



## Interim report on new graduate survey – third cohort, first 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 the employment and career patterns of each cohort over five years. Below is the interim report from the initial survey of the third cohort of new graduates from 2015. Ethical approval was gained for the study from the University of Otago and the Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

Interim summary reports of the first cohort of new graduates from 2013 and 2014 are available on the Physiotherapy Board's website.

### *Third cohort – class of 2015*

207 new graduates from the two New Zealand schools were eligible for registration in the year between 1 July 2015 and the 30th June 2016. 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. No emails were returned.

The survey was opened on 11/07/16 and closed on 29/08/16.

57 (28%) of eligible physiotherapists responded. Of these respondents 42% were from the University of Otago and 58% from the AUT Schools of Physiotherapy.

### *Demographics*

Females made up 67% of respondents.

The average age of the whole cohort was 25 (SD 3.8) years.

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 initial surveys

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Cohort 1 N=119</b>	<b>Cohort 2 N=56</b>	<b>Cohort 3 (this cohort)</b>
European	76%	86%	74%
Asian	15%	14%	13%
Māori	4%	5%	5%
Pacific Island	3%	4%	5%

### *Professional association membership*

Eighty percent (n=45) of the respondents indicated they belonged to their professional body in the country in which they were working viz. Physiotherapy New Zealand. Two respondents belonged to Tae Ora Tinana and two to special interest groups of PNZ. Almost 16% stated that they did not belong to any professional association.

### *Practising as a physiotherapist*

Almost 100% of respondents (n=57) were working as physiotherapists. Only one respondent was not registered at all but indicated they would resume a career in physiotherapy within the next three years. Two respondents volunteered that they didn't have current New Zealand Annual Practising Certificates whilst four (7.8%) were registered in other countries.

### *Finding employment*

Over 87% started looking for a job prior to graduation, and all but two were seeking jobs within two months post-graduation: 66% had a confirmed job at graduation; 27% had a job within a month and just over 7% within a three month time frame. The majority (53.6%) found a job through personal contact, just over 21% through the Physiotherapy New Zealand website, and 23% through DHB websites. Other options included the Seek website (5.4%), recruitment agencies (3.6%), the Kiwi health website and contacts made through student placements. To get their first job 82% sent in their CV just over 53% completed the application process online and 84% had face to face interviews with 16% being interviewed over the telephone and 3.6% via skype.

### *Registration:*

All but two respondents were registered in NZ (97%) and 2 (3%) had also registered in Australia. Two were registered in SE Asia. One respondent had not registered.

### *Preparation for the first job*

On a scale of 0-10, 88% of new graduates who responded to the survey rated personal preparedness for obtaining a physiotherapy job at  $\geq 5$  and 41% indicated a rating of  $\geq 8$ . Areas where they indicated they were least prepared included questions to ask the interviewers; lack of interview skills and feeling unprepared to actually start working. In response to the question "How well did the University prepare you for the process?" on the same scale for n=56 participants 75% rated their preparation at  $\geq 5$  and 23% of the ratings were  $\geq 8$ . In preparing for their first job, areas that they would have liked to have more knowledge and understanding about related to details about

contracts, practising interview skills, and potential career pathways. One indicated that it was not the University's responsibility.

### **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 39% indicated they wanted a hospital - primarily rotational - job and 38% stated they wanted a job in a private practice, which predominantly included sport and musculoskeletal work; others included community, rest home and general responses. They were then asked to relate their actual job to their ideal job and 79% stated that the job they had "was the ideal job" or "I got what I wanted". There four graduates in private practice who indicated they would like better supervision in the private practice; two had jobs that were different from their expectations but they were very happy; others indicated they were satisfied with the jobs they did get.

Respondents were then asked to outline their first job or combination of jobs - few had two jobs; n=19 respondents (34%) described that they worked clinically in DHBs and 36 respondents (64%) in private practice; n=11 (20%) worked with sports teams; a small number n=5 (9%) worked in aged care facilities and 4% in other e.g. private hospitals/education service.

### **Hours of work**

The majority of respondents n= 37 (66%) stated they worked 35-40h/week in their primary job; 29% worked  $\geq 40$ h/week and a few were part time. For those with second jobs (5 respondents) they all worked  $< 10$ h/week. Of the 38 who responded "Yes" to the question "Do you undertake weekend/on call work?" 24 (43%) worked with sports teams/private practice/strapping clinics, 14 (25%) in ICU and acute hospital work. On a scale of 0-10 for preparedness (0 being not prepared at all), the mean was 7 with 35 of the 37 respondents rated preparation as being  $\geq 5$  and 13 were at a level of  $\geq 8$ .

### **Current work situation**

96% of respondents (52/54) of new graduates who responded were working in New Zealand at the time of the survey with the remaining two working in Australia. This is slightly higher than in previous years. None of the participants were working in other Pacific Islands or in the United Kingdom – traditional centres for new graduate employment. The main motivations for wanting to work as a physiotherapist include wanting to be able to help people, patient contact, autonomy and problem solving, optimize people's performance and "links between sports, activity, science and people". The responses of this cohort are entirely consistent with those of previous respondents.

80% of respondents (44/55) said that they felt well prepared for their transition from student to work, although some talked about the lack of exposure to community/private practice during their student placements. Some commented that they had little knowledge of ACC procedures before entering practice, but those entering DHBs generally had a more comprehensive grounding and transition. 80% of students had experienced an inter-professional clinical placement which focused on inter-professional education, and 64% were currently working as part of an inter-professional team. As above, these findings are entirely consistent with previous cohorts. (However it is unclear whether the response to Inter-professional/collaborative practice met the accepted definition)

### **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 8.96. 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 working within a good team, having autonomy and flexibility but also acknowledged that they found the work role challenging.

### *Salary range*

Over 92% were earning a salary within the range \$40,000 - \$59,000, with 5.6% earning \$60,000 - \$79,000 and 1.9% earning \$20,000 - \$39,000. 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 an average rating of 4.44/5 (89%). A very similar average rating of 4.41/5 (88%) indicated strong indications that respondents were looking forward to continuing to work in physiotherapy. In addition, a rating of 4.31/5 (or 86%) suggested that many respondents would recommend physiotherapy as a career to others. These numbers correspond closely to figures from previous years.

### *Summary*

The number of participants matched those in Cohort 2 although the response rate for cohort two, and this cohort, 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 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.