

Younger doctors more likely to train and work closer to home

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Younger doctors are more likely than older generations to train and work in the same region as their home before entering medical school. New research published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* investigating the geographical mobility of UK-trained doctors, reveals that 36% attended a medical school in their home region. 34% of hospital consultants and GP partners settled in the same region as their home before entering medical school. The geographical distribution of doctors is an important factor in the equitable distribution of health services.

Trevor Lambert, a statistician from Oxford University who led the research team, said: "Compared with similar data we reported fifteen years ago, the relationships between location of career post and training post, career post and medical school and career post and original family home have strengthened in recent UK cohorts." Lambert believes that this may reflect increasing moves to structure specialist training programmes in non-[teaching hospitals](#) with training relationships with their local medical school.

Lambert explains that the increase in percentages of doctors who stay local may also reflect shorter periods of training such that doctors are less inclined to move to career posts afar from training posts. However he points out that one of the most striking characteristics in the trends was the increased likelihood that doctors from more recent than older cohorts settled, for their first career post, in the broad location of their family home.

"[Career expectations](#) and [practice patterns](#) of younger doctors differ from those of older generations. Younger generations are more likely to take into account the preferences of their spouses than older generations," Lambert says, adding that greater emphasis in recent years on 'work-life balance' may have caused more doctors to stay close to parental family.

"We are already aware that the equity of distribution of [general practitioners](#) in England has fallen since 2002, says Lambert. "Reduced geographical mobility may not be sustainable: doctors have to go where the jobs are."

More information: Geographical movement of doctors from education to training and eventual career post: UK cohort studies, by Michael Goldacre, Jean Davidson, Jenny Maisonneuve and Trevor Lambert, will be published online on Wednesday 13 March 2013 by the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*.

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