Work Life Balance for Junior Doctors in Family Medicine

A Danish National Review

May 2019 - Dr. Kim Agerholm Brogaard
Board member of the Junior Doctors Association, Denmark
Introduction

- We experience a declining number of GP’s over time

- An increasing and aging population

- Increasing pressure on the Danish National Health Care System

- A political desire for increased proximity in the Health System - a strengthening of the primary health sector

- Risk of distorted work-life balance for GPs and junior doctors in Family medicine
The increase of patients aged 70 to 80+ from 2008 to 2030
Hypotheses

- How do we ensure there are enough GP’s in the future?
- What are the thoughts of the future GP’s?
- Do the current labour market match the wishes and demands the Junior doctors within the primary care have for working as GP’s?
The system and education - General Practitioner

- Clinical Basic Training - Year 1 after graduation
  - 6 months in a hospital
  - 6 months with at General Medical Practice

- Introduction - Year 2 after graduation
  - 6 - 12 months in a general medical practice depending on whether you already have spend 6 months or not in a General Medical Practice

- Post Graduate Specialist Training
  - Part 1: consists of 6 months in a GMP plus 2,5 years in different hospital wards e.g. Gynaecology/obstetrics, paediatrics, surgery, psychiatry, internal medicine
  - Part 2: 6 months in a GMP
  - Part 3: 12 months in a GMP
The system and education - a threat to our work environment?

- Many shifts between workplaces more times every year
- Lack of affiliation creates rootlessness
- Lack of professional and collegial sparring creates loneliness
- New procedures + new areas of responsibilities
The Danish Primary Health Care System

❖ A GP is traditionally self-employed with sole ownership of a practice

❖ Works often alone with help from a secretary and maybe a nurse

❖ In the recent years more and more have settled into a joined practices where each is the sole owner of their own practices but share the same address and maybe different medical facilities, the secretary and a nurse.
The number of patients allocated to a General Practitioner (GP)

- The total of active GP’s in 2018 is only 3402 persons
- The number of GP’s has decreased with -6.5 % from 2008 to 2018
- In average a GP is assigned 1643 patients in 2018
- 70% of the GP’s have “closed” for new patients
- Approximately 10 % of the GP’s are aged 65 or more
Number of patients face-to-face in a GPs practice on general day

Source: QUALICOPC, Peter Vedsted, Forskningsenheden for Almen praksis, Aarhus Universitet
The survey

- The purpose was to investigate the challenges for Junior Doctors in family medicine - from the Junior Doctors own perspective
- The study was conducted in June 2018
- The survey was especially focused on:
  - Stress and illness among Junior doctors
  - Work-private life balance
  - Loneliness
  - Worries about complaints from patients
- It was important to reach all the Junior Doctors in family medicine and questionnaire was forwarded through the regional post graduate training secretariat where they are all registered
- 1,827 persons were forwarded the questionnaire
- 744 respondents - a response rate of 40%
The general profile of a Junior doctor in training

- The majority are women
- Average age is 36 years.
- Civil status - the majority is married or in a steady relationship
- Most have 2 to 3 children
Have you felt stressed during your general working day through the last 3 months?

- To a high degree: 12%
- To some degree: 32%
- Neutral: 24%
- To a lesser degree: 24%
- Not at all: 9%
The working life of the future - the work environment

Do you tend to shorten the length and/or the number of breaks during your working day?

- Yes: 75%
- No: 25%
Have you gone to work even though you were ill during the last 12 months?

- Yes: 68%
- No: 32%
The working life of the future - the work environment

Do you find it difficult to "let go" of your work when you are off?

- To a high degree: 5%
- To some degree: 20%
- Acceptable: 14%
- To a lesser degree: 41%
- Not at all: 21%
The working life of the future - the work environment

Would you like to work reduced hours?

- To a high degree: 44%
- To some degree: 30%
- To a lesser degree: 18%
- Not at all: 9%
What are your reasons for wanting reduced hours?

- More time with my family: 94%
- Workload is too heavy: 34%
- Other: 11%
- Teaching: 10%
- Time assigned to research: 10%
- Volunteer work/association work: 5%
- Own illness: 4%
Do you ever feel lonely during a normal work day?
Do you worry about the risk of being involved in patients complaint cases on a daily basis?
What do junior doctors in family medicine worry about?

(up to five options allowed)

1. Being able to fulfill the increasing demand for documentation of quality - 66%
2. That many new tasks will be added - 54%
3. The ability to maintain job satisfaction - 53%
4. To able to find the time for both working with patients and improving my skills - both as a GP and as a manager - 42%
5. To get the balance between efforts and earnings right - 41%
6. Being able to follow the many innovations and restructurings within the health care system - 38%
7. Being able to deal with the increasing amount of patients complaints - 35%
What do you worry about regarding the purchase of your own general practice?

(up to five options allowed)

- The workload: 74%
- Burn out: 53%
- Uncertainty about the future in a General Medicine Practice: 50%
- Increased control of GP's work: 47%
- Being tied to the same work place for many years: 40%
- I will have to relate to many NON-medical tasks: 39%
- Economy: 27%
What did the survey show us? - The result

- Most Junior Doctor experience a stressed work life
- Breaks are often shortened in order to manage all the patients
- Many turn up on work even when they are ill - especially pronounced among Junior Doctors working with family medicine at hospitals
- Many have a desire to work part time with reduced hours
What would Junior Doctors like?

- 75% would work reduced hours is possibly
- Both to reduce their workload but also in order to spend more time with their families
- Junior Doctors want colleagues during their workday but many still feel lonely at work - mainly in the hospital departments
Do you feel you have a reasonable balance between your work life and private life?
Yngre Læger

Kristianiagade 12
2100 København Ø
Tlf: 35 44 8500
yl@dadl.dk
yl.dk

facebook • twitter • linkedin