

Planning your Medical Career

The medical workforce has grown by 17.5% in the past six years. There were 14,678 doctors with annual practising certificates registered with the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) as at June 2015, up from 12,493 in 2009.

Medical workforce*							
Size*	Age 50+	Gender split*		Ethnicity*		Main place of employment*	
14,678 (including 4592 working in general practice)	40.1%	Male	58.3%	European	68.3%	Public	54.4%
		Female	41.7%	Indian	5.2%	Private	35.3%
				Chinese	5.1%	Other	10.3%
				Māori	5.1%		
				Pacific	1.8%		
				Other	16.9%		

+ Annual practising certificates as of 30 June 2015

* Medical Council New Zealand (MCNZ) 2014 workforce survey

- Almost 40% of doctors are aged 50 or over, up from 34% in 2009. In 2010, the largest group was aged between 45 and 49.
- Since 2011, the largest age group has been 50- to 54-year-olds.
- The gender gap is closing. In 2013 women made up 41.7% of the workforce (39.1% in 2009) and outnumber men among new doctors and
 - 45 % of female doctors, and 28% of male doctors, are under 40 years
 - 57 % of house officers and 50% of registrars are women.
- The trend is to work shorter hours with the average across all specialities 45 hours a week, down from 45.5 in 2009. The MCNZ's 2014 workforce survey (the latest available) showed that general practitioners (GPs) worked on average 36.8 hours a week, down from 38.1 in 2009

Medical graduates

- In 2013, for the first time, there were more applicants for postgraduate year (PGY) 1 placements than vacancies as the first graduates of an initiative aimed at expanding medical student numbers, joined the workforce.
- All 376 domestic medical graduates were offered a placement in 2013, 397 domestic medical graduates in 2014 and 423 in November 2015,
- The number of domestic medical graduates is expected to be 483 expected in November 2016.
- A staged implementation of community based placement for PGY 1 and 2 trainee doctors continued in 2015/16 towards 100% compliance by November 2020. This is consistent with implementation of the MCNZ's revised prevocational programme from December 2015 that requires PGY1 and 2 trainee doctors to complete a 13-week clinical attachment in a community-based setting.

Medical workforce Programme

- The Medical Workforce Taskforce, established in 2013, provides guidance and advice on strategic development of the medical workforce. Its key focus is on ensuring that:
 - there is a sustainable medical workforce from PGY1 to consultant
 - New Zealand trained medical graduates have an opportunity to successfully progress their career through to vocational training
- To help trainee doctors make informed decisions when choosing a specialty, Health Workforce New Zealand continues with the modelling of the medical workforce pipeline. A forecasting tool is

now available that provides detailed information relating to each medical specialty and has been made widely available to medical colleges.

General Practice

- Prospects are particularly good for general practice especially in rural areas, as New Zealand's population grows and ages and as health care moves closer to communities. There were 84 doctors (76.9 FTEs) working as GPs per 100,000 New Zealanders in 2014. Auckland and Capital & Coast DHB geographical areas had the highest number of GPs per 100,000, while West Coast, MidCentral and Counties Manukau had the lowest¹. This data refers to all doctors working as GPs across New Zealand, including doctors who may work in general practice but who do not have vocational registration in general practice.
- The trend is for GPs to work shorter hours. MCNZ's 2014 workforce survey showed that GPs worked on average 36.8 hours a week (0.92 FTE based on a 40-hour week), down from 38.1 in 2009. The average across all other specialties was 45 hours a week, down from 45.5 in 2009.
- In 2009 vocationally registered GPs made up 37.5% of the total medical workforce, and this proportion has remained steady at 37.7% in 2015. However, in 2015 169 doctors entered general practice training, an increase of 45 on 2014. The number of doctors trained in other vocational specialties continues to grow at a similar rate to the number of doctors trained in general practice. The number of specialists (excluding general practice) went up from 4,176 to 5,362 between mid-2009 and mid-2015, a 28.4% increase².

Other specialties

- Trainee doctors who choose to train in other specialties such as palliative care, gastroenterology, neurology, pathology, psychiatry and rural hospital medicine will have particularly good job prospects.
- Prospects may be limited for specialties including emergency medicine and paediatrics. These have current high ratios of trainee doctors to senior staff and competition for training positions and jobs will be fierce if this trend continues.

More information

- <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/health-workforce/career-planning>
- <http://www.kiwihealthjobs.com/rmo/medical-workforce-pipeline>

To assist domestic medical students and graduates making informed career decisions, the [Kiwihealthjobs website](#) publishes 'Specialty Factsheets' providing medical colleges' specialty training programme information and labour market data.

Sources

- Health Workforce New Zealand <http://healthworkforce.health.govt.nz/home>.
- Medical Council of New Zealand <https://www.mcnz.org.nz/>.
- Representative colleges <http://www.cmc.org.nz/about-us>
- DHBs Resident Medical Officer Workforce Collection Profile – September 2015.
- Goodyear-Smith F, Janes R. The New Zealand rural primary healthcare workforce in 2005: It is more than just a doctor shortage, Australian Journal of Rural Health, 16: 40-46, 2008
- The role of Health Workforce New Zealand and Health of the Health Workforce 2015 publications <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/role-health-workforce-new-zealand>

¹ MCNZ workforce survey 2014, and Statistics New Zealand population projection based on the 2013 Census.

² MCNZ registration by specialty for annual practising certificates mid-2009 to mid-2015. Note: this information relates to the number of doctors.