



PHYSIOTHERAPY NEW ZEALAND
Kōwhiri Aotearoa



Interim report on new graduate survey – second 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 second cohort of graduates from 2015. Ethical approval was gained for the study from the University of Otago and the Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

Second cohort – class of 2015

For the first survey undertaken in 2015, 198 new graduates from the New Zealand schools were eligible for registration in the year between July 2014 and the end of June 2015. Five had not registered. Thus 198 potential participants were emailed inviting them to participate in the survey. One email bounced back. There were 56 (28%) responders to the first survey. There were similar numbers from AUT and Otago Schools of Physiotherapy.

For the second survey 198 were invited to participate. The survey opened on 11/07/2016 and closed on 29/08/2016. There were 36 (18%) responders of which ten were new. No emails were returned.

Demographics

	2015	2016
Percent Female	70%	64%
Average age (SD)	25 (4.5)	27 (5.3)
Ethnicity		
European	86%	86%
Māori	5%	11%
Pacific Island	4%	3%
Asian	13%	14%
Indian	2%	0%

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

Eighty three percent of respondents said they belonged to Physiotherapy NZ a professional association. This was similar to the previous year however the number of people not belonging to any association was slightly less (11% vs 14%).

Practising as a physiotherapist

Ninety five percent of respondents were registered to work in NZ with a few also registered in overseas countries. . The majority of respondents were working as physiotherapists (83%) with a smaller number also completing postgraduate study (5.6%). A small number (5.6%) were working in another job.

Employment

81% percent of respondents were in the same job as the previous year (down from 67%), and for 31% of these respondents the description of their job had changed in terms of the type of work, promotion and level of responsibility (down from 45%).

Nine respondents had changed jobs citing promotion, a change in work, rotation or new responsibilities as reasons, but six also reported poor work environments, overseas travel and not enough work as reasons.

33% found work through personal contacts, with 17% each identifying the PNZ website, Seek, Kiwi Health Jobs and recruitment agency for the rest.

Preparation for job

Respondents generally felt well prepared for their job. The areas that they felt less prepared for remained practice management and working with other agencies. This mirrors reports from previous years.

Types of work situations

32 physiotherapists responded to this question. 72% (up from 60%) indicated private practice, 28% (down from 33%) stated DHB hospitals and 28% (up from 11%) stated they worked with sports teams. A small number (6%, the same as previously) worked in aged care facilities. The majority (90%) received support / mentorship from a senior physiotherapist and 36% (up from 33%) said they received formal professional supervision. One respondent said they received no support at all.

Hours of work

It must be noted that the majority of respondents (73%) were from the private practice work environment. Total respondents to the question numbered 32. The majority n=17 (53%) worked 35-40h/week compared to 36% in 2015; Ten (19%) stated they worked ≥40h/week in their primary job compared to 25 (48%) in 2015. For those with second jobs (5 respondents) they all worked <20h/week.

Of the 32/36 who responded “Yes” to the question “Do you undertake weekend/on call work?” Twenty two (69%) responded “Yes”: Fourteen (64%) worked in private practices/sport at the

weekends and eight in acute care. However the total responses were skewed towards private practice (n=23) rather than DHB (n=9), so a comparison with figures for 2015 is difficult. In 2015 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 for on call work (0 being not prepared at all), 21 of the 22 respondents (85%) rated preparation as being ≥ 5 and n=13 (59%) were at a level of ≥ 8 . This compares with 24 of the 31 respondents (77%) and 10 (32%) respectively in the 2015 survey.

Current work situation

92% (46 of 50) of recent graduates 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 when they graduated 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 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.

Integrated teams and inter-professional experience

Of the 32 respondents 7 (22%) were working in isolation; n=15 (47%) in a group physiotherapy setting and n=8 (25%) indicated they worked in an Inter-professional collaborative setting. In response to the question "As an undergraduate did you have a clinical placement which focused on inter-professional education?" 26/32 (81%) answered positively however it is unclear whether the setting truly met the definition for Inter-professional education at the undergraduate level or in the current setting e.g. *Working on wards with OT, dietician, SW* implies working in a multidisciplinary team but not necessarily in collaborative practice. With this proviso 15/32 respondents (47%) indicated they are currently working in Inter-professional collaborative settings including inpatients, community, PHO settings.

Pro's and con's for working collaboratively include

- *Able to bounce ideas off each other. Can be personality clashes that need to be dealt with*
- *Easier: Quicker response to care, referrals, liaising, case discussions and focused treatment approaches. More difficult: Not much*
- *Trust, respect, and an understanding of each other's roles help. When others have different priorities than you do or are more relaxed with their communication, things are slightly more difficult.*

Satisfaction with current employment

The n=32 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 8.03 (8.59 the previous year). N=29 indicated a level of satisfaction at ≥ 5 and n=15 ≥ 8 . The main factors impacting on their job satisfaction were similar to the previous year: peer support and mentoring n=27 (84%), professional development opportunities (n=17, 53%); they enjoyed working with people and knowing they were helping them (n=25, 78%), were appreciative of workload flexibility (n=20, 63%); career progression opportunities, salary, commitment to the organisation and work role challenging were much less influential.

Salary range

Salary levels had a wider spread than last year with 75% earning a salary within the range \$40,000 - \$59,000, 12.5% earning \$60,000 - \$79,000 and 3% earning \$80,000 or more. Of note the remaining 9.4% earned a salary with the range \$20,000 - \$39,000. Remuneration levels were not highly ranked on the list of the factors influencing their 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. Respondents discussed the enjoyment of working with people and helping people as the main reason for working as a physiotherapist.

Summary

Overall the responses from these graduates, although low, 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. Working with people and peer support were again highly valued by the recent graduate physiotherapist workforce. The comparison of results from this survey to the survey completed in 2015 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.