

ABSTRACT

Background: Globally, more health workers are needed but not simply the more of the same. For optimal skill mix of human resources for health, stronger collaboration between medical education and health service delivery is necessary. Studying career preferences can aid in this process by providing important information for health planners. There are over 15,000 undergraduate medical students in Myanmar, but studies concerning their career preferences are scarce. This study aimed to identify the career preferences of house officers in University of Medicine 2, Yangon.

Methodology: Cross-sectional descriptive study was done on house officers in University of Medicine 2, in 2011. Systematic random sampling and self-administered semi-structured questionnaire was used. The questionnaire consisted of specialty preferences and reasons, future career choice and personal opinions.

Results: Of 221 selected house officers, 202 participated. Most of the respondents had intention to specialize, and the majority chose one of four subjects (Medicine, Surgery, OG and Pediatrics). Males had more interest in Surgery and Orthopedics while females in OG and Pediatrics. The most common reasons of choice of specialty were job prospects, academic interest, and patient orientation but there were differences in reasons among different specialties. Most respondents had intention to live as a doctor, and half of them had intention to join government service. Although the young doctors had positive views on their professional life as a doctor, there were still unmet expectations on current working environment, and these opinions were exerting influences on their future career choice.

Conclusion: Most had intention to specialize but the choice of specialty was narrow. Only half had intention to go into government service; there were unmet expectations on current working environment; and these two factors were related. Medical education and health service delivery systems should strive for working in synergy to have the optimal skill mix of human resources for health.