



Perceptions and experiences of psychosocial mentoring amongst paediatric postgraduate trainees:
A gender-focused, mixed-methods study

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PAEDIATRIC SPR / NUIG

The need for psychosocial mentoring in modern-day clinical medicine

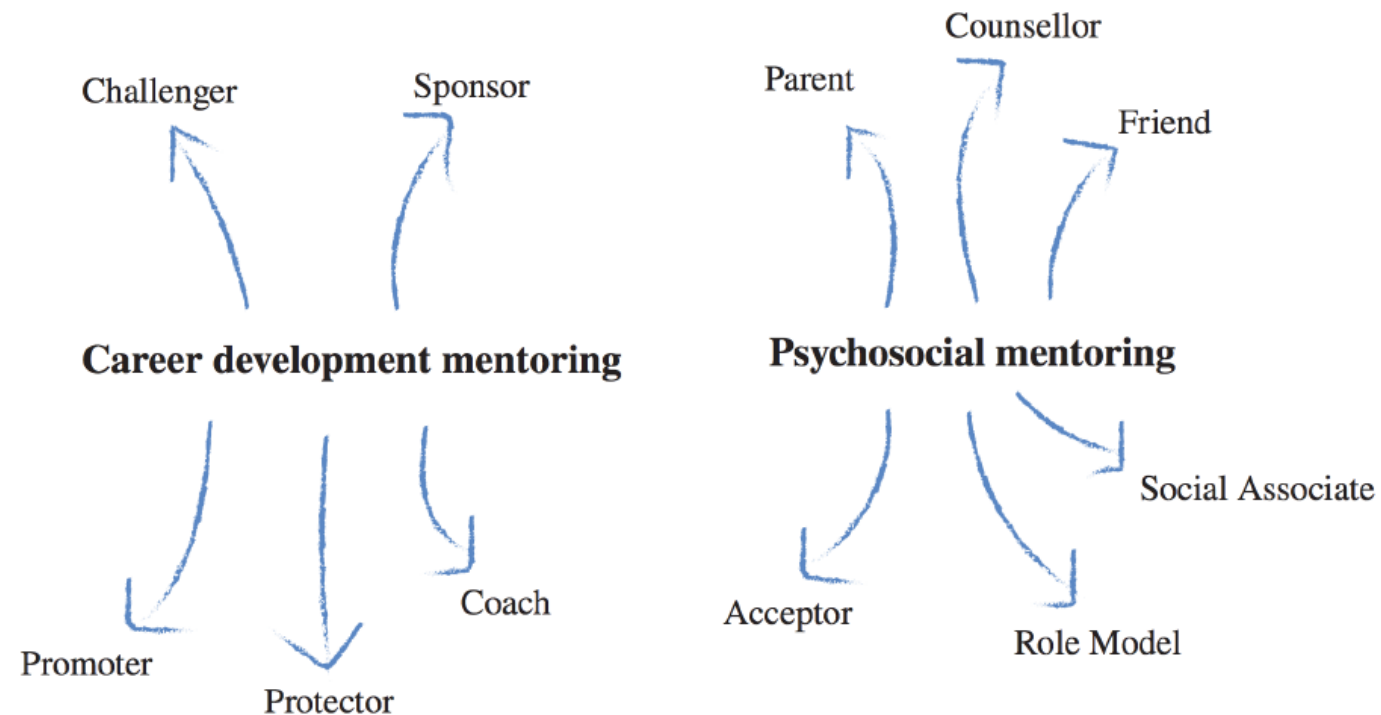


Fig. 1: The domains of mentoring (Kram, 1985) and proposed roles within these domains (Ragins, 1990)

The need for psychosocial mentoring in modern-day clinical medicine

- **Personal issues and lifestyle factors** are increasingly important to today's medical trainees ^(1,2)
- As trainees pay more attention to the **personal spheres of their lives**, so too should mentoring
- Modern-day successful mentoring needs to **traverse the personal-professional interface** ^(3,4)
- **Psychosocial mentoring** is perfectly poised to facilitate this

Knowledge gaps and the gender question

- Relationship between **gender** and psychosocial mentoring especially contentious
- Literature divided on several questions...
 - Do male and female trainees *differentially experience* psychosocial mentoring?
 - Do male and female trainees *differentially require* psychosocial mentoring?
 - Does *gender composition* of the psychosocial mentoring relationship matter?

Study aim

- We asked the question...

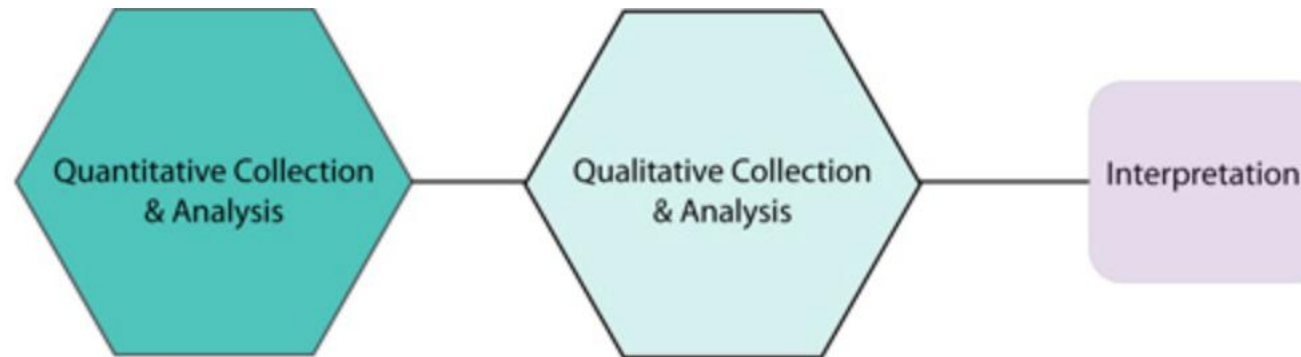
“What are trainees’ perceptions and lived experiences of psychosocial mentoring within postgraduate paediatric training?”

..through a gender-focused lens

- To better understand the **processes, underlying structures** and **key mediators** of psychosocial mentoring so that we can effectively incorporate it into modern-day mentoring programmes

Methodology

- Critical realism → allows methodological pluralism
- Mixed-methods – explanatory sequential design



- RCPI paediatric trainees (HST & BST)
- Consent from Temple St Ethics Committee

Questionnaire

- Sociodemographic variables – gender, formality, structure of mentoring relationship
- Ragins and McFarlin Mentor Role Instrument (1990)
 - Psychosocial mentoring: 18 items, 6 domains
 - Career development mentoring: 15 items, 5 domains
- SPSS v.23 for descriptive and inferential statistical tests

Please indicate on a scale from 1-7 the extent to which you believe your mentor provides the following roles:
(1= I do not agree at all with this statement, 7= I fully agree with this statement)

Psychosocial mentoring functions

My mentor:

Is someone I can confide in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Provides support and encouragement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Is someone I can trust	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Has one-on-one social interactions with me outside work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Socialises one on one with me outside work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gets together with me informally after work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reminds me of my parents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Is like a father or mother to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Treats me like a son or daughter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Serves as a role model	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Interviews

- Semi-structured interviews
- Phenomenological
- Focused on descriptions of lived experiences of psychosocial mentoring
- NVivo v.11.2.2 (QRS)
- Colaizzi's method of descriptive phenomenological analysis

→ Triangulation & overall meaning extrapolated

Results – Questionnaire

- RMMRI: Cronbach's α of 0.94 for both mentoring domains → strong internal consistency
- 81 trainees in 14 Irish hospitals (RR 46%)

Table 3: Characteristics and response rates of study sample

	BST		HST		Total	
	<i>n (%)</i> *	<i>RR (%)</i> **	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>RR (%)</i>	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>RR (%)</i>
Male	12 (14.8)	52.2	8 (9.9)	30.8	20 (24.7)	40.8
Female	28 (34.6)	54.9	33 (40.7)	43.4	61 (75.3)	48.0
Total	40 (49.4)	54.1	41 (50.6)	40.2	81 (100)	46.0

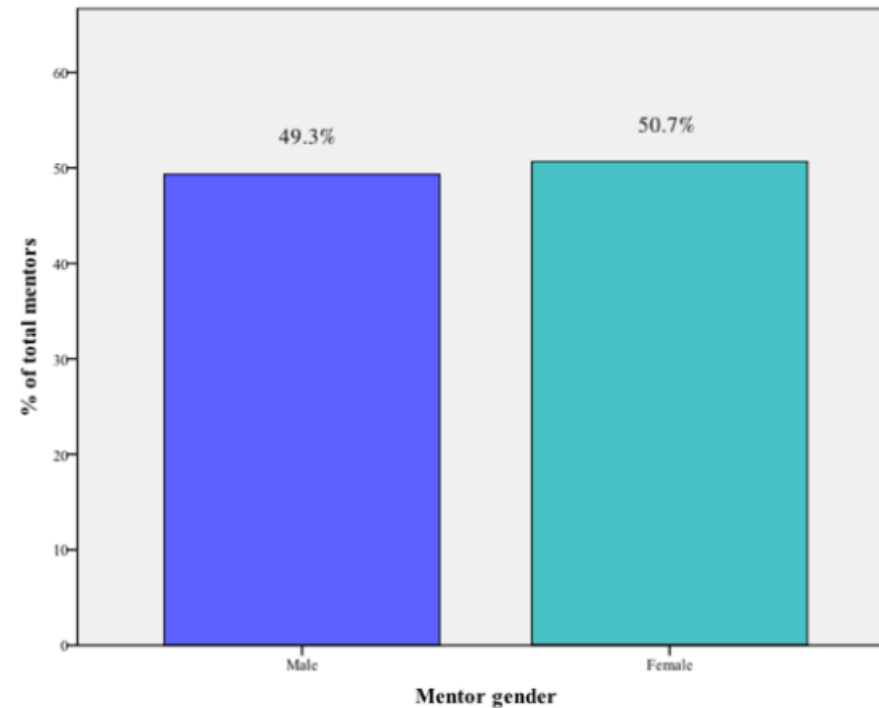
* *n (%)* = Number of respondents (% of total respondents)

** *RR (%)* = Response rate within sampling frame subgroup

Results – Questionnaire

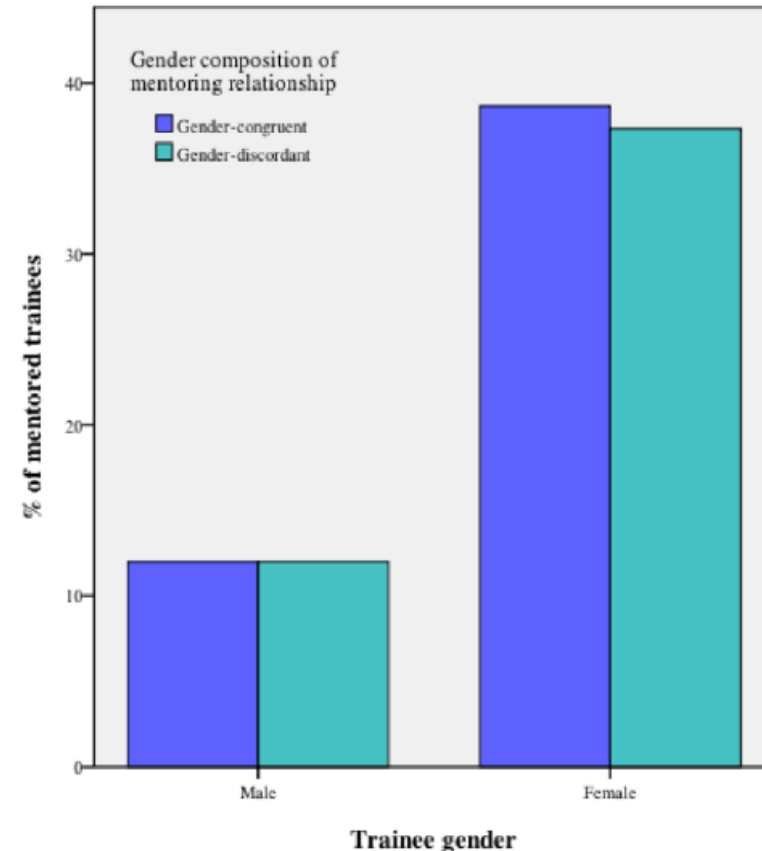
- 92.6% (n=75) of trainees identified a mentor
- Male and female trainees were equally likely to report having a mentor ($\chi^2(1, N=81)=0.26$, $p=0.61$)
- This mentor was equally likely to be male or female ($\chi^2(2, N=75) 0.13$, $p=0.91$)

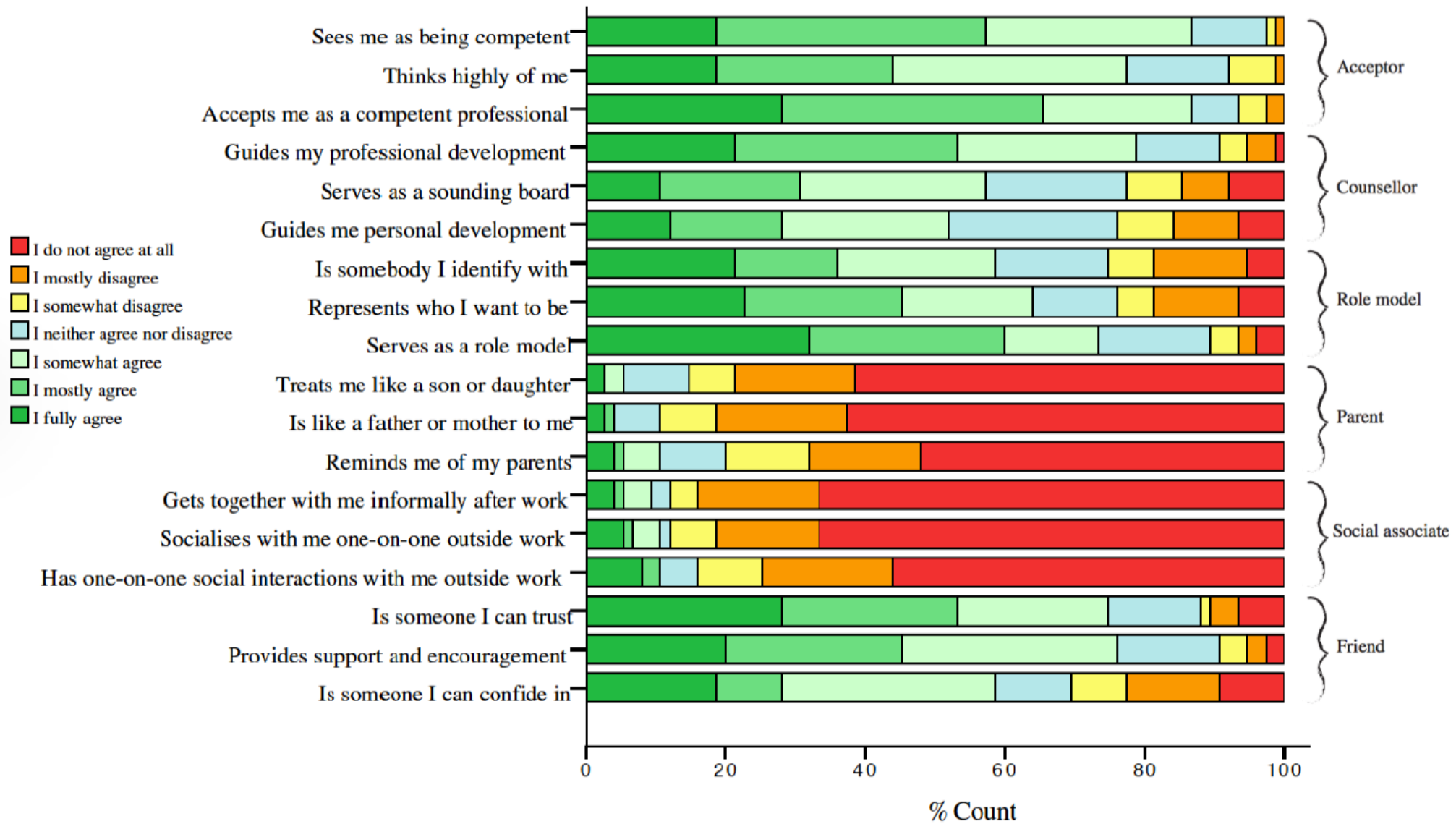
Graph 1: Mentor gender distribution



Results – Questionnaire

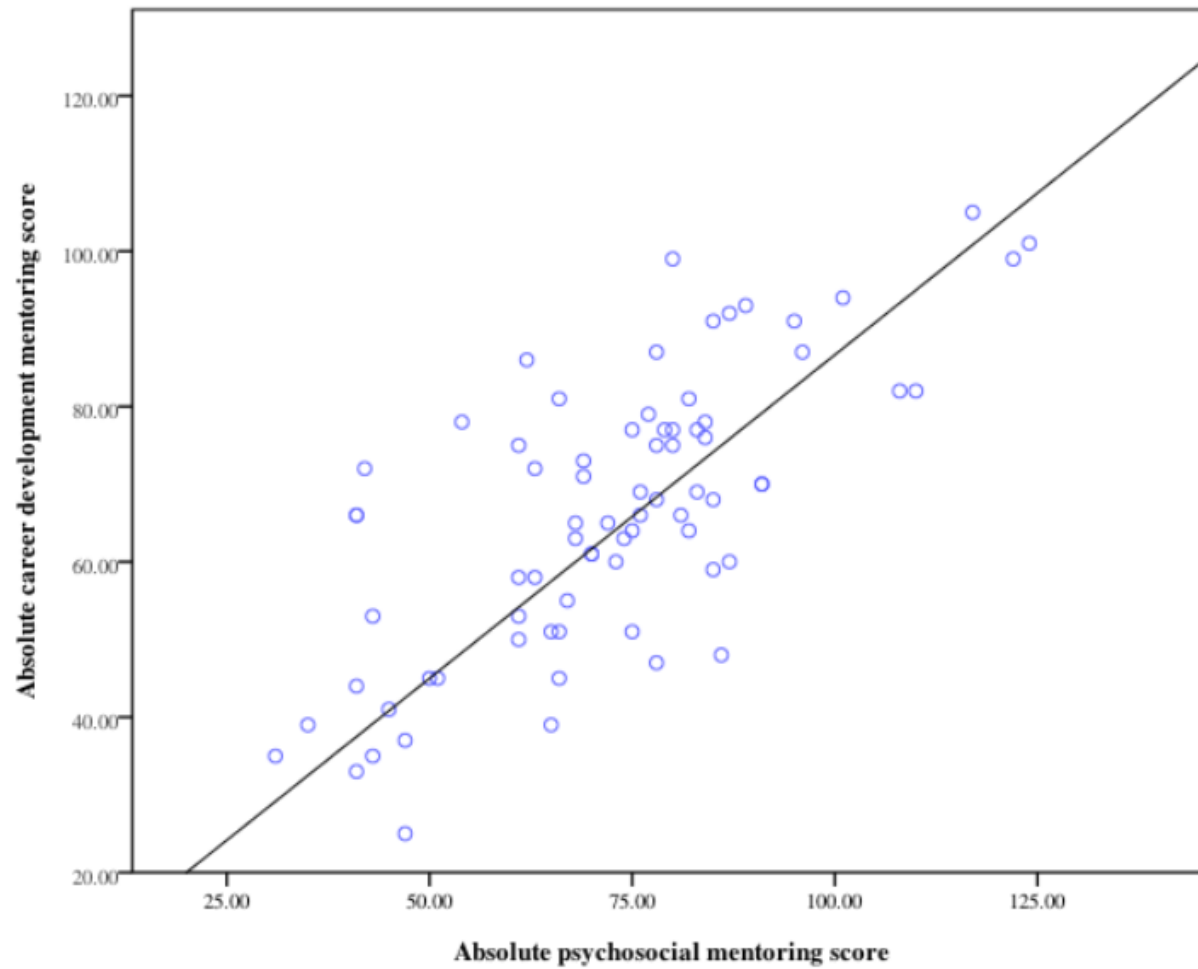
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- This mentor was equally likely to be male or female ($\chi^2(2, N=75)=0.13$, $p=0.91$)
- Male and female trainees were equally likely to be in gender-congruent or gender-discordant mentoring relationships ($\chi^2(1, N=75)=0.004$, $p=0.95$)
- Mentors were more likely to be consultants than peer NCHDs ($\chi^2(2, N=75)=49.6$, $p<0.005$)





Graph 4: Trainees' responses to individual psychosocial mentoring roles on the RMMRI

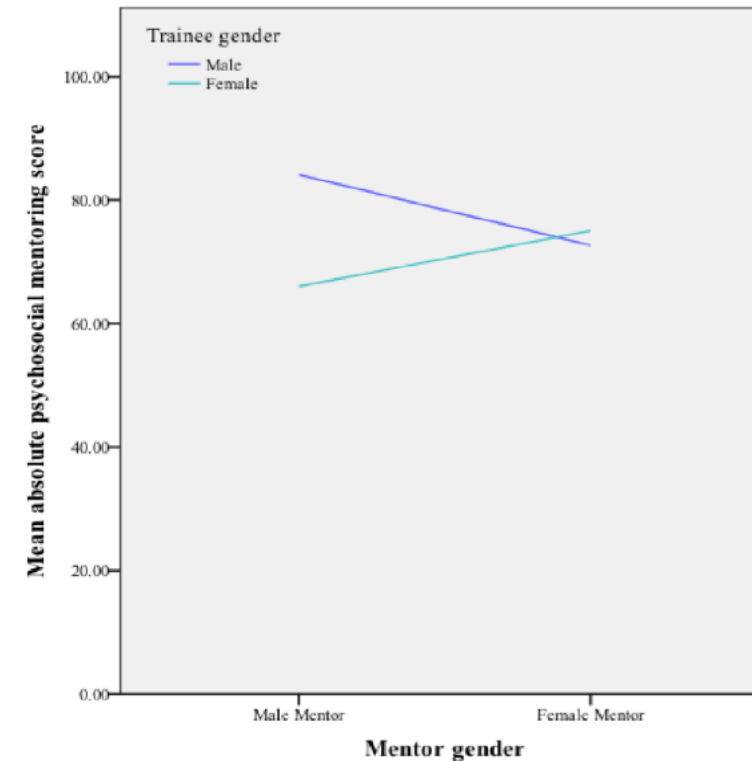
Graph 3: Positive correlations between career development and psychosocial mentoring scores



Results – Questionnaire

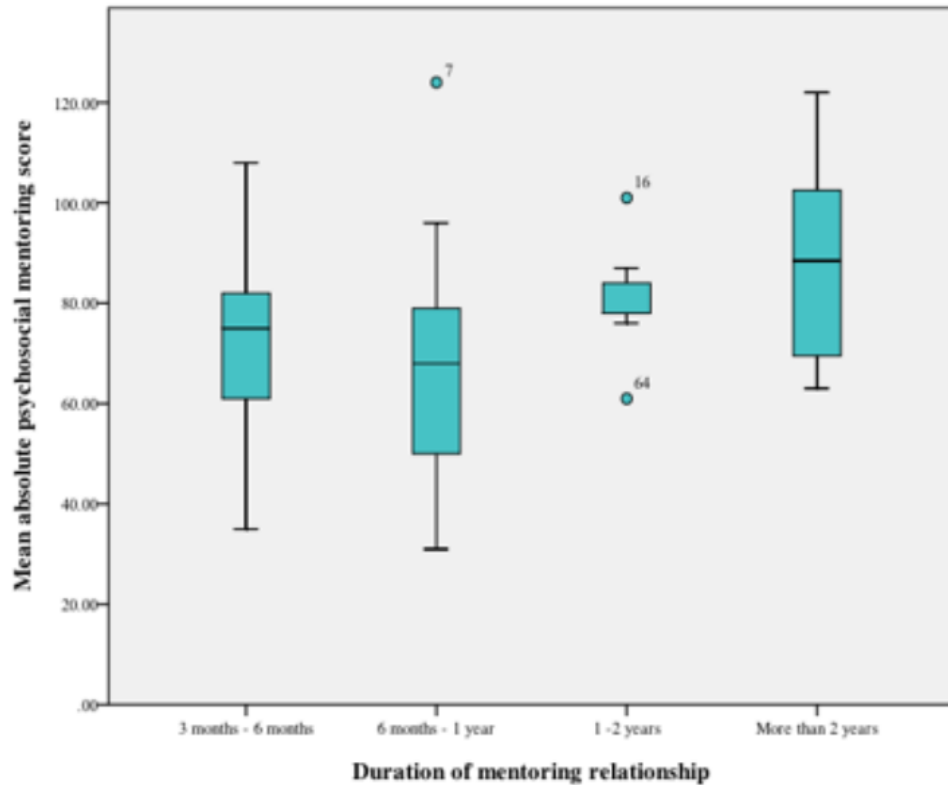
- Trainees in gender-congruent mentoring relationships reported **significantly higher mean psychosocial mentoring scores** ($\mu=77.2$, $SD=23.3$) than trainees in gender-discordant relationships ($\mu=67.6$, $SD=14.2$), ($t(61,41)=2.15$, $p=0.035$, $d=0.50$)

Graph 5: The interplay of mentor gender, trainee gender, and psychosocial mentoring scores

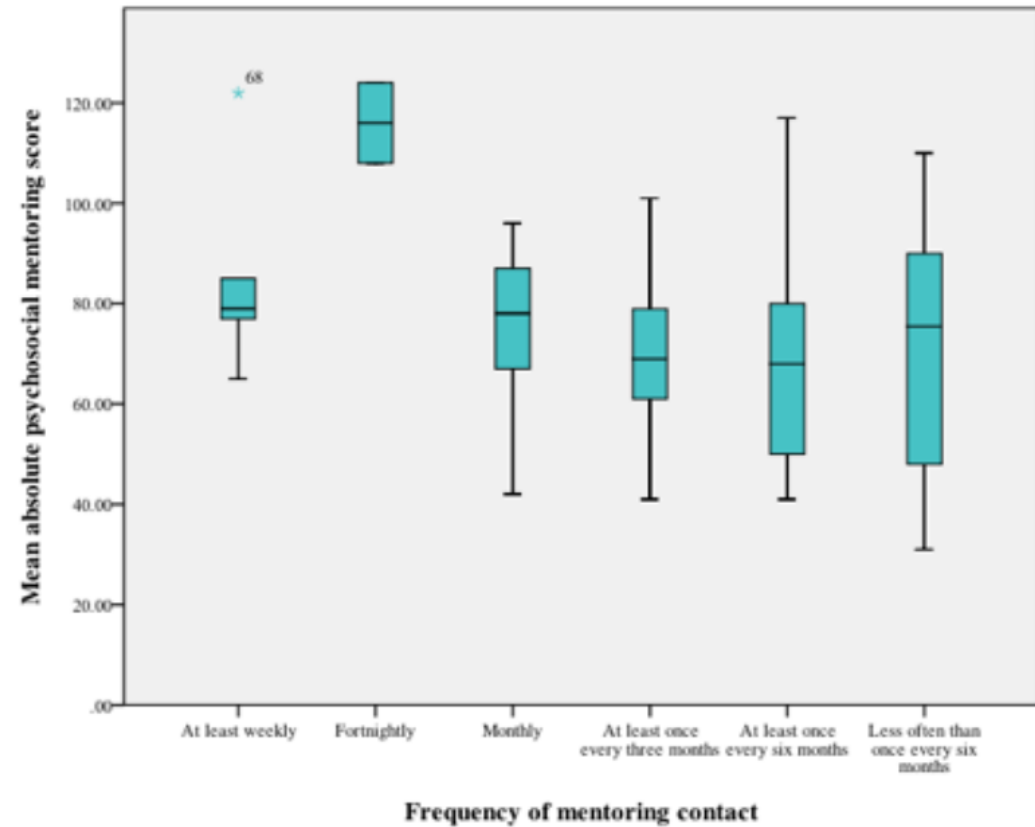


Results – Questionnaire

Graph 6: Effect of duration of mentoring relationship on psychosocial mentoring scores



Graph 7: Effect of frequency of mentoring contact on psychosocial mentoring scores



Results – Interviews

- Interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of 8 participants.
- Exploring trainees' lived experiences of psychosocial mentoring revealed several key shared meanings of the phenomenon, encapsulated within **four central themes**:
 1. Interpersonal comfort
 2. The transition to a psychosocial mentoring relationship
 3. Seeing the bigger picture
 4. Enduring meanings of psychosocial mentoring experiences

“Like you kind of find them yourself. It’s a very personal, natural thing. If something was thrust upon me ... “here’s your personal mentor, sit down together at five o’ clock”, and you sat down at five o’clock, it’d all be a bit forced, a bit pushed.” [NR]

“She made me realise that there are people who really can love their jobs. I could be one of them.”
[EI]

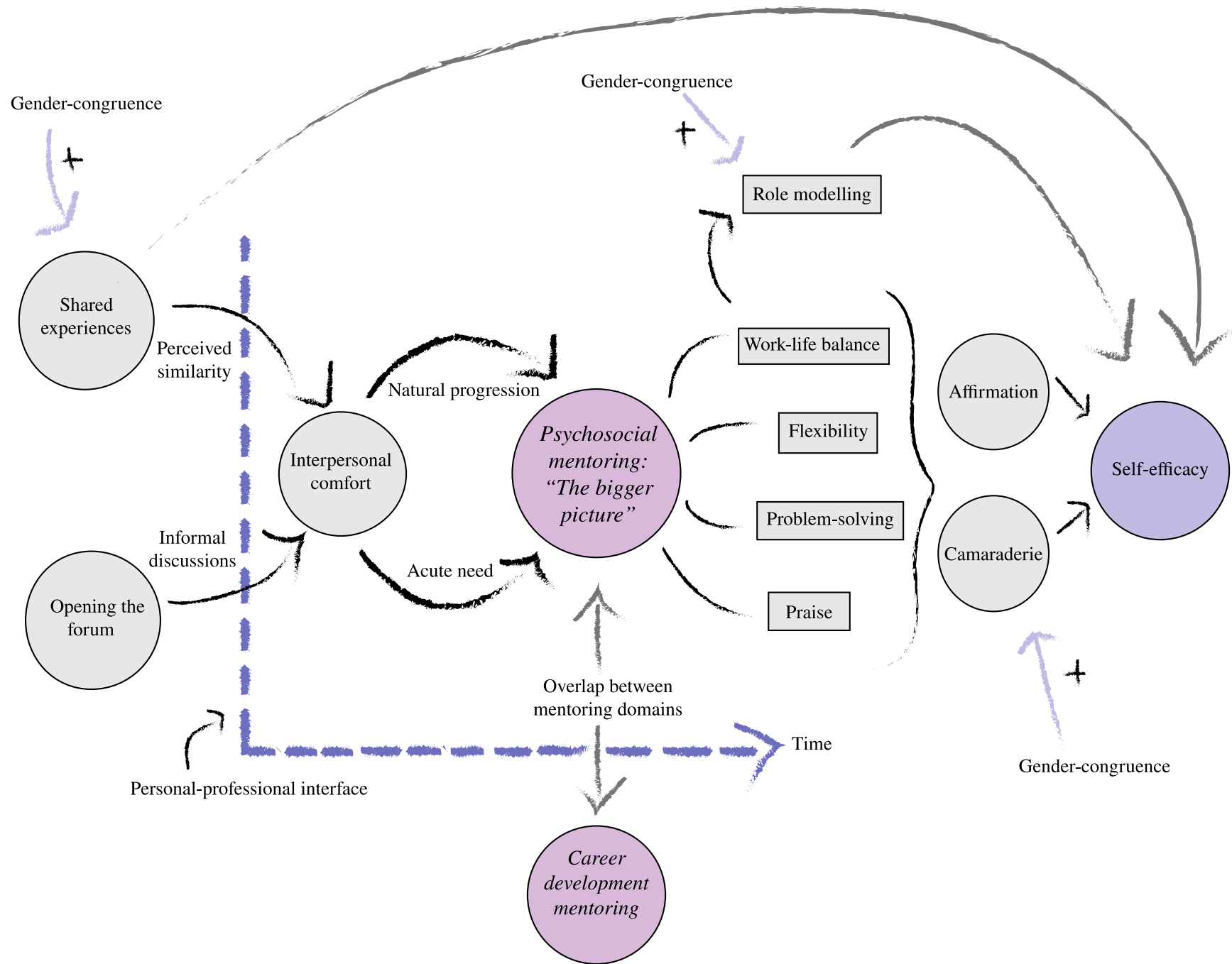
“Because I was upset, she stepped up to that role.. but maybe it would’ve been nice for her to have had that role from the beginning. It’s not nice, when you’re upset, for that to be the time that you initiate something.” [EI]

“And wow did I appreciate him saying all that, because it made it clear “oh, he is grateful”, I actually am doing a good job, I am good at this. I did need to hear that. Cause at that time I really felt I wasn’t.” [ER]

“Look, as a woman you’re meant to be there at home... you’re “meant” to be there...you feel like you have this maternal role you should be fulfilling...organising your house, raising your kids. When you’re not doing that, it’s nice to have someone on your side who has been there.” [IA]

“The nicest thing she said in her email back was “congratulations”. She was just like well the most important thing is that you’re having your first baby, just stop and enjoy that. (Significant pause)
Others told me to keep my pregnancy quiet.” [GH]

“Yeah it was a difficult time and yeah I wondered about staying in paediatrics...but she really encouraged me to stay, told me you know your children won’t be this young forever. She made me realize – yeah things will get better. She was just like plough on, keep going, you’re okay.” [HT]



Discussion

- Insight into origins, functions, and meanings of psychosocial mentoring experiences
- Gender congruence enhanced psychosocial mentoring experiences, particularly in female-female psychosocial mentoring relationships
- More similarities than differences in the ways male and female trainees experience psychosocial mentoring → possible to extrapolate an essential structure
- Shift in contemporary psychosocial mentoring roles → RMMRI outdated
- Developers should aim to facilitate the development of psychosocial mentoring relationships by arranging opportunities for trainees to relate to seniors in relaxed, informal environments
- Existing mentors should be aware that trainees welcome discussion on both personal and professional aspects of their career development

Big thank you to...

- Prof Walter Cullen, UCD
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- ...and all the RCPI trainees who completed my survey – cheers!