



2015 Interim report on new graduate survey– second cohort

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 the employment and career patterns of each cohort over five years. Below is the interim report from the initial survey of the second cohort of new graduates from 2014. Ethical approval was gained for the study from the University of Otago and the Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

An interim summary report of the first cohort of new graduates from 2013 – initial survey is available on the Physiotherapy Board's website.

Second cohort – class of 2014

198 new graduates from New Zealand schools were eligible for registration in the year between 1 July 2014 and the 30th June 2015. Five had not registered at the time of the survey but were included as they had known email addresses. Thus all new graduates were emailed inviting them to participate in the survey. One email bounced back so 197 were contacted.

The survey was opened on 06/07/15 and closed on 17/08/15.

56 (28%) of physiotherapists eligible responded. There were similar numbers from the AUT and Otago Schools of Physiotherapy.

Demographics

Females made up 70% of respondents, which is similar to the proportion of females currently practising in the profession.

The average age of the whole cohort was 25 (SD 4.5y)

The percentages of ethnic groups were compared with those for cohort 1 (table 1). The total does not add up to 100% as participants could choose more than one ethnicity.

Table 1 Ethnicities of new graduate physiotherapists from the first and second cohorts who completed the surveys

Ethnicity	Cohort 1 N=119	Cohort 2 (this cohort) N=56
European	76%	86%
Asian	15%	14%
Māori	4%	5%
Pacific Island	3%	4%

Professional association membership

Eighty two percent of the respondents indicated they belonged to their professional body in the country in which they were working viz. Physiotherapy New Zealand. Fourteen percent stated that they did not belong to any professional association.

Practising as a physiotherapist

Just under 95% of respondents (52) were working as a physiotherapist. Of the four who were not, one was looking for work, one was undertaking post graduate study in orthopaedic manipulative therapy, one was studying medicine and the remaining respondent was on holiday but intending to start work. Three of the four currently not practising planned to work as a physiotherapist in some capacity in the next three years.

Finding employment

Seventy four percent started looking for a job prior to graduation, and all but one were seeking jobs within two months post-graduation: 52% had a confirmed job at graduation; 22% had a job within a month and 20% within the two month time frame. The majority (48%) found a job through personal contact, 32% through the Physiotherapy New Zealand website, and 28% through DHB websites. Six percent used the student web page (*Blackboard*) during their final year of study and 24% used generic websites: *Seek* and *Kiwi Health Jobs*. To get their first job 68% sent in their CV, 66% completed the application process online and 68% had face to face interviews with 16% being interviewed over the telephone and 12% via skype.

Registration:

All but three respondents were registered in NZ (95%) and 4 (7%) had also registered in Australia. One was registered in the UK and one in Germany. One respondent had not registered.

Preparation for the first job

On a scale of 0-10, 96% of new graduates who responded to the survey rated personal preparedness for obtaining a physiotherapy job at ≥ 5 and 36.5% indicated a rating of ≥ 8 . Areas where they indicated they were least prepared included CV writing and questions about on call work and the variety of patients likely to be seen in the hospital setting. In response to the question "How well did the University prepare you for the process?" on the same scale 77% rated their preparation at ≥ 5 and 25% of the ratings were ≥ 8 . In preparing for their first job, areas that they would have liked to

have more knowledge and understanding about related to pay scales, including hourly rates, as well as spending more time considering potential interview questions.

Types of work situations

Participants were asked to describe the sort of job they had in mind as their “ideal job”. Of the 56 respondents 54% indicated they wanted a hospital - primarily rotational - job and the remainder stated they wanted a job in a private practice, which predominantly included sport and musculoskeletal work, except one who just wanted a job that had “good room for growth”. They were then asked to relate their actual job to their ideal job and 69% stated that the job they had “was the ideal job” or “I got what I wanted”. There were six graduates who wanted hospital rotational jobs but found these were not available, so they selected jobs in private practices; one chose to go to private practice as there was no hospital near their home.

Respondents were then asked to outline their first job or combination of jobs. Only 4% of the cohort had two jobs. Seventeen respondents (34%) described that they worked clinically in DHBs and 30 respondents (60%) in private practice; 20% also stated they worked with sports teams; a small number (4%) worked in aged care facilities and 8% in schools/education service.

Hours of work

The majority of respondents 25 (48%) stated they worked 35-40h/week in their primary job; 36% worked ≥ 40 h/week and a few were part time. For those with second jobs (4 respondents) they all worked < 10 h/week. Of the 31 who responded “Yes” to the question “Do you undertake weekend/on call work?” 14 (27%) worked with sports teams, 14 (27%) in ICU and acute hospital work and a few in private practices. On a scale of 0-10 for preparedness (0 being not prepared at all), 24 of the 31 respondents rated preparation as being ≥ 5 and 10 were at a level of ≥ 8 .

Current work situation

92% (46/50) of new graduates who responded were working in New Zealand at the time of the survey, with three respondents working in Australia and one in the UK. The main motivations for wanting to be a physiotherapist remained consistent: wanting to help people function better and attain the best quality of life, patient satisfaction, knowing how the body works and problem solving were their main motivations.

Eighty percent of respondents felt prepared for the transition into work after graduating in late 2014, although those that went straight into private practice felt less prepared to work under ACC’s systems. Just over three-quarters of the students stated they had experienced an inter-professional clinical placement, but only 60% were currently working inter-professionally (compared with 86% in the previous cohort). The ability to share information with other professionals, engage in face-to-face team communication and learning were still considered to be the best things about inter-professional practice, however.

Satisfaction with current employment

The new graduates 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 8.59. The main factors impacting positively on their job satisfaction were peer support and mentoring, and professional

development opportunities; they enjoyed working with people and knowing they were helping them, were appreciative of workload flexibility and acknowledged that they found the work role challenging.

Salary range

Just over eighty one percent were earning a salary within the range \$40,000 - \$59,000, with 10.2% earning \$60,000 - \$79,000. Remuneration level was not strongly ranked in regard to the factors influencing their job satisfaction.

Satisfaction with physiotherapy as a career

The majority of respondents were enjoying working in the profession (with the same 93% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement and only 2% disagreeing). Further, 85% of respondents were looking forward to continuing their work as physiotherapists (5% down on the previous cohort).; 76% stated they would recommend a career in physiotherapy to others (85% from the cohort in 2014). When asked "What is your main reason for wanting to work as a physiotherapist?" respondents stated that the opportunity for social interaction, to work 'hands on' and 'help people' came through strongly again; working with interesting clients, opportunities for ongoing learning, and being active in their jobs were also consistent themes.

Summary

Although the response rate for cohort two was substantially less than for cohort one, overall the responses from the new graduates indicated a high level of satisfaction with preparedness for the job market, seeking and obtaining their first job and meeting the expectations of their first experiences as physiotherapists in the workforce.

The research team are grateful to the respondents for their participation. Further surveys will be carried out with all three cohorts in 2016.