

Professional identity

see What does it take to become a neurosurgeon? A mixed methods cross-sectional analysis of professional identity formation amongst neurosurgical trainees

It is often mentioned that 'being' a [neurosurgeon](#) is about more than just performing surgery. Professional identity may be defined as the 'stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role' ¹⁾. However, the concept of professional surgical identity and how it can be cultivated by [trainees](#) has barely emerged in the neurosurgical community. This may be important as career success has been associated with successful professional identity formation ^{2) 3)}.

Ever-developing changes to the [working time](#) of [junior doctors](#) by the [European Working Time Directive](#), the [junior doctor contract of 2019](#) and most recently the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) have impacted the [professional identity](#) of doctors. There has been little [investigation](#) into its influence on the multifaceted aspects of [postgraduate medical training](#), which feeds into how [trainees](#) consider themselves professionally and the concept of professional identity or 'being a doctor'. A review of the medical, socio-political and educational literature reveals that the impact on the professional identity development of trainees is influenced by several perspectives from the trainee, [trainer](#) and the public. Gross reduction in working hours has no doubt decreased the raw volume of clinical [experiences](#). However, to counteract this, smarter [learning processes](#) have evolved, including narrative [reflection](#), supervised learning events, and a greater awareness of [coaching](#) and training among [trainers](#) ⁴⁾.

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Ibarra H. Provisional selves: experimenting with image and identity in professional adaptation. Admin Sci Q 1999;44:764-91.

²⁾

Arthur MB, Inkson K, Pringle JK. The new careers: individual action and economic change. London: SAGE; 1999.

³⁾

Hall DT, Zhu G, Yan A. Career creativity as protean identity transformation. In: Peiperl MA, Arthur MB, Anand N, eds. Career creativity. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2002:159-179.

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Mukherjee S, Meacock J, Kissane E, Pal D. Factors relating to working hours restriction that have impacted the professional identity of trainees in the last decade. Br J Hosp Med (Lond). 2021 Mar 2;82(3):1-10. doi: 10.12968/hmed.2020.0355. Epub 2021 Mar 13. PMID: 33792379.

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