Cross Board Collaboration in Disciplinary Matters
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Regulation of Professionals in Irish Health Sector
• Structure of sector - 5 regulators
  • Medical Council, Nursing and Midwifery Board, Dental Council, Pharmaceutical Society, Health and Social Care Professionals Council
• Separate legislation governing each
  • Recent reform
    • Non professional majorities
    • Public inquiries
• Broadly similar disciplinary regimes with some significant differences
  • examples

Complaints Process
• Receipt and screening of complaints
• Options where further action required
• Disciplinary Inquiry
• Imposition of sanction by Council/ Board
• Oversight of process
• What’s wrong?
Problems

- Inconsistent decision making
  - Same adverse event addressed in isolation
  - Inconsistent legislation
  - Different panels making decisions

- Inadequate learning and risk assessment

- Consequences
  - Potentially unfair outcomes
  - Does not reflect multidisciplinary nature of healthcare
  - Lost confidence of public

Costs

- Inefficiencies in process
- Duplication of resources
- Significant legal costs

Potential Solutions

- Immediate and without legislative reform
  - Common panel members, joint training, information sharing, joint guidance, collective competence frameworks, alternative management of health issues

- Amendment of existing legislation
  - Introduce efficiencies, harmonise concepts and processes

- Single legislative code
  - Combined code of conduct, universal disciplinary regime
Potential Solutions contd

- Single independent disciplinary tribunal
  - Conducts all inquiries into healthcare practitioners
  - Pros and cons
- Health professionals complaints authority
  - Deal with all complaints from receipt to sanction, investigation powers
  - Single inquiry for all professionals in single adverse event
  - Can monitor concerns, patterns of behaviour across sector
  - What role for regulator?

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