

16th October 2024

Dr Dagan Lonsdale MBBS FFICM FRCP SFHEA PhD
cc Dr Mumtaz Patel.
Acting as President and Senior Censor, RCP London

Via email

Dear Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians of London

PAs and AAs - The Academy's call for a review

Thank you for your letter dated 3rd October 2024. I note your concerns. As we made clear in our letter to the Secretary of State and the NHSE Chief Executive, our primary concern is patient safety. A focus I know you also collectively share.

In your letter, you particularly highlight our use of the phrase 'almost devoid of factual information' and interpret this as saying there is no evidence. To be clear, we deliberately used the word 'almost' to acknowledge that there is evidence, as you point out, from coroners' cases, safety reporting and elsewhere which have led to concerns. The strength of the evidence is precisely what should be examined by a review.

Indeed, our central point is that there is currently no formal data collection, or analysis from cases and incidents which would help us collectively identify or determine whether there are systemic issues that should be addressed. In the absence of such data and evidence collation, the only repository for concerns is the media.

This is not a satisfactory position for doctors, PAs or most importantly, for patients. Our belief is that we need a more structured approach to evidence gathering and evaluation of this important issue.

As we state in our letter, we believe that an independent review, which has the confidence of all relevant stakeholders, is the best way to move this difficult situation forward. A view we hope you also share.

In the interests of transparency, we plan to publish this response on our website alongside the original letter to DHSC and NHSE.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeanette Dickson', with a decorative flourish underneath.

Dr Jeanette Dickson

Chair of Council, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges