

Clarifying recruitment & retention myths and realities: findings from Canada's 2007 National Physician Survey

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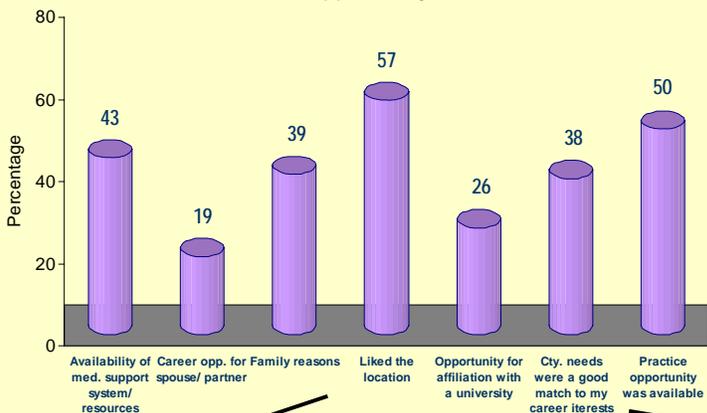
Objective

Recruiting and retaining physicians to their cities and regions is a day-to-day challenge faced by policy planners and health authorities in all countries. Canada's 2007 National Physician Survey (NPS) asked physicians to identify the factors contributing to their choice of practice location. This analysis aims to identify key variations observed in response to this question.

Methodology

Secondary data analysis was conducted using the 2007 National Physician Survey (NPS). The survey was completed by 10,270 family physicians and 8,969 other specialists, representing 32% and 31% of all eligible respondents respectively

The most common reasons identified by Canadian physicians for choosing their practice location were as follows: Liked the location (57%); Practice opportunity was available (50%); and Availability of medical support system/resources (43%)



Conclusion/Discussion

Findings from the NPS validate and quantify the notion that jurisdictions looking to attract upcoming physicians are multi-factorial, including, being able to offer employment opportunities for spouses and possess the social infrastructure that would attract families, given that these are important determinants for new doctors in choosing their practice location. There is almost no difference in the proportion of rural physicians versus urban physicians who say they chose their location because of the opportunity to practice. This would suggest that the availability of work opportunities (or the lack thereof) is *not* significantly impacting on doctors choosing to practice in urban or rural settings.

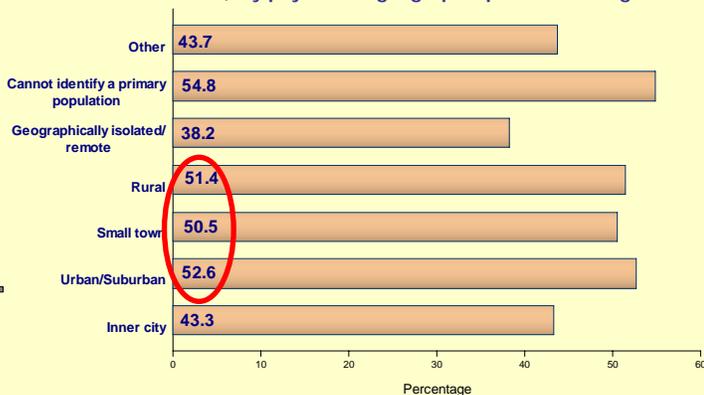
Variations by Age

- Availability of career opportunities for their spouses is key for younger physicians.
- Financial recruitment incentives may play a role (albeit a lesser one) in recruiting some younger physicians. Liking the location where they practice is more important to the upcoming generation of doctors (identified by 64% of those under 35) as compared to older physicians (53% of those over 65).

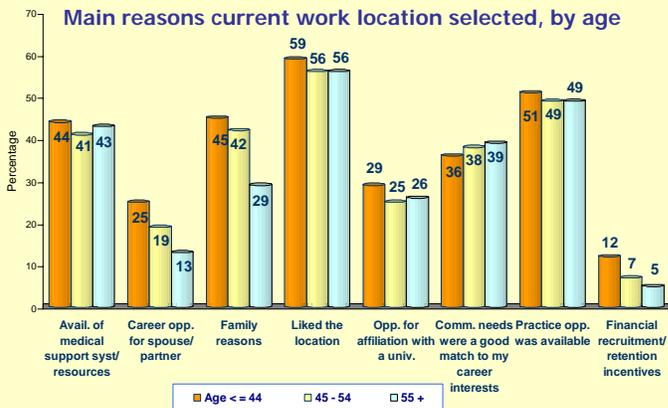
Variations by Geographic Practice Setting

Surprisingly, there is a negligible difference in the percentage of respondents from an urban/suburban practice setting versus a rural setting who say they chose their location because of the availability of a practice opportunity (53% and 51% respectively).

Availability of practice opportunity as a factor in choice of practice location, by physician's geographic practice setting



Main reasons current work location selected, by age



The NPS is a partnership between the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Medical Association and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada



The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
 Le Collège royal des médecins et chirurgiens du Canada

For more information on the NPS, contact D. Fréchette at dfrchette@rcpsc.edu or go to www.nationalphysiciansurvey.ca