Child Protection Peer Review: what help is there for a paediatric registrar?

There has been a lot of escalating attention to safeguarding training in the last few years and the GMC, RCPCH and Home Office have made Child Protection training a compulsory requirement for paediatric trainees. In spite of this, starting as a new registrar we very often find ourselves ‘supervised’ but still very isolated in this particularly challenging field of work.

Peer review and clinical supervision are part of the clinical governance framework to which all doctors must comply. The main purpose of Child Protection Peer Review is to develop a pro-active culture of learning about the process, diagnosis and management and to support doctors who are doing child protection work. These sessions are an excellent training opportunity for paediatric registrars.

The Peer Review process involves presenting cases that you have been involved with. Knowing I would be doing this encouraged me to review the literature and search for the best evidence - so even prior to the Peer Review process it had already encouraged my own learning. It is a good opportunity to present a patient in front of a group of more experienced colleagues and feedback is given there and then. Peer review is a form of reflective practice that has afforded me the opportunity to learn from my own experience as well as to develop my expertise. The copy of Peer Review documentation (omitting patient details of course) can be easily transferred to e-portfolio and/or if the trainee wishes it can also be easily used for a Case Based Discussion as well.

Safeguarding is certainly a hot topic in the media and a few high profile cases in recent years have showed that paediatricians can be very vulnerable. Some doctors are reluctant to get involved in Child Protection and therefore trainees may feel unsupported and isolated undertaking this sort of work. The PR process provides professional support and decreases isolation.

Child Protection is a particularly stressful area of paediatric practice, especially for a junior doctor. Peer Review Meetings have provided a forum for de-briefing following particularly difficult and stressful cases. Peer Review is always a good place to discuss other relevant child protection news and publications too.

I feel that Peer Review is an important tool that should be universally available because of its excellent training and support and opportunities for reflection.

*This article was written by Dr Natalia Cartledge, a ST6 at Hounslow and Richmond NHS Trust and originally appeared in BACCH News*