

The More Things Change, The More They Stay the Same:

Key factors influencing choice of practice locations
of family physicians at four different career points

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Factors Influencing Practice Location

- Rural medical exposure
- Remuneration
- Workload
- Professional support
- Spousal employment opportunities
- Children's education
- Community characteristics
- Personal characteristics



Welcome to Northern Ontario



- Really big
 - 89% of Ontario
- Pop: 839,549
 - 7.4% of Ontario
- Primary industry sector
 - Mining and Forestry
- Public sector employment
 - Education and Health care



Northeastern Ontario Family Medicine (NOFM) Program

- Community-based, 2-yr residency program
- Northern ON regional programs begun in 1991
- Affiliated with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine
- Trains graduates from any Canadian medical school in family medicine



Methods

- Years of data: 2001-2005
- Two measures of importance:
 - Indicate the **relative importance** of different factors on influencing choice of practice location
 - Indicate the **top three factors of importance** in influencing the choice of practice location
- 5-point response scale

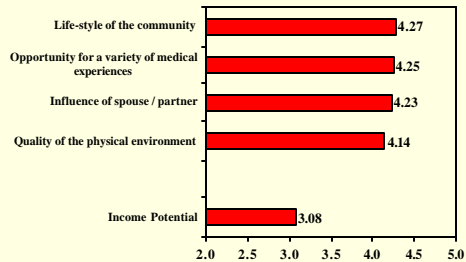
- Approved by Laurentian University REB



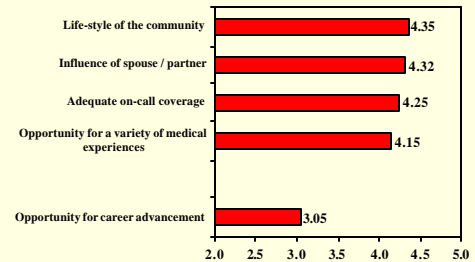
Nineteen Factors of Influence

Personal factors (3)	Influence of spouse/partner Proximity to family/relatives Proximity to friends / colleagues
Community Factors (5)	Lifestyle of the community Quality of the physical environment in the area Cultural and recreational opportunities Size / population of community Medical needs in community
Professional factors (11)	Opportunity for a variety of medical experiences Adequate on-call coverage Availability of hospital facilities / services Previous contacts with health care professionals in community Access for specialists for consultation Previous medical practice in community Availability of CME opportunities Income potential Bursaries / incentive program's return-of-service requirements Opportunity for career advancement

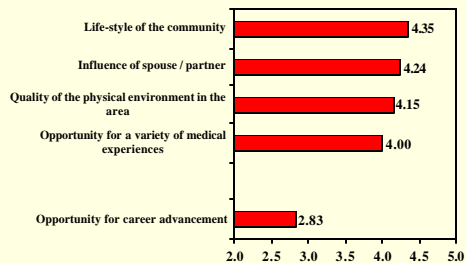
Relative Importance – Entry respondents



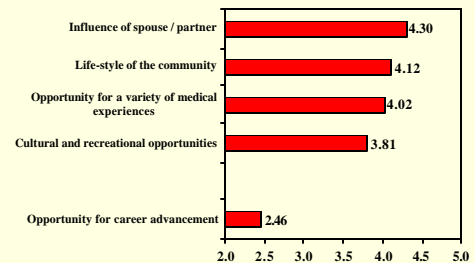
Relative Importance – Exit respondents



Relative Importance – 2-Yr respondents



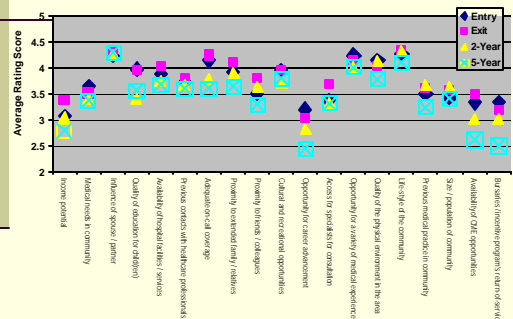
Relative Importance – 5-Yr respondents



Relative Importance

Relative Influence	Entry	Exit	2-Yr	5-Yr
Life-style of the community	1 st	1 st	1 st	2 nd
Opportunity for a variety of medical experience	2 nd	4 th	4 th	3 rd
Influence of spouse / partner	3 rd	2 nd	2 nd	1 st
Quality of the physical environment in the area	4 th	6 th	3 rd	5 th

Relative Importance



Rank Order of Importance

Rank Order of Influence	Entry	Exit	2-Yr	5-Yr
Influence of spouse / partner	1 st	1 st	1 st	1 st
Opportunity for a variety of medical experience	2 nd	4 th	4 th	3 rd
Proximity to extended family / relatives	3 rd	2 nd	2 nd	2 nd
Life-style of the community	4 th	3 rd	3 rd	4 th

Some factors influencing practice location remain stable across different career points

- Influence of spouse/partner
- Opportunity for a variety of medical experiences
- Proximity to extended family/relatives
- Lifestyle of the community
- Opportunity for career advancement
- Availability of CME opportunities



Some factors influencing practice location change between different career points

- Cultural and recreational opportunities
- Previous medical practice in the community
- Adequate on-call coverage
- Proximity to friends/colleagues



And sometimes it depends on how you ask the question

- Previous contacts with health care professionals in the community
- Medical needs in the community
- Income potential
- Bursaries/Incentives program's return-of-service requirements
- Quality of the physical environment in the area
- Quality of education for children
- Availability of hospital facilities/services
- Access for specialists for consultation,
- Size/population of community



Study Limitations

- Unable to establish causation
- Small sample size of unique group of family medicine graduates
 - Generalizability of results



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