



RURAL AND METRO GPs REPORT SIMILAR  
LEVELS OF JOB SATISFACTION

Evidence shows no difference in professional satisfaction between metropolitan and rural GPs, according to a study published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*.

Dr Matthew McGrail from the Gippsland Medical School and the School of Rural Health at Monash University, VIC, and his co-authors conducted a study investigating whether the level of professional satisfaction of Australian general practitioners varied according to community size and location.

The authors used data from 3906 GPs who participated in the first wave of the *Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life (MABEL)* study conducted between June and November 2008.

Dr McGrail said that the professional satisfaction of GPs did not differ by community size for most aspects of the job, with overall job satisfaction at about 85 per cent across all community sizes.

“Satisfaction with remuneration was slightly higher in smaller rural towns, even though the hours worked there were less predictable,” Dr McGrail said.

Dr McGrail said that, overall, GPs working in different sized communities in Australia expressed similar levels of satisfaction with most professional aspects of their work. However, despite a range of government incentives, relatively little progress has been made in increasing the number of Australian medical professionals taking up practice in rural communities.

“Rural medical practice is often presented negatively, with many reports and research studies highlighting overworked, under-remunerated and undervalued rural doctors struggling to deal with sicker patients in communities characterised by chronic workforce shortages,” Dr McGrail said.

“This study indicates that Australian GPs are highly satisfied with most professional aspects of their work ... Rural medicine should be marketed more actively as a highly satisfying professional career choice for practising GPs, and stronger efforts need to be made to reduce the prevailing negative perceptions of rural practice.”

The *Medical Journal of Australia* is a publication of the Australian Medical Association.

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