

Students' Research Group at the Department of Epidemiology, Medical University of Lublin

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*Working in Poland or working abroad? A crucial question
in every medical student's and doctor's life*

Healthcare in Poland becomes more and more complicated and difficult nowadays. The main problem is shortage of funds in almost all health protection institutions. Above mentioned reduces funds for diagnostics and treatment process as well as has impact on employment and payments. Patients wait in long queues to be serviced, frustrated doctors very often make a decision to look for a job abroad. Highly developed countries offer well paid jobs and trainings to gain better qualifications as well as far more better living conditions than in Poland.

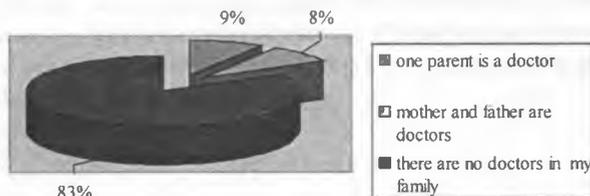
The object of the study: 1. Presenting the opinions of students and young doctors regarding job abroad. 2. Stating factors motivating doctors to go abroad. 3. Assessment of education conditions and professional development in Poland.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The survey was carried out in November 2005 among students and young doctors of the Medical University of Lublin. Anonymous questionnaire was used as a research tool. The sample was of random character. There was over-representation of women and the last sixth-year students.

THE RESPONDENTS' STRUCTURE

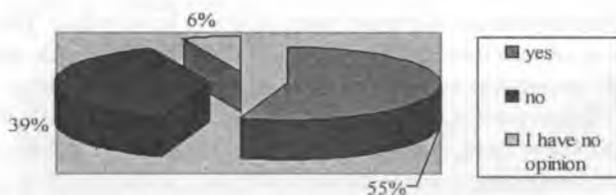
Almost half of the inquired (48%) were the students of the sixth year, Faculty of Medicine Medical University of Lublin. Twenty-one per cent of the inquired were young doctors; 27% – students of the third year, 2% – students of the first year, 2% – students of the second year. The majority of the inquired had no doctors in the family (83%).



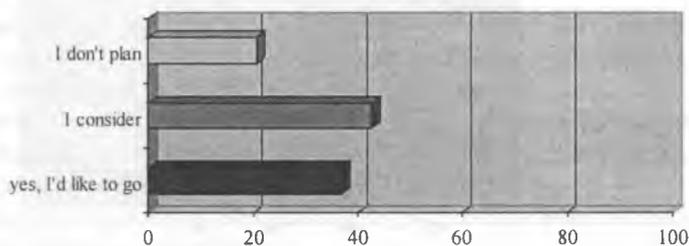
Sixty-five per cent of the respondents declare that they know one foreign language on the advanced level. Eighteen per cent know two foreign languages, 17% of students do not know any foreign language.



Over half of the respondents are aware of the fact that they must know foreign languages to find work abroad. For 39% it is not a barrier.



It is alarming that the difficult situation in Polish institutions of health protection influences decisions of 37% of medicine students and young doctors to leave the native country searching for a job. Forty-two per cent of the respondents consider leaving the country in the future. Only every fifth student decides to stay in Poland.



Comparing the percentage of the respondents who declare searching for a job abroad in the following groups; the students of first years – first–third; the students of the sixth year and the group of young doctors, we notice that the most determined group to leave Poland is the group of young students – 46%. The similar part of respondents from the surveyed groups think about looking for a job abroad, but 26% – the students of the sixth year (the greatest group) declare staying in Poland.

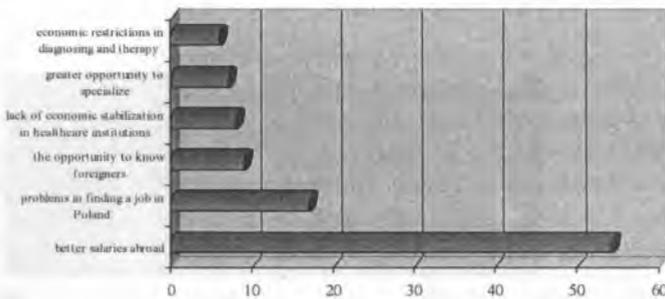


On being asked about their future plans concerning going abroad, every second respondent has answered that he considers searching for a job abroad but only after completing practice in Poland and passing LEP exam. Every third respondent wants to go abroad after specialization but every fifth before practice.

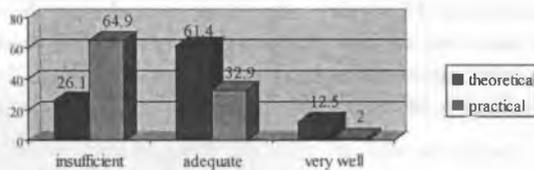
We asked for how long the surveyed group decides to leave Poland. The majority of persons – 45% decide to go abroad for about 5 years, 37.7% of the respondents declare staying abroad for 5–10 years, 9.1% for longer than 10 years, 8.2% decide to stay abroad forever.

Over half of the respondents would willingly find a job in Great Britain and Ireland. Every third wants to go to the Scandinavian countries, 10% to German language countries.

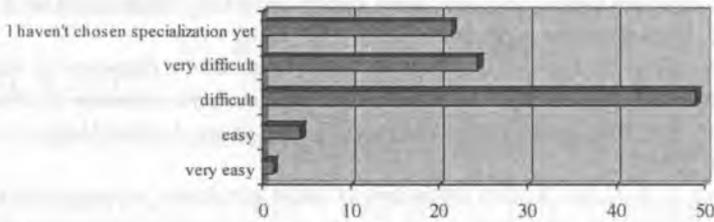
The most important reasons which dispose students and young doctors to look for a job abroad are: better salaries, problems in finding a job in Poland, lack of economic stabilization in healthcare institutions, economic restrictions in diagnosing and therapy and also an opportunity to get to know foreigners, new environments as well as a greater opportunity to specialize in chosen directions.



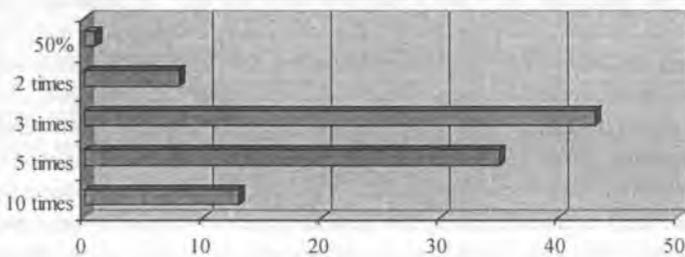
Theoretical and practical preparation to practice a profession in Poland the respondents estimate as follows:



Access to planned specialization is hard or very hard for 70% of the respondents and for only 2% of the respondents it is easy to specialize according to earlier plans.



The most important factor motivating the respondents to search for a job abroad is doctors' low economic status in Poland. We tried to examine how high should be average salary to convince doctors to stay in Poland. Forty-three per cent respondents answered that three times higher salaries would be satisfying, 35% – five times higher.



CONCLUSIONS

1. It is an alarming fact that almost 80% of the respondents decide to find a job abroad or consider such a solution. In the nearest future this situation will result in a shortage of doctors and medical staff to protect health of Polish people.

2. It appears that the group of first-year students considering searching for a job abroad is greater than that of the sixth-year students and young doctors. It means that students chose medical studies to emigrate from Poland.

3. Most of the respondents think about going abroad after practice and LEP exam for about 5 years, preferring Great Britain.

4. For respondents, the deciding reasons are better payment conditions and next, the problems with finding a job in Poland.

5. To reason 43% of the respondents into staying in Poland, doctors should earn at least three times more money than they earn now. Every third respondent is of the opinion that five times higher salaries would be adequate for doctors work.

6. The majority of the respondents consider themselves to be theoretically well prepared but not well enough as for professional experience concerned. The respondents estimate the opportunity to specialize in chosen disciplines as difficult or very difficult.

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SUMMARY

Healthcare situation in Poland has become increasingly difficult nowadays. Insufficient funds concern almost all healthcare units and cause restriction not only in diagnostic and therapeutic process but also in medical staff employing and remunerating. Patients wait more often in a very long queue to get healthcare also the prolonging bad situation in Polish hospitals and outpatient's clinics causes frustrated doctors to decide to take up a job abroad. The developed countries provide much more beneficial working conditions and further career development possibilities than Poland. Due to the present situation we decided to ask students and interns about their opinion about working conditions in Poland and their vocational plans for the future. The data were collected on the basis of the questionnaire study conducted among 204 persons (students – mainly 6th-year medical students and young doctors). They were asked if and why they want to take up a job abroad. We wanted to know whether they decided to go abroad during the medical studies and after getting familiar with Polish healthcare or before studies entering medical studies. They were asked to evaluate the practical and theoretical preparation for the further job and also about the possibility of entering the specialization process in Poland. We wanted to estimate what changes should be made in the near future to convince students and young doctors to stay and work in Poland.

Pracować w Polsce czy za granicą? Kluczowe pytanie w życiu każdego studenta medycyny i lekarza

Ochrona zdrowia w Polsce jest w coraz trudniejszej sytuacji. Brak funduszy dotyka prawie wszystkie placówki ochrony zdrowia i powoduje ograniczenia zarówno w procesie diagnostycznym i leczniczym, jak też w zatrudnianiu i wynagradzaniu pracowników. Pacjenci czekają w coraz dłuższych kolejkach po świadczenia zdrowotne, a lekarze, sfrustrowani przedłużającą się i pogłębiającą złą sytuacją w polskich szpitalach i przychodniach, coraz liczniej decydują się na podejmowanie pracy za granicą. Wysoko rozwinięte kraje proponują możliwość dalszego rozwoju zawodowego w znacznie korzystniejszych warunkach niż te, na jakie liczyć można w Polsce. W związku z obecną sytuacją uznaliśmy, że należy zapytać studentów i młodych lekarzy stażystów o ocenę warunków pracy w Polsce i plany zawodowe na przyszłość. Badaniem ankietowym objęto 204 osoby: studentów (głównie z końcowych lat studiów) oraz lekarzy stażystów. Pytano, czy planują w niedalekiej przyszłości wyjazd i podjęcie pracy za granicą i co ich ku temu skłania. Podjęliśmy próbę zbadania, czy decyzja ta była podjęta jeszcze przed rozpoczęciem studiów, czy w ich trakcie w związku z bliższym poznaniem warunków pracy w placówkach polskiej ochrony zdrowia. Pytaliśmy o ocenę teoretycznego i praktycznego przygotowania do zawodu oraz dostępu do planowanej specjalizacji w kraju. Podjęliśmy próbę ustalenia, co musiałoby się w najbliższej przyszłości zmienić, aby przekonać studentów i młodych lekarzy do pozostania w Polsce.