



Royal College of
Obstetricians &
Gynaecologists



The Royal College of
Midwives

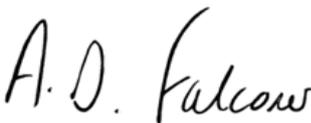
STATEMENT FROM THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS & GYNAECOLOGISTS AND THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES

The RCM and the RCOG are the standard setters for their professions. By working together to reduce undermining and bullying behaviours, we will improve the working environment for our professional teams and deliver better care to women and families. The RCM and the RCOG together categorically condemn undermining and bullying behaviour under any circumstance.

Together we will promote a positive working environment for all, where individuals and teams treat each other with compassion, dignity and respect, where critical feedback and whistle-blowing are encouraged, and women are central to the care we provide. A culture in which unsafe care is reported by any member of staff, independent of their seniority, will be nurtured and supported.

RCM and RCOG will develop and implement strategies, building on existing good practice and working with other stakeholder organisations, to ameliorate undermining behaviours and bullying behaviour.

We will publish an action plan for our professions to implement UK-wide that will be sent to all UK medical directors with this statement for wide dissemination.

	
Dr Tony Falconer FRCOG	Professor Cathy Warwick
President, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists	Chief Executive, Royal College of Midwives

Supporting information

1. Undermining and bullying behaviour has long been recognised as a problem for Obstetric and Gynaecology (O&G) trainee doctors, as evidenced by repeated national General Medical Council trainee surveys¹. O&G trainees report more undermining behaviour than any other medical specialty.

¹ http://www.gmc-uk.org/National_training_survey_key_findings_report_2013.pdf_52299037.pdf



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2. Although the GMC Trainee Surveys indicate that the vast amount of undermining reported by trainees is carried out by consultants, midwives are the next biggest group - 23% of undermining behaviour reported by trainees was carried out by midwives in 2009, 15% in 2010 and 16% in 2011. The questions were changed in 2012 to ask where undermining behaviour had occurred – the highest percentage of reported occurrences was in the Labour Ward (10.1% = 193 trainees) though these will have involved both consultants and midwives.
3. The 2012 NHS England Staff Survey also reveals that midwives also experience more harassment or abuse from their managers/team leaders or other colleague than nurses and midwives combined (31% compared to 27%)². Undermining behaviour can negatively affect patient outcomes and this was a major factor in the problems experienced at Mid Staffordshire Hospital³ in nursing.
4. In 2012 RCOG decided to take specific action to reduce the undermining experienced by O&G trainees, and explored the possibility with the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) of a joint workshop, building on the previous joint RCOG/RCM work in 2008⁴ ([The Clinical Learning Environment](#)).
5. This joint statement arises from a joint workshop held early in 2013 and heralds the launch of our joint RCOG/RCM action plan to address the issue of undermining and bullying behaviours in obstetrics and gynaecology.

² <http://www.nhsstaffsurveys.com/Page/1006/Latest-Results/2012-Results/>

³ <http://www.midstaffspublicinquiry.com/report>

⁴ <http://www.rcog.org.uk/womens-health/clinical-guidance/clinical-learning-environment-and-recruitment-report-joint-working-p>