

Female physicians found more likely to leave rural practice

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(HealthDay)—Factors associated with physician mobility include smaller

population size and lower primary care physician supply, according to a study published online in the July/August issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

Matthew R. McGrail, Ph.D., from Monash University in Churchill, Australia, and colleagues created seven two-year mobility periods during 2000 to 2014 using data for each clinically-active U.S. physician. The periods were merged with county-level rurality, physician supply, economic characteristics, demographic measures, and individual physician characteristics.

The researchers found that biennial turnover was about 17 and 9 percent for physicians aged 45 years and younger and for those aged 46 to 65 years, respectively; little difference was seen between rural and metropolitan groups. Counties that lacked a hospital, those with a smaller population size, and those with lower [primary care physician](#) supply had higher county-level [physician](#) mobility, while there was little effect for area-level economic and demographic factors. The likelihood of leaving rural practice was higher for female physicians (odds ratios, 1.24 and 1.46 for those aged 45 years or younger and those aged 46 to 65 years, respectively) and for those born in a metropolitan area (odds ratios, 1.75 and 1.56, respectively).

"Rural health workforce planners and policymakers must be cognizant of these key factors to more effectively target retention policies and to take into account the additional support needed by these more vulnerable communities," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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