

Using Workforce Statistics To Help With Career Planning

The Collins Report which reviewed the Foundation Programme 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”

So what are they?

Workforce statistics will give you valuable trend information about areas of medicine that are growing, contracting or remaining 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 of highest service demand. For example there is a great emphasis on primary care at present and this will remain so 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 in the future. All areas of employment are covered in this workforce information which is also sometimes referred to as Labour Market Information (LMI).

Why look at them?

Using workforce statistics will enable you to analyse such trends in greater detail with the possibility of informing your career choices.

Where can I find them?

First visit <http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/specialty-recruitment/competition-ratios/> to find the competition ratios for previous years.

On the medical careers website there is a workforce statistics page that links to the labour market information produced by the Centre for Workforce Information. See http://www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/specialty_pages/workforce_statistics.aspx for an explanation on how to interpret them or go directly to the Centre for Workforce Intelligence <http://www.cfw.org.uk/>

Another useful resource is this video on how to interpret work force statistics as an aid for career planning on the medical career website at

http://www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/specialty_pages/workforce_statistics/workforce_statistics_video.aspx This video looks at: What are the benefits for you and how reliable and useful is the information on workforce statistics, how you use the data and where you can find it?

There is also an interesting article on workforce statistics <http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=20015362> looking at opportunities to enter specialty training programmes leading to a certificate of completion of training in England, Scotland, and Wales.

A word of warning when interpreting statistics

Do remember that statistics will only be **ONE** aid that might help you to make an informed choice about the next step in your career. You will also need to consider your interests, motivations, values, personality etc.

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