

2005 Commencing Medical Students Questionnaire

National Data Report

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1.0 Introduction

The Medical Schools Outcomes Database and Longitudinal Tracking Project (MSOD) is an ongoing longitudinal study that is conducted by Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand. The project is the Australian Government's main data collection tool for medical student information. During the study data is collected directly from students at entry to medical school (Commencing Medical Students Questionnaire [CMSQ]); in the final year of medical school (Exit Questionnaire [EQ]); and one year after completion of their medical studies (PGY1). Information on student placements and electives is collected directly from medical schools throughout the duration of the program. In coming years data will also be collected at three and five years after completion of medical studies. This report presents summary data from the 2005 CMSQ. This was the first year in which the study was piloted.

2.0 Method

All entry level medical students at six Australian medical schools were invited to join the study. A list of these medical schools can be found in Appendix A. The MSOD identified and tracked seven groups from within these medical schools. These groups are listed in Table 1.

The CMSQ's were distributed by medical schools to students within the first month of commencing medical school. Once completed the questionnaires were returned to Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand and scanned at Educational Assessment Australia (EAA) located at the University of New South Wales. Data was fed back to Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand in SPSS 17.0 for analysis.

2.1 Questionnaire

The 17 item (26 question) CMSQ gathers student information about basic demographic details, enrolment characteristics, previous tertiary education and plans for future practice. The majority of the questions are quantitative, with three qualitative questions (relating to scholarship source, previous university qualification and partner occupation) which have been grouped into themes. A link to the 2005 CMSQ can be found in Appendix B.

2.2 Analysis

The data for this report is largely reported as frequency tables and, where possible, follows the format agreed by participating medical schools and endorsed by the MSOD Management Committee for predefined reports.

The overall response rate for the 2005 CMSQ was 77%. The population therefore consisted of 879 individuals enrolled at 6 Australian medical schools for which usable data was available. Some cell samples with a value of five or less have been suppressed for confidentiality reasons

(indicated by x). All percentages are rounded to one decimal place, except total percentages which are rounded to the whole number.

3.0 Results

3.1 Students' characteristics

Table 1 shows the number of respondents enrolled in each group. Of these groups four were graduate-entry programs, responsible for training 35% of the responding students.

Table 1. Number of respondents in each group

Group	Frequency	Percentage
Flinders University (Graduate-entry)	95	10.8
Griffith University (Graduate-entry)	78	8.9
Monash University (Undergraduate-entry)	219	24.9
University of Melbourne (Undergraduate-entry)	182	20.7
University of Melbourne (Graduate-entry)	3	0.3
University of New South Wales (Undergraduate-entry)	175	19.9
University of Sydney (Graduate-entry)	127	14.4
Total	879	100

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Table 2 presents the gender of respondents. Over half (59%) of respondents were female.

Table 2. Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	358	41.0
Female	516	59.0
Total responses	874	100
Missing	5	
Total	879	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Respondent ages were grouped into 5-year age ranges and are presented in Table 3. Eighty nine percent of the sample was under the age of 25. Among the respondents commencing undergraduate-entry programs 98% were under the age of 25, compared with 72% of those in graduate-entry programs. The mean age was 20 years old (Standard Deviation [SD] =4.7).

Table 3. Age range of respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
<20 years	497	56.7
20-24 years	284	32.4
25-29 years	67	7.6
30-34 years	14	1.6
35-39 years	x	x
40 years and over	x	x
Total responses	876	100
Missing	3	
Total	879	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

3.2 Admission/Entry Scheme

The majority of respondents (60%) were attending medical school under the Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) scheme (Table 4). Twenty six percent of students paid full fees, including both International Fee Paying (IFP) students and Australian Full-Fee Paying (FFP) students.

Table 4. Entry scheme indicated by respondents

Entry Scheme	Frequency	Percentage
Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP)	524	60.2
Commonwealth Medical Rural Bonded Scholarship	38	4.4
Commonwealth Bonded Medical Places Scheme	81	9.3
Australian Full-fee paying (FFP)	33	3.8
International fee paying (IFP)	195	22.4
Total responses	871	100
Missing	8	
Total	879	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

The majority of respondents (80%) were not in receipt of a scholarship when they commenced medical studies*. For those who were, the sources indicated by students are summarised in Table 5 below. These sources included those provided by the Commonwealth Government, by

State Governments, by governments outside Australia, by Australian universities and by other institutions.

Table 5. Source of scholarship indicated by respondents

Scholarship Source	Frequency	Percentage
Australian Commonwealth scholarships**	59	33.5
Australian state scholarships	x	x
Scholarships provided by Australian universities	30	17.0
Scholarships provided by home country to international students	79	44.9
Scholarships provided by other institutions	x	x
Total	176	100

Base: Respondents who indicated scholarship source (n=176)

* RAMUS and John Flynn scholarship outcomes are generally not known at this stage. The information for both these scholarships is collected via the medical schools data collection.

** Including MRBS, RAMUS and Defence

3.3 Participants Background and Place of Birth

Less than 1% percent of respondents identified themselves as having Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent (Table 6 below).

Table 6. Indigenous status of respondents

Indigenous Status	Frequency	Percentage
Neither Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin / missing	873	99.3
Aboriginal origin	x	x
Torres Strait Islander origin	0	0
Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin	x	x
Total	879	100

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Seventy eight percent of respondents were either Australian or New Zealand citizens, or Australian permanent residents. The remainder of respondents held a temporary entry permit or indicated 'other' status (Table 7).

Table 7. Citizenship of respondents

Citizenship Status	Frequency	Percentage
Australian citizen	646	73.5
New Zealand citizen	12	1.4
Australian permanent resident status	25	2.8
Temporary entry permit	190	21.6
Status other than one of the above	6	0.7
Total	879	100

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Fifty two percent of all respondents reported being born within Australia. A breakdown of states of birth for these respondents is presented in Table 8. Of these Australian born respondents, 37% were born in NSW, while 34% were born in Victoria.

Table 8. State of birth within Australia

State	Frequency	Percentage
NSW	171	37.3
Victoria	157	34.3
Queensland	48	10.5
South Australia	46	10.0
Western Australia	11	2.4
Tasmania	9	2.0
Northern Territory	0	0.0
ACT	16	3.5
Total responses	458	100
Country other than Australia	421	
Total	879	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Tables 9 and 10 report the most frequent country of birth for those respondents who reported an overseas birth. The distribution of birth place differed between citizenship categories; among Australian and New Zealand citizens and Australian permanent residents (Table 9), the most frequent place of birth was China (15%) followed by Sri Lanka (12%) and India (10%). For those holding temporary or 'other' entry permits (Table 10), the majority of respondents reported Malaysia (46%), followed by Singapore (20%) and Canada (10%).

Table 9. Overseas place of birth for Australian and New Zealand citizens and Australian permanent residents

Country of Birth	Frequency	Percent
China*	33	14.9
Sri Lanka	27	12.2
India	21	9.5
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	19	8.6
Malaysia	14	6.3
England	12	5.4
Taiwan	10	4.5
Singapore	9	4.1
New Zealand	8	3.6
United States of America	7	3.2
Korea, Republic of (South)	6	2.7
South Africa	6	2.7
All other (where total n≤5)	50	22.5
Total responses	222	100
Missing	4	
Total	226	

Base: Australian and New Zealand citizens and Australian permanent residents reporting overseas birth (n=226)

** excludes SARs and Taiwan Province*

Table 10. Overseas place of birth for respondents holding temporary or 'other' entry permits

Country of Birth	Frequency	Percentage
Malaysia	89	46.1
Singapore	38	19.7
Canada	20	10.4
Botswana	12	6.2
All other (where total n≤10)	34	17.6
Total responses	193	100
Missing	2	
Total	195	

Base: Holders of temporary or 'other' entry permits who reported overseas birth (n=195)

Forty percent of respondents spoke a language other than English at their permanent home address (Table 11). Individuals who held a temporary visa were more likely to report speaking a language other than English at home (82%), compared with Australian and New Zealand

citizens and Australian permanent residents born overseas (62%), and all Australian and New Zealand citizens and Australian permanent residents, regardless of place of birth (28%).

Table 11. Language spoken by respondents other than English

Language Spoken other than English	Frequency	Percentage
No	530	60.4
Yes	348	39.6
Total responses	878	100
Missing	1	
Total	879	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Table 12 shows the most frequently reported languages among respondents who reported speaking a language other than English at home. The most frequently reported was Mandarin (23%), followed by Cantonese (15%) and Malay (13%).

Table 12. Most frequently spoken languages other than English

Language	Frequency	Percentage
Mandarin	78	23.1
Cantonese	52	15.4
Malay	44	13.1
Chinese, nec	26	7.7
Tamil	17	5.0
Sinhalese	14	4.2
Hokkien	8	2.4
Korean	8	2.4
Arabic	7	2.1
Hindi	7	2.1
African Languages, nec	6	1.8
Vietnamese	6	1.8
All other (where total n≤5)	64	19.0
Total responses	337	100
Missing	11	
Total	348	

Base: All surveyed individuals who reported speaking a language other than English (n=348)

Table 13 is limited to those respondents who are Australian or New Zealand citizens and Australian permanent residents who reported speaking a language other than English at home. Cantonese was the most frequently reported (20%), followed by Mandarin (17%).

Table 13. Most frequently spoken languages other than English for Australian and New Zealand citizens and Australian permanent residents

Language	Frequency	Percentage
Cantonese	36	19.6
Mandarin	31	16.8
Sinhalese	14	7.6
Chinese, nec	13	7.1
Tamil	12	6.5
Arabic	7	3.8
Hindi	7	3.8
Korean	7	3.8
All other (where total n≤5)	57	31.0
Total responses	184	100
Missing	4	
Total	188	

Base: Australian and New Zealand citizens and Australian permanent residents who reported speaking a language other than English (n=188)

3.4 Rural/Urban Background

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of geographical location they had lived in the longest within Australia (Table 14). The majority of respondents (82%) reported they had lived in a capital city or major urban centre the longest. A further 11% had lived mainly in a regional city or large town.

Table 14. Location of longest residency within Australia

Location within Australia	Frequency	Percentage
Capital city or major urban centre	602	81.8
Regional city or large town	78	10.6
Smaller town	56	7.6
Total responses	736	100
Missing	143	
Total	879	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Just under one fifth (19%) of all respondents perceive themselves to be from a rural background (Table 15).

Table 15. Self-perception of rural background

Perception of Rural Background	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, from rural origin	147	18.8
No rural origin	636	81.2
Total responses	783	100
Missing	96	
Total	879	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Rural perception corresponded well with the type of location an individual had lived in the longest. As presented in Table 16 the majority (92%) of Australian and New Zealand citizens and Australian permanent residents who had spent most of their time in a capital city or major urban centre did not consider themselves to be rural. This pattern was reversed for those from smaller towns. The overall pattern of increased rural perception with decreasing urban centre size was significant ($\chi^2 [6, 588] = 427.7, p < 0.001$).

Table 16. Cross tabulation of self-perception of rural background and classification of location lived in the longest

Location Lived in the Longest by Respondents	Self-perception		
	Yes	No	Total
Capital city or major urban centre (frequency)	9	468	477
<i>% within location</i>	<i>11.1</i>	<i>92.3</i>	
Regional city or large town (frequency)	39	30	69
<i>% within location</i>	<i>48.1</i>	<i>5.9</i>	
Smaller town (frequency)	33	9	42
<i>% within location</i>	<i>40.7</i>	<i>1.8</i>	
Total	81	507	588
Total percent	100	100	

Base: All Australian and New Zealand citizens and Australian permanent residents stating their location and rating their rural background (n=588)

Respondents were asked to state the name and postcode of the school where they spent their final year of secondary education. This information was used to indicate state of secondary school. Table 17 shows that the majority of respondents indicated that they had attended secondary school in NSW or Victoria (both 36%).

Table 17. Location of secondary school

State	Frequency	Percentage
New South Wales	237	36.1
Victoria	237	36.1
Queensland	90	13.7
Western Australia	10	1.5
South Australia	49	7.5
Tasmania	9	1.4
Australian Capital Territory	19	2.9
Northern territory	6	0.9
Total	657	100

Base: All individuals who attended an Australian secondary school (n=657)

3.5 Previous Higher Education

Just over a third (35%) of individuals reported having previously completed at least one university qualification. As expected, almost all respondents in graduate-entry programs reported a previous university qualification (99.7%). One percent (n=7) of those enrolled in undergraduate-entry programs also reported at least one former university qualification.

Table 18 illustrates the discipline in which the highest qualification was completed by respondents who held a previous university qualification. Forty two percent of respondents' highest qualification was in science, followed by medical science (25%) and health/allied health (11%).

Table 18. Discipline within which previous HIGHEST qualification was completed

Discipline	Frequency	Percentage
Science	129	41.7
Medical Science	76	24.6
Health/Allied Health	34	11.0
Humanities	22	7.1
Commerce/Business/Law	18	5.8
Physical Sciences	14	4.5
Other/Unknown	16	5.2
Total	309	100

Base: All individuals who reported previous qualifications (n=309)

For those respondents who reported a previous university qualification, the category of their highest qualification is presented in Table 19. Just over two thirds of respondents' (68%) highest

qualification was a bachelor degree, while 20% held either an honours degree or a postgraduate diploma/certificate.

Table 19. Category of HIGHEST qualification

Highest Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor	209	67.6
Honours	62	20.1
Postgraduate diploma/ Certificate	x	x
Master's	13	4.2
PhD	x	x
Other/Unknown	11	3.6
Total	309	100

Base: All individuals who reported previous qualifications (n=309)

3.6 Marital Status and Dependents

The majority of respondents were *single* (93%). Six percent reported being *married/living with partner*, while 1% reported being *divorced/separated*.

Respondents were asked to state the occupation of their partner (if applicable). These answers were grouped into 14 major categories* which are presented in Table 20. The respondents reported a range of partner occupations: the majority (37%) reported their partners' occupation to be *non health professional*; followed by *student* (21%); followed by *other health professional* (16%).

Table 20. Occupation of respondents' partner

Partner Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Medical practitioners	0	0.0
Other health professional	7	16.3
Non health professional	16	37.2
Managers	x	x
Self-employed	0	0.0
Technicians and trades workers	x	x
Community service workers	x	x
Clerical	0	0.0
Sales Workers	x	x
Machinery operators and drivers	0	0.0
Labourers	0	0.0
Student	9	20.9
Unemployed outside home	x	x
Other	1	2.3
Total	43	100

Base: Individuals who reported partner occupation (n=43)

**Occupation categories based on:*

*ABS Australian and New Zealand Standard class of occupations, First edition (cat.no.1220.0), revision 1
"Career decision making by postgraduate doctors" AMWAC, Dec 2005*

The number of respondents with children under the age of 16 is shown in Table 21. Ninety eight percent of individuals reported having no children, while 1% reported having one or two children, and 1% reported having three or more. Those respondents who reported having children were almost exclusively Australian citizens or Australian permanent residents (93%).

Similarly 99% of respondents reported having no dependents (people who are financially dependent on them excluding children under the age of 16 [Table 22]). Fifty one percent of those respondents with dependents were Australian citizens or Australian permanent residents.

Table 21. Number of children reported by respondents

Number of Children	Frequency	Percentage
0	864	98.3
1	x	x
2	x	x
3 or more	6	0.7
Total	879	100

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Table 22. Number of dependents reported by respondents

Number of Dependents	Frequency	Percentage
0	872	99.2
1	x	x
2 or more	x	x
Total	879	100

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Respondents were asked to indicate their source of income for education and/or living expenses (Table 23). As this is a multiple response question (respondents could mark all answers that were relevant) the percentages in the table do not add to 100%. Table 23 shows there were some differences between those enrolled in undergraduate and graduate-entry programs. Government assistance was reported far more commonly for those in graduate-entry programs than those in undergraduate-entry programs (41% and 9% respectively), as was paid employment (32% and 18% respectively). However those respondents in undergraduate-entry programs were more likely to report being supported by parents, partners or other family members, than those in graduate-entry programs (77% and 45% respectively). More undergraduate students reported holding scholarships compared with graduate-entry students (24% and 9% respectively).

Table 23. Source of income reported by respondents

Source of Income	Undergraduate-entry		Graduate-entry	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Government assistance	49	8.5	124	40.9
Parents/other family	445	77.3	137	45.2
Paid employment	101	17.5	98	32.3
Scholarship	138	24.0	26	8.6
HECS/FEE/OS HELP loan	x	x	x	x
Savings/trust fund	13	2.3	35	11.6
Personal loan	x	x	x	x
Other	9	1.6	24	7.9
Total	755		447	
Total number of students	576		303	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879), N.B. Multiple response question.

3.7 Location of Future Medical Practice

Table 24 shows respondents' preferences for location of practice on completion of their basic medical degree. Eighty percent of those responding to this question reported that they would prefer to practice within Australia. When preferences for only Australian and New Zealand citizens and Australia permanent residents were examined, 95% reported that their first preference for location of future practice was within Australia. For those on temporary entry permits, 30% reported that they would prefer to practice within Australia. The preferred states for location of future practice were NSW (32%), followed by Victoria (31%).

Table 24. Preferred location of future practice

Preferred Location	Frequency	Percentage
NSW	274	32.0
Victoria	264	30.8
Queensland	72	8.4
South Australia	50	5.8
Western Australia	7	0.8
Tasmania	x	x
Northern Territory	9	1.1
ACT	x	x
Overseas	170	19.9
Total responses	856	100
<i>Missing</i>	23	
Total	879	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Capital cities were the most preferred geographical location for future practice within Australia (53%). The percentage of individuals reporting a particular location decreased as the population of the centre decreased, with just 6% preferring smaller towns and 3% small communities (Table 25).

Table 25. Preferred geographical location of future practice

Location within Australia	Frequency	Percentage
Capital city	448	52.5
Major urban centre	77	9.0
Regional city or large town	85	10.0
Smaller town	49	5.7
Small community	25	2.9
Not applicable, not intending to work in Australia	170	19.9
Total responses	854	100
Missing	25	
Total	879	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

The preference for a particular location was significantly influenced by past exposure to that location. As presented in Table 26, 76% of those who did not consider themselves as coming from a rural background reported that they would prefer to practice in capital cities. Those perceiving their background as rural were significantly more likely to consider increasingly rural locations as a preferred option for future practice ($\chi^2 [12, 643] = 304.63, p < 0.001$).

Table 26. Cross tabulation of self-perception of rural background and preferred location for future practice

Preferred Location of Future Practice	Self-perception		Total
	Yes	No	
Capital city (frequency)	29	393	422
<i>% within location</i>	22.8	76.2	
Major urban centre (frequency)	8	64	72
<i>% within location</i>	6.3	12.4	
Regional city or large town (frequency)	47	32	79
<i>% within location</i>	37.0	6.2	
Smaller town (frequency)	30	17	47
<i>% within location</i>	23.6	3.3	
Small community (frequency)	13	10	23
<i>% within location</i>	10.2	1.9	
Total	127	516	643
Total %	100	100	

Base: All surveyed individuals nominating a preferred location and rating their rural background (n=643)

Twenty percent of all individuals indicated that they would prefer to practice overseas (n=170 [Table 25]). Table 27 shows the preferred overseas country indicated by temporary permit holders whose first preference is to practice overseas. The most frequently reported country was Malaysia (49%), followed by Singapore (21%).

The preferred location reported by Australian and New Zealand citizens and Australian permanent residents whose first preference is to practice overseas could not be reported as all values were less than 5 (total n=32).

Table 27. Preferred overseas country of practice for temporary permit holders

Country	Frequency	Percent
Malaysia	65	49.2
Singapore	28	21.2
Canada	14	10.6
Botswana	11	8.3
All other (where total n<10)	14	10.6
Total responses	132	100
Missing	1	
Total	133	

Base: Temporary permit holders who preferred to practice overseas (n=133)

N.B. 5 respondents who reported they preferred to practice overseas indicated 'other' citizenship status.

3.8 Preferred medical practice

Table 28 shows the area of future medical practice respondents would like to pursue. The majority (33%) of respondents indicated they had not yet decided which area they would like to pursue. The most frequently reported preferred area of medicine was surgery (16%), followed by paediatrics/child health (12%) and general practice (11%). More male than female respondents selected surgery as their first preference (24% compared to 11%), while more females than males selected paediatrics/child health (15% compared with 7%). The leading choices for males were surgery (24%), followed by general practice (10%). The leading choices for females were paediatrics/child health (15%), surgery (11%) and general practice (11%).

Table 28. Preferred area of practice for respondents

Area of Medicine	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Adult medicine/Internal medicine	22	6.3	27	5.3	49	5.6
Anaesthesia	x	x	x	x	11	1.3
Dermatology	x	x	x	x	14	1.6
Emergency medicine	18	5.1	27	5.3	45	5.2
General practice	36	10.2	58	11.3	95	10.9
Intensive care medicine	x	x	x	x	x	x
Medical administration	x	x	x	x	x	x
Non-specialist hospital practice	x	x	x	x	x	x
Obstetrics and gynaecology	7	2.0	33	6.4	40	4.6
Occupational medicine	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ophthalmology	16	4.5	10	2.0	26	3.0
Paediatrics and child health	23	6.5	77	15.0	100	11.5
Pathology	x	x	x	x	8	0.9
Psychiatry	8	2.3	7	1.4	16	1.8
Public health medicine	x	x	x	x	12	1.4
Radiology	x	x	x	x	9	1.0
Rehabilitation medicine	x	x	x	x	x	x
Surgery	84	23.9	57	11.1	141	16.2
Other	1	0.3	1	0.2	x	x
Not yet decided	113	32.1	168	32.8	284	32.7
Total responses	352	100	512	100	869	100
Missing	6		4		10	
Total	358		516		879	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

N.B 5 respondents did not state their gender (Table 3)

When asked if they were interested in becoming involved with medical teaching and/or research, 63% of respondents said that they would be interested (Table 29).

Table 29. Respondent's interest in Medical teaching and/or Research

Interest in Medical Teaching and/or Research	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	545	63.2
No	317	36.8
Total responses	862	100
Missing	17	
Total	879	

Base: All surveyed individuals (n=879)

Appendix

Appendix A

List of Australian medical schools:

Flinders University
Griffith University
The University of Melbourne
Monash University
The University of New South Wales
The University of Sydney

Appendix B

Link to the 2005 CMSQ:

http://www.medicaldeans.org.au/MSOD_Webpages_05_08/2005_questionnaire.pdf