

ACADEMY OF MEDICAL ROYAL COLLEGES

STATEMENT: New BMJ research into NHS hospital death rates at the weekend.

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The BMJ's analysis of the higher risk of death for patients admitted to NHS hospitals at weekends confirms previous research and underpins the Academy's case for seven day services and seven day consultant delivered care in NHS hospitals.

There is clearly a 'weekend effect' with patients admitted on a Saturday or Sunday being more likely to die than those who are admitted during the week. While the reasons for this may be complex, the fact remains that the phenomenon is simply not acceptable and must be addressed urgently.

With the analysis showing that patients admitted at weekends are likely to be sicker, the Academy argues that this in fact strengthens the case for appropriate consultants and support staff to be present in hospitals at weekends, as well as weekdays. This does not mean seven day working for staff – it does mean seven day service in NHS hospitals.

The Academy began its analysis of the value of consultant delivered care, with a report issued in January 2012. This showed unequivocally that outcomes are improved if consultants lead the care because patients have access to rapid diagnosis and quicker decision making. Later that year, the Academy continued the work with a report on the value of seven day consultant led care. This showed that while quality of care is obviously not simply about the number of doctors present, there would be significant benefits across the whole healthcare system if standards of weekend care matched those of weekday care. A subsequent report in December 2013 set out how seven day consultant led care should be implemented. Professor Terence Stephenson, the then Chair of the Academy and Professor Norman Williams, the former president of the Royal College of Surgeons led this valuable work.

Professor Dame Sue Bailey OBE, Chair of the Academy, said, *'The BMJ's findings underscore what has been known, but seemingly ignored for too long. People don't stop getting sick at weekends and this means that the appropriate doctor and support staff should be available to care for them whatever day of the week it is. This will obviously require some careful planning locally and will have resource implications for the NHS, but the quicker we can move towards proper seven day service, the better.'*
ENDS.....

For more information and interview bids for Professor Dame Sue Bailey contact Max Prangnell – communications director on 0773 436 1055 or 0207 490 6810 or email max.prangnell@aomrc.org.uk

The Academy's reports can be found [here](#).