

Key findings

RCPCH MMC Cohort Study (Part 4)

March 2016

Response rate and cohort demographics

1. Overall, 47.5% of the original cohort responded to part 4 of the study, this represents 209 individual respondents. 196 were currently working in the UK and 185 (88.5%) were training in paediatrics, 178 in the UK.
2. Only 37.7% had progressed as far as ST7 or ST8 including 2 who have completed training.
3. 47.7% (83/174) were working full time. 31.0% (54/174) were working less than full time an increase from 21.9% in part 3 of this study. 9.8% (17/174) were on maternity leave and 11.5% (20/174) were out of programme
4. Of 89 trainees who stated that they are undertaking specialty training in grades ST6-8, only 40 (44.9%) said they were doing this on the grid.

Current post and preferences

5. If trainees preferences were realised the proportion of less than full time trainees would rise to 45%.
6. Overall 47.8% of the cohort would like to work less than full time on becoming a trained paediatrician and amongst female trainees this rises to 60.3% (82/136).
7. 73.2% of those who answered are happy with choosing paediatrics as a career and males appear to be happier, with 81.6% (40) compared to 70.3% (102) of females.

Training progress, confidence and support from seniors

8. All community paediatric trainees worked on either general paediatric or neonatal rotas as do the majority of general and neonatal trainees. The specialty where the fewest trainees take part in these rotas paediatric intensive care medicine (1/13).
9. Overall, 79.4% (158) were confident or reasonably confident or obtaining their chosen post on completion of training. Males showed higher levels of confidence with 43.1% compared to only 19.6% of females saying they were confident.
10. Confidence is highest amongst those intending to be paediatricians in community child health (20/21) and lowest among trainees intending to become academic paediatricians of obtaining their chosen post.
11. Between parts 3 and 4 of the study, there has been a noticeable decrease in those who are not confident in obtaining a consultant post from 31.5% to 18.2%, 84.4% of whom (27/32) stated that there were an insufficient number of consultant posts available as a reason for their lack of confidence.

12. Half (91/182) of the trainees felt either totally or very well supported by seniors in their training and development. Only 3.8% who answered felt poorly supported. The results suggest that respondents who are confident or reasonably confident are more likely to feel better supported than those who are not confident.

Access to teaching time

13. 18.1% (33/182) had an hour per week of protected teaching time and 37.9% (69/182) had more than an hour. Since part 3 of the study, the proportion of respondents who stated that they had no protected teaching time has decreased from 43.4% (93/215) in part 3 to 37.8% (68/180). Of those who had protected teaching time, 65.2% were able to attend more than 50%
14. 21.7% (39/180) had one hour and 38.9% (70/180) had more than one hour of other teaching time. Of those who had other teaching time 37.7% were able to attend more than 50%.
15. There appears to be some association between the amount of protected teaching time and a trainee's happiness with choosing paediatrics as a career. 78.3% of those reported to have more than an hour per week and 81.8% of those that have an hour a week are happy with their career choice compared to only 50% who have less than 1 hour per week and 63.2% who have no protected teaching time.

Time out of training

16. Female respondents were more likely to have taken time out of training in the previous 2 years - 59.6% (81/136) in comparison to male respondents 36.4% (16/44). Half of the female trainees' reasons related to parental/maternity leave and 4/19 (21.1%) of males took time out for parental leave.

Geographic preferences

17. Out of the 185 currently in training, 15 (8.1%) stated they would like to work abroad - 10 permanently and 5 temporarily.
18. 75.0% of the cohort says their application for a consultant post will be limited to geographical constraints. Of those reporting constraints 82.7% stated that their partner's spouse's job was fixed to a particular area and 76.7% of respondents stated that they own a house
19. The most common reasons given for geographical constraints in regards to training programme relate to the jobs of the doctors' spouses (86.8%) and home ownership in a particular area (83.7%).

Career and subspecialty intentions

20. The largest proportion of respondents, 90 (46.2%) intend to be general paediatricians, and the percentage of trainees intending to be subspecialty paediatricians has increased from 24.4% in part 1 to 31.0% in part 4
21. The proportion of respondents amongst the whole cohort intending to be community paediatricians has more than doubled since part 1 of the study from 4.2% to 10.7% (21/197) in part 4, but that figure includes no male trainees.
22. In addition to community child health the most popular subspecialties among those who wish to become subspecialists are neonatology (28.3%) and paediatric intensive care medicine (10.0%).
23. When matched against the existing consultant workforce, there is a potential oversupply in those intending to become general paediatricians (7.7%) and a potential shortfall in community paediatricians (-7.0%) if the proportions in the current workforce are to be maintained.

Resident shift working

24. 52.2% of those in training expect to be working resident shifts after they have completed training. Respondents who have worked in a unit where consultants do resident shift work are more likely to expect to do so - 58.5% compared to 48.7% of those who have not worked in such a unit.
25. 69.8% of respondents would be very or reasonably happy to accept an option in which consultants do twilight shifts and weekend working with a move to a phased career option later on in their career.
26. 46.9% of respondents agreed that resident shift working provided better quality service. This rose to 53.7% for respondents who had worked in a unit where consultants participate in resident shift work.
27. 60.9% of respondents felt that in the long term, resident shift working is not sustainable.