Specialty pages

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Career Planning using Workforce Statistics

Medical Careers talked to Mike Wilson, Careers Lead for the Northern Deanery and careers advisor at Newcastle University, about using workforce information to aid career planning.

NB: you can also view our videos on You-Tube.

Using this video Medical Careers is setting out to increase the knowledge, and use of information about trends and forecasts of future staff numbers prepared within the NHS. They are not new and are freely available to users of the site. But from our research we know that they are not widely used.

Mike answers our questions about workforce information. Such as: What are the benefits for me and how reliable and useful is the information? He also tackles the practical issues like: How do I use the data and where can I find it? Mike is not a statistician and his approach is about practical applicaion in career planning. We hope you find the approach of the video helpful.

The recent Collins Report into the Foundation programme also highlighted the importance of workforce statistics in medical career planning and noted:

"The challenge which remains is how best to help trainees to manage their career expectations against realistic opportunities and the needs of the service, while at the same time encouraging them in their overall aspirations. Guidance is required in defining best practice in the provision of careers information and advice, and obtaining key workforce data collated to help trainees to make early and wise decisions regarding their long-term careers"

Workforce statistics is essentially information about areas of medicine that are growing, contracting or remain stable. It should also be borne in mind that a medical career is very much a service driven role. That essentially means that opportunity will be highest in areas that require it. For example there is a great emphasis on primary care at present and this will remain over the coming years. You may already be aware of this but it is worth re-iterating that it is envisaged that over 50% of medical graduates will be required to train as GPs. It is information such as this that is tied up in the broader area that we call workforce statistics. All areas of employment rely on this workforce information and it is sometimes referred to as LMI or Labour Market Information.

The best place to access the reports is on this site in the 'information pages for each specialty' as an example here is the page for General Practice. There is individual data for each specialty. We link to the latest workforce statistics information; they have last been updated by the Centre for Workforce Information in August 2011.

BMJ Articles:

Specialty Training Places - written by Dr Alison Carr, Dr Melanie Jones and Dr Jane Montgomery - December 2010

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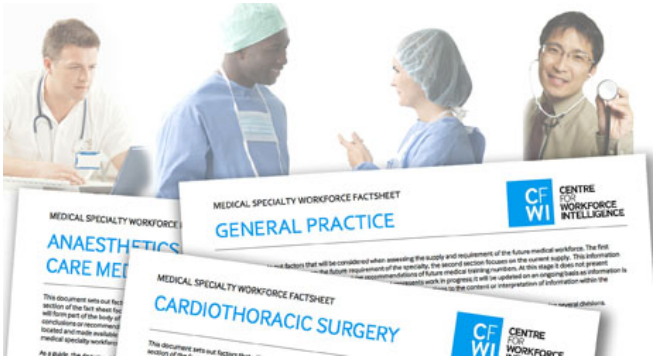
Specialty training at ST1 and CT1 in England -written by Alison Carr, Elaine Sullivan, Steve Buggle, Patricia Hamilton - November 2011



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