



Interim report on new graduate survey – first cohort / third 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 third 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 – third survey

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 the 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.

For this third survey, of the 199 invitees, 60 (30%) responses were received. No emails were returned. The survey opened on 11/07/2016 and closed on 29/08/2016. There were four new respondents.

Demographics of cohort 1

	2014	2015	2016
Percent Female	67%	74%	80%
Average age (SD)	25.3 years	26.4 years	28 years

Age range	22 - 52	23 - 58	24 – 59
Ethnicity			
European	76%	82%	89%
Māori	4%	5%	6%
Pacific Island	3%	5%	2%
Asian	11%	10%	13%
Indian	4%	7%	3%

Ethnicity percentages reflect the differences in particular respondents for each year. Numbers for ethnicity do not add up to 100% as some respondents selected more than one ethnicity.

Professional Association membership

From the 62 physiotherapists who responded to the question about professional membership 29% did not belong to any professional association. Just over 60% of respondents belonged to PNZ (compared with 68% in 2015 and 80% in 2014) and just under 5% belonged to an overseas professional association.

Practising as a physiotherapist

Almost eighty nine percent of respondents (55) were registered in NZ. Just over 3% (2) were not registered at all whilst just over 11% (7) were registered in overseas countries. Almost eighty percent of respondents were working as a physiotherapist whilst just over 3% (2) were working in another job. Only one respondent was a medical student who practiced physiotherapy in the holidays.

Employment

80% of respondents were employed in New Zealand. 65% were in the same job as they were this time last year with 51% stating that their job had changed since last year (up from 45%). Change was through a changed caseload or a more senior position. 18 respondents cited changes in personal circumstances, overwork and poor practice management as reasons for leaving their previous employment. These responses were similar in number and focus to previous years. Most found out about their job from personal contact (33%), the internet (22%), recruitment agencies (17%), and the PNZ website (17%). There was no change in responses to how respondents had secured their jobs.

Preparation for job

Respondents felt well prepared for their job, with strong responses for professionalism (99%), ethical responsibility (98%), inter-professional practice (92%), with the lowest scoring being practice management (83%). This is consistent with reports from previous years.

Types of work situations

65% of practitioners three years out from graduation were working as part of an inter-professional/multidisciplinary team, alongside a wide range of health and social work practitioners. Collaboration and communication were the most reported reasons for easier inter-professional working.

53/60 practitioners responded to the question about the areas where they carry out their work: 62% indicated private practice (down from 60% last year), 30% stated DHB hospitals (down from 32%), but 20% stated they worked with sports teams (up from 11%). 7.5% worked for ACC but only 2% worked in aged care facilities (down from 6%). The majority (80%) received support / mentorship from a senior physiotherapist (down from 87%) and 19% said they received formal professional supervision (down from 33%). It is worthy of noting that 6 of the 52 respondents (12% up from 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 years in practice and a similar percentage were undertaking on-call work mainly in ICU / acute or with sports teams: 33 of the 53 respondents (62% worked between 35-40h/wk. and 16/53 (30%) worked more than 40h/wk. Of the 53 respondents 66% undertook on call/weekend work; 19 of these were with acute sports/private practice and 11 involved acute hospital; care. On a scale of 1-10, 8 was the mean rating for “feeling prepared for weekend work”.

Integrated teams and inter-professional experience

Seventy one percent of respondents (62% in 2015) stated they worked in groups or integrated teams 19 of these were with other physiotherapists and 20 (39%) with an Inter-professional team; only 6 of the 52 who responded were working as sole practitioners. In response to the question on an undergraduate placement that focused on inter-professional experience n=35 (68%) said they had experienced such a placement. In regard to current Inter-professional work environment 34/52 (65%) stated they were currently working in such an environment. However the descriptions of the inter-professional environments may not have been Inter-professional collaborative practice as understood by its accepted definition.

The survey question that asked “what makes working in an inter-professional team easier or more difficult” was answered by 32 respondents. Responses were similar to the previous year and positive responses focused on communication being “easier” e.g.

Access and time to one another during the working day

Easier - when attending weekly meetings to discuss the best care for the patient and discharge planning

Get a good outlook on the patient from many perspectives.

Good to blur boundaries, problem solving, more holistic

There were few responses for “more difficult” e.g. *when everyone is on the same page and following same direction is easier; complications occur when everyone is wanting different things ; Attitude of older/medical staff. Accessibility for opinion/discussion*

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 8.72 (8.53 in 2015 which in turn was slightly down from the 2014 survey); 94% had responses ≥ 5 and 33% ≥ 8 . The main factors impacting on their job satisfaction were flexibility of work (33/50, 66%) peer support and mentoring (32/50, 62%), and professional development opportunities (32/50, 52%); the greatest

majority enjoyed working with people (43/50 86%). Of those who had changed jobs recently six indicated that there were issues with practice performance of their employers.

Salary range

Salary levels differed from the previous years' responses with 56% of respondents earning a salary within the range \$40,000 - \$59,000 (compared to 83%), 30% earning \$60,000 - \$79,000 (compared to 10% in 2015) and 12% earning \$80,000 or more. Remuneration levels were not highly ranked on the list of the factors influencing job satisfaction.

Satisfaction with physiotherapy as a career

The large majority of respondents enjoyed physiotherapy as a career with many prepared to recommend it as a career to others. The enjoyment of 'helping people' and improving their quality of life was the overwhelming theme given as the reason for working as a physiotherapist.

Summary

Overall the responses from these graduates in their third 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 surveys completed in 2015 and 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 2017. It is intended that the study will be published as a formal report once a complete set of comparative data are available and a final report will be prepared at the completion of the study.