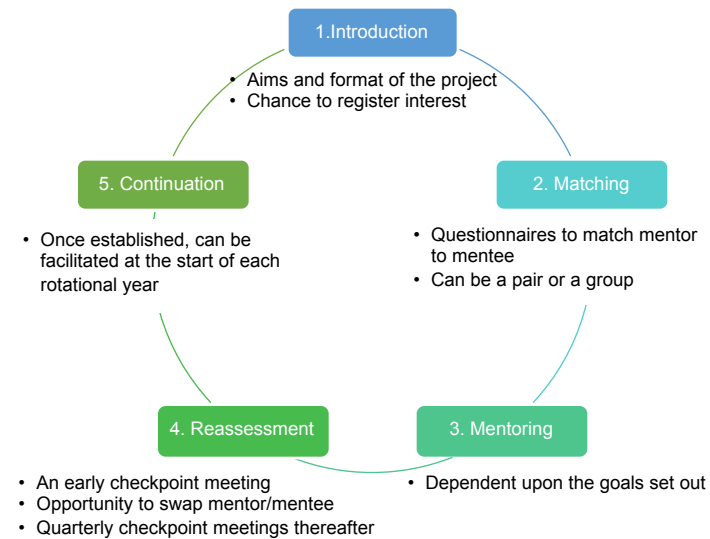


Figure 4: The proposed outline of The Buddy Up Project.

## The Buddy Up Project Continued

We found that support from colleagues were shown to be the most helpful factor influencing wellbeing in doctors.

Propelled by these suggestions, we are aiming to introducing The Buddy Up Project to pair foundation doctors with other more senior doctors. This is outlined in Figure 4.

## Outline of the Project:

### Aims for Mentees:

- Portfolio enrichment
- Research opportunities
- Exposure to specialties of interest
- Pastoral support

### Aims for Mentors:

- Portfolio enrichment
- Building leadership
- Opportunity for teaching
- Pastoral support

### Goals for the Project:

- Provide a safe space to promote wellbeing
- Connect like-minded individuals together
- Provide both parties with opportunities for professional development

**Matching:** A pre-mentorship questionnaire will be filled to ensure a good match between mentor/mentee. Examples of questions include age, specialty of interest, what they would like to achieve from the program. From here, like minded individuals can then be paired together.

**Mentoring:** Once pairs and groups have been established, how the meetings are conducted would be up to their discretion, to suit individual needs.

**Reassessment:** Quarterly checkpoint meetings will be conducted thereafter to identify issues, standardise the scheme and evaluate the project throughout the year. If the mentor/mentee pair do not feel that they are best suited to each other, there is opportunity for reshuffling of pairings early on.

**Continuation:** The results of the project will be analysed, with feedback from both mentor and mentee. From there, the project can be improved, and handed over to future aspiring mentors keen to ensure its continuation.

## References:

1. Gupta, N. et al. (2021) Impact of covid-19 pandemic on Healthcare Workers. Industrial psychiatry journal. U.S. National Library of Medicine. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8611576/> (Accessed: April 20, 2023).
2. Atif, K. et al. (2016) Prevalence of anxiety and depression among doctors; the unscreened and undiagnosed clientele in Lahore, Pakistan. Pakistan journal of medical sciences. U.S. National Library of Medicine. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4859009/> (Accessed: April 20, 2023).