

Racism and inequalities in medicine

Recent events internationally and in the UK have brought these issues to the fore. We empathise with their impact and continue to affirm that hate in all forms is unacceptable.

Discrimination or harassment of individuals or groups based on race, religion, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, nationality, or any other identity is intolerable and has no place in our society. Antisemitism has no place in our society. As the UK's union and professional body for doctors we represent more than 160,000 doctors and medical students, all of whom are racially and culturally diverse.

Recent events internationally and in the UK have brought to the fore how differences in ethnicity, faith and culture can be used as a justification for hate and violence. Shameful acts of antisemitism and incitements to violence against Jewish people witnessed in recent days, on the streets of the UK and on social media, run contrary to a key ethical principle for doctors to do no harm. Antisemitism and racial discrimination harms people and harms communities. We empathise with the negative impact these events have had on our Jewish members.

Therefore, we have and will continue to affirm that hate in all forms is unacceptable. Whether by doctors or towards doctors; from patients, other doctors, or any healthcare professional.

Racism as a concept is complex, but it is essential that we acknowledge it does include the intersection between gender, race, colour, ethnicity and faith – and that there are unique differences between the manifestation and impact of colour-based racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia and cultural discrimination.

We advocate for equality for doctors in the places where they work and train, and we know a workplace culture that is caring, supportive and collaborative is paramount to ensuring fair outcomes for everyone in the health sector. To that end professionalism for doctors extends past their interactions in the workplace and into wider society, and how we hold ourselves in all parts of our lives, including our personal interactions and our presence on social media.

Antisemitism and any form of racial discrimination is unacceptable and to maintain the trust of our patients and colleagues, the BMA affirms that we cannot achieve equality for some without equality for all.