

6th February 2012

IAEM survey confirms ongoing senior doctor shortfall in Emergency Departments

The Irish Association for Emergency Medicine (IAEM) has completed an up to date (January 2012) census of medical staffing within Emergency Departments (ED) across the country. This takes into account the effects of the recent HSE India and Pakistan Recruitment (HSE IPR) drive and identifies persistent ongoing vacancies within EDs with resultant expensive locum requirements.

Whilst recruitment to the more junior Senior House Officer grade (SHO) has been successful with all vacancies filled (36 of these are filled from the HSE IPR), there unfortunately still remains an unsafe deficit within the more senior Middle Grade or Registrar in Emergency Medicine tier. Only 71% (108/152) of these positions are filled (4 from the HSE IPR) and almost 1 in 3 of these more senior positions requires expensive temporary agency staff to fill them.

Those hospitals with EDs where 50% or more of Middle Grade doctor positions remain unfilled and continuously reliant on agency staff include:

- Children's University Hospital, Temple Street, Dublin
- Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown
- Galway University Hospital
- University Hospital, Limerick (formerly the Midwestern Regional Hospital)
- Mayo General Hospital
- Naas General Hospital
- Letterkenny General Hospital
- Our Lady's Hospital, Navan

This continued reliance on locum senior medical staff in EDs in Ireland is not only expensive but is potentially detrimental to standards of clinical governance and risk avoidance in patient care. Such continued understaffing of the Middle Grade medical tier will also place in jeopardy the recent success of the reforms undertaken by the Special Delivery Unit (SDU).

President:
Mr Mark Doyle FRCSI, FCEM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine.

Waterford Regional Hospital,
Dunmore Road,
Waterford,
Ireland.

Tel No: +353 51 842647
Fax No: +353 51 848550

Secretary:
Mr John McInerney FRCSEd, DipIMC, FCEM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine.


Mater Misericordiae University Hospital,
Eccles St,
Dublin 7,
Ireland.

Tel No: +353 1 803 4342
Fax No: +353 1 803 2850

Treasurer:
Mr Niall O'Connor DCH, DObs, MRCP, FRCSEd, FCEM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine.

Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital,
Drogheda,
Co. Louth,
Ireland.

Tel No: +353 41 9874791
Fax No: +353 41 9874799



IAEM urges an immediate government focus on potential strategies to ensure that the medical staffing of EDs is secured. In the longer term this is dependant on significant Consultant expansion to ensure that our patients receive the best possible emergency care.

In the short-term this requires a stable Middle Grade tier that should consist of:

- Doctors of senior trainee status to ensure there are adequate trainees to go on to become Consultants in Emergency Medicine and
- A regularised Staff Grade position.

To assist this latter process the Association has recently published a [Proposal for the Development of the Staff Grade in Emergency Medicine](#).