My PhD thesis

• Academic Collaborative with Dutch Healthcare Inspectorate

• How do professions and professionals address poor performance of individual healthcare professionals?

• 8 licensed professions
Survey on knowledge and experiences with poorly performing colleagues

Interviews with disciplined professionals about impact on personal and professional life

Interviews with professional associations about support and policies regarding poor performance

Systematic review on outcomes of remediation and rehabilitation programmes
Poorly performing colleagues

- For physicians: a protocol with steps to take in case of a poorly performing colleague
- For dentists and pharmacists: a place where one can report a poorly performing colleague (aimed at support and recovery)

Experience in previous 12 months: 31.3%
Indicated to have taken action: 68.4%
Disciplinary process

• Aim: quality assurance

• Scope: professional performance of individual professionals

• ±1500 complaints per year, mostly by patients or relatives

• Measure intended as correction rather than punishment
Impact

Psychological: misery, fear and long-term impact

“It gets you down and almost makes you depressed, although you get over it as well.”

“I don't relive being in front of the disciplinary board anymore. For about a year I would wake up every night at 3 AM and would start to explain what had happened.”

Professional: work, defensive practice and financial

“Yes, I'm constantly hedging.”

“...And after they've visited me, they search the internet, and then immediately cancel their treatment.”
Enhancing factors

Publication of measures, media coverage and duration of the process

“A criminal is only listed with his initials, and they have done something wrong on purpose.”

“Patients can say whatever they want in the media, but a doctor can't defend himself because when he does say something, he violates the law of confidentiality.”

“It's terrible, and it goes on and on. The complete process lasted four years.”
A corrective measure?

• Follow-up research shows that 17% of disciplined professionals agree with the verdict

• Measure not meant as punishment, but (some) professionals do experience it as such
Programmes to get back on track

In the Netherlands, there are programmes for addicted physicians and for dentists and pharmacists with performance concerns
38 studies on national or state programmes

Majority from USA (58%), about physicians (79%), focusing on SUD (63%)

- Substance use disorder: High programme completion, 80-90% employed after treatment
- Knowledge and skills deficits: Mixed outcomes across studies
- Comparing problems & professions
Concluding remarks

In my thesis, I argue that it is necessary to:

- Create and clarify reporting opportunities
- Take into account the impact of investigation
- Structure recovery for professionals with performance problems

Current issues in the Netherlands...
Thank you

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