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TRAIL

This panel helps to market the paper by tempting readers inside. It tells readers about stories in other parts of the paper.

Imran Khan on corruption, the Panama Papers and Pakistan



Dazzling new puzzle page



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both in g2

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MASTHEAD

The masthead is a specially designed logo that shows the name of the newspaper.

GMC: doctors' strike will put patients at risk

Staff warned they could be struck off if walkouts result in serious harm

Denis Campbell
Health policy editor

BYLINE

Sometimes the writer's job title or where they are writing from is included. Staff writers are always credited.

They should think twice about joining the first total withdrawals of medical labour in the NHS's history.

The GMC made it clear that medics who strike could be at risk of being disciplined or even struck off if their actions "caused patients serious harm" because it was not possible to deliver care as needed.

The regulator said it recognised junior doctors' "anger and frustration" at the contract the health secretary, Jeremy Hunt, is forcing on them, but patient safety had to be the priority. "We ask every doctor contemplating further and escalated industrial action to pause and consider again the possible implications for patients, not only in terms of the immediate action but also in terms of cumulative impact on patients and the additional risk posed by the withdrawal of emergency cover," its new advice states.

Unknown numbers of the 45,000 medics below the level of consultant will strike between 8am and 5pm on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Unlike during their four walkouts since January, junior doctors will refuse to work in any hospital department, even those in which lives are at stake.

The guidance says: "Given the scale and repeated nature of what is proposed, we believe that, despite everyone's best efforts, some hospitals may struggle to cope. In these cases where local circumstances are particularly acute, the right option may be not to take action that results in the withdrawal of services for patients."

Several leading doctors - including Sir Bruce Keogh, former health minister Ara

Darzi, the GMC's medical officer, Dame Sally Davies, the GMC's chair, Sarah Wollastan, the GMC's committee, has urged junior doctors to think about the impact on patients. The association reassured patients that care would be safe because consultants would undertake junior colleagues' roles. "The critical message for patients is that anyone who needs emergency care during the days of industrial action will get it, the difference is that it will be provided by senior doctors rather than junior doctors", said Dr Johann Malawana, chair of the doctors' union's junior doctors committee.

The GMC did not define when it would describe a hospital as struggling to cope. But a lack of staff - most hospitals have too few medics - or a sudden heavy demand, for example caused by a multi-car accident, could cause such a situation. Asked if striking doctors could face disciplinary proceedings in the event of a patient coming to harm, a GMC spokesman said: "While we would not take action against a doctor for exercising their legal right to take industrial action, we would investigate information suggesting that a doctor's actions during the taking of such industrial action had caused a patient serious harm, or put patients at risk of serious harm, whatever the motive underlying the doctor's actions. It would all depend on individual circumstances."

It said striking doctors should return to work immediately if patients became "at risk" because consultants could not cope with the workload. "Where contingency plans are overwhelmed, it is vital that doctors taking action can be contacted and are available to help."

The BMA has made a last-ditch attempt to prevent the walkouts by offering to call them off if Hunt drops his threat to impose the contract and resume talks over the detail of their terms and conditions. But the health secretary said there was no

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HEADLINE

The biggest headline on the page is called the "main splash". This is a serious story so no jokes are made in the headline.



Prince Harry meets Chewbacca during a visit to the Star Wars set at Pinewood Studios, where the latest episode is being filmed Picture: Adrian Dennis/Reuters

Fewer people developing dementia, says study

Nicola Davis

The proportion of older people suffering from dementia has fallen by a fifth over the past two decades, with the most likely explanation being that men are smoking less and living healthier lives, according to new scientific research.

A team from three British universities concluded that the number of new cases of dementia is lower than had been predicted in the 1990s - estimated at about 210,000 a year in the UK as opposed to the 250,000 expected.

The findings are potentially significant because they suggest that it is possible to take preventative action, such as stopping smoking and reducing cholesterol, that could help avoid the condition. "Physical health and brain health are clearly highly linked," said Carol Brayne, of Cambridge University, who co-authored the study.

Nick Fox, professor of neurology at University of Cambridge, said: "This does not mean that dementia is disappearing. The main 'body' of a news story. Often the only part written by the reporter. This text is the Guardian's standard body text. The font is the eight point Guardian Egyptian. It was not invented in the 19th century, but was first used in the 18th century. It was first used in the 18th century, and the second between 2008 and 2013.

The scientists found that new cases of dementia had dropped from 20.1 a year in every 1,000 people in the first study conducted in the early 1990s to 17.7 in the second, which looked at new cases between 2008 and 2013. When sex and age differences were taken into account, the dementia rates were found to have dropped by 20%.

The trend emerges from a dramatic drop in new cases for men across all age groups. In the 1990s study, for every 1,000 men aged 70-74, 12.9 went on to develop dementia within a year. In the second study, 20 years later, that figure had dropped to only 8.7 men. For men aged 65-69 the rate of new cases had more than halved between the two studies.

The situation for women was more complex: while those aged 80-84 showed a small rise in rates between the two studies, other age groups saw a slight drop.

The researchers did not delve into the reasons behind the overall fall in dementia rates, or the differences between men and women, but they suggest a complex mix of

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CAPTION

Captions give a description of a photograph or graphic. Often they include the photographer's name. **Hot, from the tap. Boiling water. Safe to handle. All from a cold feed.**



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