



MEDIA RELEASE

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Medical Schools 5 Year Trend Data

Five year trend data from an annual survey of medical students highlights the challenge in addressing a key issue for the Australian health system - the concentration of doctors in major cities said Professor Nicholas Glasgow, President, Medical Deans, Australia and New Zealand.

From 2010 to 2014, Medical Deans has conducted the Medical Students Outcome Database Survey (MSOD). The Medical Schools Outcomes Database National Data Report 2015 provides the findings of the surveys of over 12 700 final year Australian medical students.

The Report finds in 2014 nearly 76% of graduating domestic students reported living in capital cities, which is a significant increase from 2010 when 67% of graduating students reported living in capital cities.

“Exposure to a rural lifestyle whether through a student’s own background or extended training in a rural or regional setting is shown to have a positive impact on medical professionals practicing in rural and remote areas.” Professor Glasgow said.

“Access to regionally based prevocational and specialist training pathways are also critical to increasing the number of doctors in country regions.

Despite the growth in medical practitioners in Australia in recent years, the concentration continues, with major cities taking up three quarters of the growth in doctor numbers between 2007 and 2012.”

This study shows that when asked about first preferred region of future practice, the majority of graduates across all years chose an urban location.

Professor Glasgow said that Medical Deans are keen to work with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and other stakeholders to expand regionally based training pathways from medical school to prevocational training and specialist training.

The Medical Students Outcome Database survey is a valuable tool for medical workforce development and planning. These exit surveys have achieved a very high response rate with over 82% of all graduate students participating in their final year of medical school.

In addition to rurality, the Report also looks at preferences for future practice, levels of satisfaction with medical programs and partnered status of students.

The five year trend report shows that the top three intended areas of future practice across all years were Adult Medicine/Internal Medicine/Physician Medicine, Surgery and General Practice. General Practice as a first preference has increased from 12.3% in 2010 to 16.1% in 2014.

It also shows that 78% of graduates were satisfied or very satisfied with their medical programs at their universities and there has been an increase in the number of medical students who consider themselves partnered from 34.6% in 2010 to 48.3% in 2014.

The MSOD and Data Linkage Project is funded by the Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Health. The Medical Schools Outcomes Database National Data Report 2015 was prepared with the assistance of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. It is available at: <http://www.medicaldeans.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Medical-Students-Workforce-Survey-Report-FINAL-14102015.pdf>

More Information: CEO - Carmel Tebbutt, 0437 476 267
 President Professor - Nicholas Glasgow, 02 8084 6557