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IMWC Conference, November 2005

Career decision making by Australian postgraduate doctors

factors influencing:

- choice of specialty
- workforce participation
- type of medical work; and
- location of medical work

- **first detailed study of its kind in Australia**

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Answers To

- **Choice of specialty:**
 - influential intrinsic and extrinsic determinants
 - stage of career when decision made
 - satisfaction with, and workforce participation
- **Learning and work environments**
 - satisfaction with, and workforce participation
- **Long-term plans re urban or rural practice**
 - determinants of choice of location

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Intrinsic and extrinsic determinants of choice of specialty

Intrinsic

Perceived:

- personal attributes
- barriers
- opportunities, and

Personal preferences

Extrinsic

Actions of:

- significant others
- training programs
- employing organisations

Greater opportunity for governments, health authorities and the medical profession to influence the extrinsic determinants than the intrinsic determinants



AMWAC's medical careers surveys

- **2002** – Wave 1 survey - 54 percent response (4295/7906)
 - 92% agreed to participate in longitudinal study
- **2004** – Wave 2 survey of 2002 cohort - 71 percent response
(2817/3946)
- **2004** – snapshot survey of recent entrants - 57 percent response
(1712/3075)



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Background characteristics 2004

Wave 2 and recent entrants

	Wave 2 (n=2817)	Recent entrants (n=1724)
Average age	34.5 years	33.1 years
Female	51%	50%
Married/partnered	76%	65%
Dependent children	84%	30%
Graduated basic degree before 1998	75%	31%
International Medical Graduates	13%	22%
Education/training debt >\$10,000	19%	46%
Rural background	24%	21%

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Career status 2004

Wave 2 and recent entrants

	Wave 2 (n=2817)	Recent entrants (n=1724)
Completed training and practising	33%	-
Completed training/taking a break	2%	-
In vocational training and practising	59%	96%
In vocational training/taking a break	4%	-
Left training without completing	1.4%	-
Left medicine altogether	0.6%	0.4%
General practice	17.5%	31.5%

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Specialty 2004

Wave 2 and recent entrants

	Wave 2 (n=2817)	Recent entrants (n=1724)
General practice	17.5	31.5
Adult medicine	15.8	11.0
Surgery	13.5	10.0
Anaesthesia	11.0	7.0
Emergency medicine	10.0	9.0
Psychiatry	9.0	6.0
10 other specialties	16.0	22.5

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Determinants of choice of specialty

2004 snapshot of recent entrants

Intrinsic

1. Appraisal of own skills and aptitudes
2. Intellectual content of the specialty
3. Interest in helping people
4. Appraisal of own domestic circumstances

Extrinsic

1. Work culture typical of specialty
2. Opportunity to work flexible hours
3. Hours of work typical of specialty
4. Work experience since graduation
5. Type of patients typical of specialty
6. Opportunity to do procedural work
7. Influence of consultant/mentors

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Variation in determinants of choice of discipline

Of importance to women:

- Hours of work typical of the discipline
- Opportunity to work flexible hours
- Appraisal of own domestic circumstances

Of importance to men:

- Opportunity for procedural work
- Perceived prestige of the discipline
- Perceived financial and career advancement prospects

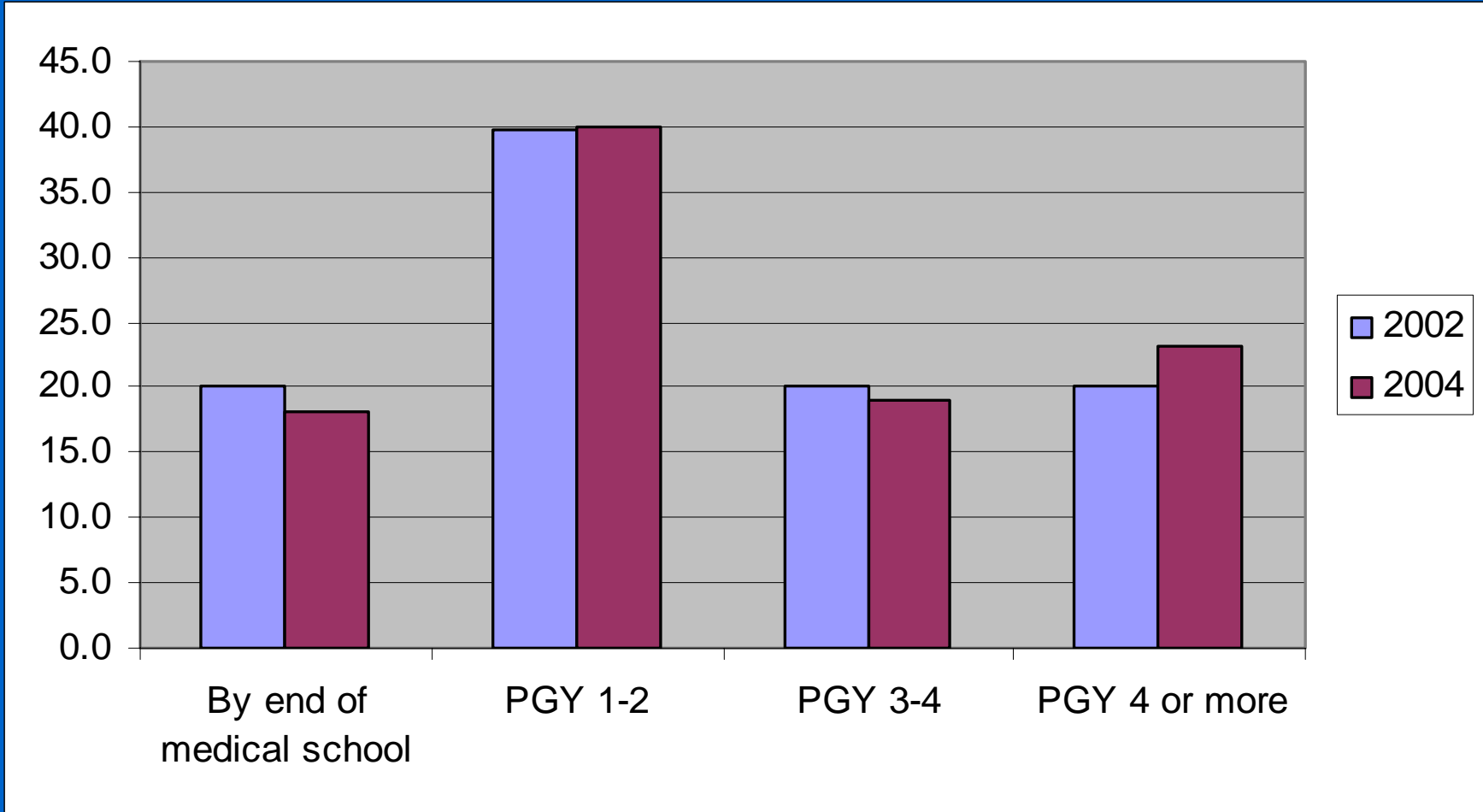
Of importance to general practitioners:

- Hours of work typical of the discipline
- Opportunity to work flexible hours
- Cost of training
- Number of years to complete training

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Stage of career when chose specialty

2002 snapshot and 2004 snapshot of doctors in vocational training



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Satisfaction with choice of specialty- Wave 2 survey respondents

- 87% were satisfied with their choice of specialty
- 8% had changed specialty between 2002 and 2004
- Between 2002 and 2004, satisfaction in 2002 was a predictor of the decision to:
 - continue in, or change specialty;
 - leave the training program without completing it;
 - take a break from training;
 - leave medicine altogether.

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Satisfaction with choice of specialty- recent entrants 2004

- 88% were in their preferred specialty

Reasons for not pursuing first choice discipline included:

- family commitments
- lifestyle concerns
- lack of availability of training positions
- expected work load, and
- working conditions.

- 85% were satisfied with their choice of specialty

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Learning and working environment – Wave 2 doctors in vocational training

(n=1660)	2004	2002
Percent full time training	86.0	90.0
Percent part-time training (male/female)	5.0/19.0	4.0/14.0
Average hours per week	49.5	52.0
% Working more than 50 hours per week	54.0	57.0
Percent high to very high stress score	52.0	57.0

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Working environment – Doctors working as fully qualified specialists, 2004

n=985	2004	2002
Average hours worked per week	43.0	46.0
Percent full time (male/female)	92.0/62.0	98.0/78.0
Percent high to very high stress	38.0	54.0

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Specialty, by percent part-time training and percent female - Wave 2 respondents, 2004

(n=1660)

	% Part time	% Female
General practice	43.6	64.0
Psychiatry	22.6	54.2
Paediatrics and child health	22.5	66.7
Emergency medicine	18.4	43.7
Obstetrics and gynaecology	10.6	65.4
Adult medicine	6.5	46.2
Anaesthesia	5.2	42.3
Surgery	2.6	20.1

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Most satisfying aspects of vocational learning environment

- the quality and content of the program
- supportive relationships with supervisors, consultants and peers
- a supportive training environment
- the opportunities afforded by the program
- enjoyment gained from doing the program

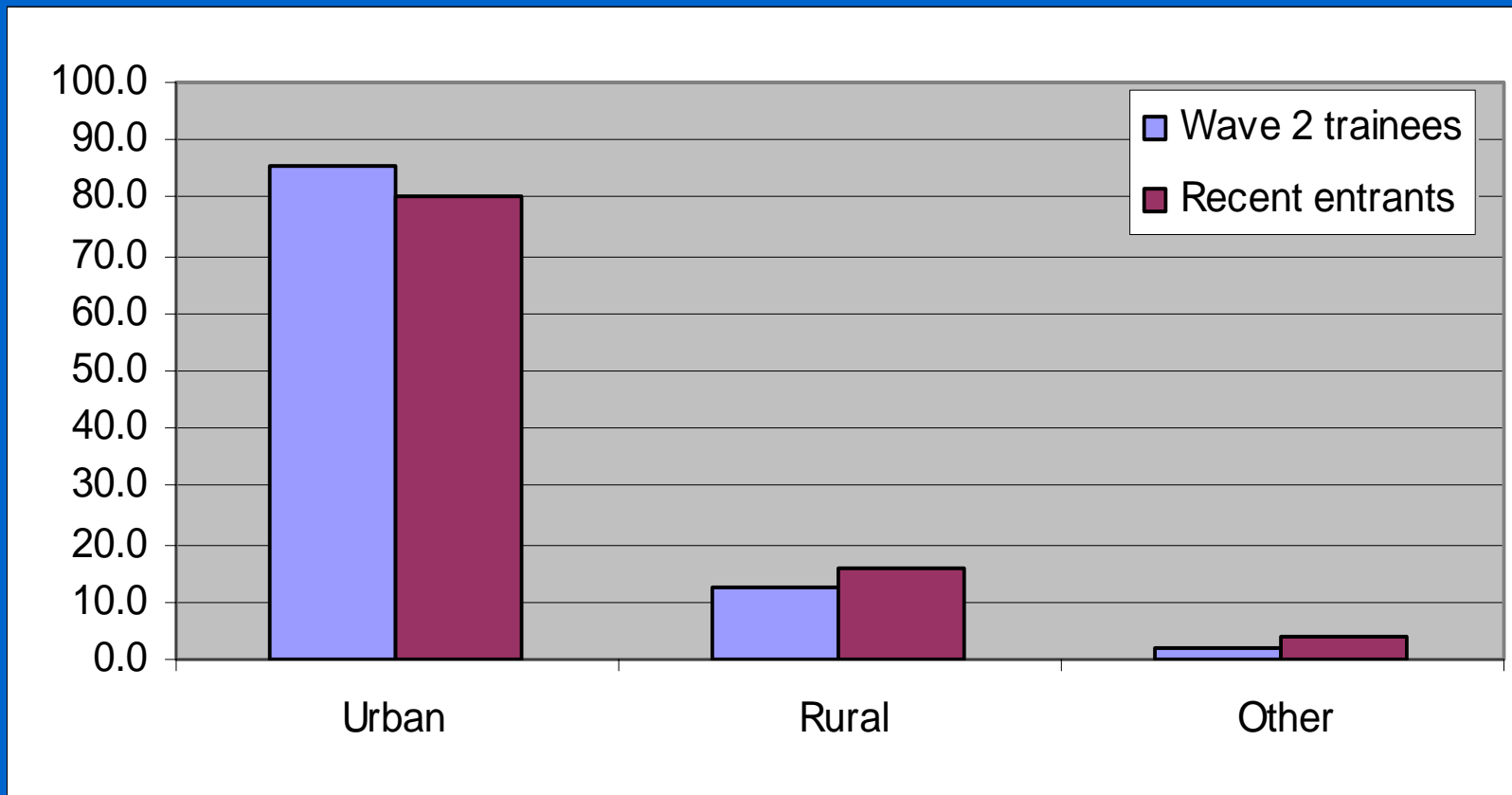
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Dissatisfying aspects of vocational learning environment

- poor quality training, teaching and supervision
- inadequate structures and procedures
- non-supportive relationships with supervisors
- lack of guidance
- rural training requirements
- discrimination
- training costs

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Geographic location plans- Wave 2 trainees and recent entrants, 2004



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Website



National Health Workforce Secretariat

www.healthworkforce.health.nsw.gov.au