

# About one in ten Doctors plan to quit over the next 5 years

Thursday 23 April 2009

Initial results from the first wave of the MABEL longitudinal survey of Australian doctors - Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life - identifies that nearly 10 percent of Australian doctors plan to quit their work over the next five years.

The initial results from the first wave of the survey, released on 23 April by the Melbourne Institute, contains information from a representative sample of over 10,500 doctors surveyed in 2008. The results provide policy-relevant insights on how changes in the working lives of Australian doctors are influencing the provision of healthcare.

The release of top-line results were launched in Melbourne by Professor Stephen Sedgwick, Director, Melbourne Institute and Professor Anthony Scott, Head of Health Economics Research Program and Principal Investigator of MABEL, Melbourne Institute. The MABEL project is funded by a Health Services Research grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and is being conducted in collaboration with Monash University.

Initial results from Wave 1 of the MABEL survey are shown in the newsletter MABEL Matters, and cover a breadth of attitudes and intentions by doctors, including:

## Intentions to quit

- Almost 12% of GPs and 13% of specialist doctors intend to quit medical work within the next five years, largely driven by their expectations to retire. This proportion would equate to the loss of around 2,500 GPs and 2,500 specialists in Australia.

## Doctor satisfaction with their work

- Specialist doctors were the most likely to be satisfied with their work, followed by doctors enrolled in specialty training programs, then GPs, and lastly non-specialist hospital doctors (e.g. interns, medical officers).
- Around a quarter of all doctors are dissatisfied with their hours of work.
  - Non-specialist hospital doctors were the most dissatisfied with their working hours, and amongst younger doctors more women than men want to reduce their hours of work.
  - GPs are the least dissatisfied with their hours of work.
- For specialists and GPs, men were more likely to be dissatisfied with their hours of work than women. This could reflect that male doctors generally work longer hours relative to female doctors.

Further data analysis will be undertaken in the next few months to learn more about the determinants of doctor preferences and intentions. Results and publications from MABEL will progressively be posted on the MABEL website at [www.mabel.org.au](http://www.mabel.org.au)

Doctors responding to the 2008 survey were 3,910 GPs, 4,603 medical specialists, 924 doctors enrolled in a specialist training program, and 1,072 non-specialist hospital doctors. Respondents are broadly representative of all Australian doctors in terms of age, gender, and geographic location.

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