



2015 Interim report on new graduate survey – first cohort / second survey

Background

In 2013 representatives from the Physiotherapy Board, Physiotherapy New Zealand and the Schools of Physiotherapy at the University of Otago and Auckland University of Technology met to establish a framework for a prospective longitudinal cohort study of New Zealand physiotherapy graduates. The study includes graduates from 2013, 2014 and 2015 and will follow their employment and career patterns for the first five years following graduation. This report is the interim report from the second survey undertaken of the first cohort of graduates from 2013. Ethical approval was gained for the study from the University of Otago and the Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

Initial cohort

For the first survey undertaken in 2014, 203 new graduates from the New Zealand schools were eligible for registration in the year between July 2013 and the end of June 2014. Seven had not registered – five were included in the survey as they had known email addresses but two were not, as they had no contact addresses. Thus 201 potential participants were emailed inviting them to participate in the survey.

For this second survey, of the 201 invitees from 2014 two did not have known email addresses, thus 199 potential participants were invited to respond to the survey. The survey was opened on 06/07/15 and closed on 24/08/15. Responses were received from 59 (30%) physiotherapists. Of these, 15 were new responders (i.e. they did not respond to the first survey). There were similar numbers from the AUT and Otago Schools of Physiotherapy.

Demographics

	2014	2015
Percent Female	67%	74%
Average age (SD)	25.3 years	26.4 years
Age range	22 - 52	23 - 58

The ethnic groups identified by respondents was similar to 2014 year.

Professional Association membership

There was a drop in the numbers of respondents who said they belonged to PNZ (68% v 80%) but an increase in membership to PNZ special interest groups and other professional organisations such as NZMPA, PAANZ, Sports PNZ and MINZ.

Practising as a physiotherapist

Ninety five percent of respondents (56) were working as a physiotherapist. Those who were not were either travelling, looking for work, or working in another job. Eight of those working as a physiotherapist were also undertaking postgraduate study.

Employment

Sixty seven percent of respondents were in the same job as for their first year in practice and for 45% of these respondents the description of their job had changed in terms of the type of work, promotion and level of responsibility.

Eighteen respondents had changed jobs and cited poor working conditions, no support / isolated, poor wage and lifestyle change as reasons.

The majority found a job through personal contact or 'Seek', with much less use of the PNZ and DHB websites. There was no change in responses to how respondents had secured their jobs.

Preparation for job

Respondents generally felt well prepared for their job. The areas that they felt less prepared for related to practice management and working with other agencies.

Types of work situations

Fifty five physiotherapists responded to the question about the areas where they carry out their work: 60% indicated private practice, 33% stated DHB hospitals and 11% stated they worked with sports teams. A small number (6%) worked in aged care facilities. The majority (87%) received support / mentorship from a senior physiotherapist and 33% said they received formal professional supervision. Two respondents (3%) said they received no support at all.

Hours of work

There was very little change in the hours worked by respondents compared to their first year in practice and a similar percentage were undertaking on-call work mainly in ICU / acute or with sports teams.

Integrated teams and inter-professional experience

Sixty two percent of respondents stated they worked in groups or integrated teams although only one described a true IPE / collaborative situation. A new question for this survey asked what makes working in an inter-professional team easier or more difficult;

Responses for "easier" included - joint decisions; sharing information; face to face; immediate access to care plans; regular meetings so get to know staff; understanding how collaboration works; share workload; no egos; common focus; share software; understanding others roles; easier for planning and discharges; easier for referrals; hard working flexible team; best practice; mutual respect; easier to ask when not in known scope of practice.

Responses for “more difficult” included - poor communication e.g. non reply to emails; one team member being hierarchical; getting hold of others; separate buildings; staffing shortages; undermining of PT knowledge and clinical reasoning.

Satisfaction with current employment

The participants who responded to the survey were very satisfied with their current employment. On a scale of 0 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied) the average rating was 8.53 which was slightly down from the previous survey. The main factors impacting on their job satisfaction were peer support and mentoring, and professional development opportunities; they enjoyed working with people and knowing they were helping them, while acknowledging they found the work role challenging. Additional factors for the second survey included honesty of contractors and workplace flexibility.

Salary range

Salary levels were the same as last year with 83% earning a salary within the range \$40,000 - \$59,000, and 10% earning \$60,000 - \$79,000. Remuneration levels were not highly ranked on the list of the factors influencing their job satisfaction.

Satisfaction with physiotherapy as a career

Satisfaction with physiotherapy as a career, and the reasons for this, were similar to last year. Using skills and keeping people active as well as learning new skills every day were consistent themes.

Summary

Overall the responses from these graduates in their second year of practice indicated an ongoing high level of satisfaction with preparedness for the job market, seeking and obtaining jobs and meeting the expectations of the workforce. The comparison of results from this survey to the survey completed in 2014 should be viewed with caution due to the smaller number of respondents.

The research team are grateful to the respondents for their participation. Further surveys will be carried out with the three cohorts of graduates in 2016. It is intended that the study will be published as a formal report once comparative data are available and a final report will be prepared at the completion of the study.