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**Job Satisfaction, Intention to leave the Profession and Leaving the Practice of Medicine Among Doctors in Israel: Survey of Doctors Receiving their Licenses in 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006**

**Abstract**

Over the past decade there has been increasing evidence from around the globe indicating that doctors are dissatisfied with their professional practice of medicine and are abandoning that profession. The purpose of this study is to measure job satisfaction and assess how many doctors who received their license to practice in the second half of the 2000’s in Israel are abandoning the practice of medicine. The survey was conducted by telephone and encompassed 733 male and female doctors (almost an equal percentage of both, average age 36); graduates from two medical schools in Israel, who had received their medical licenses in the years 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006. The sample constitutes 61% of the doctors receiving licenses during those years.

Findings from this research indicate that 40 doctors, constituting 5.4% of the sample, had abandoned the practice of medicine. However, the percentage abandonment in the more senior years (2000 and 2002) reached a total of 8%. That finding indicates that the percentage abandonment might well reach that average after the first ten years from receipt of the license. Adding the number leaving the profession to the percentage of those graduates living abroad (6.5%) means that close to 12% of the doctors receiving their licenses in Israel are not employed as doctors in Israel.

In reference to those intending to leave the profession - 96 doctors (13%) reported that they often think about leaving the profession and 108 doctors (14.7%) reported that they had made contact with human resources companies or had attended a work interview. Only 65% of the doctors have had no thoughts about leaving the profession, or think about it rarely.

Regarding job satisfaction in medicine our findings indicate that satisfaction with external factors impinging on the profession (physical conditions, work relations, wages, the ability to find a balance between work and personal lives), is higher among those leaving than among those staying. In contrast, satisfaction with internal professional factors (the significance of the work, interest, and challenges) which are known to be motivation enhancers is higher among those staying than those leaving. It was also found that the internal factors, specifically the substance of the profession, are two factors that predict with great accuracyI intentions to leave the profession. This difference between the external and internal factors tells us that whereas the practice of medicine is steeped in self-motivation (self-fulfillment, meaningfulness) it also suffers from an unrewarding occupational environment, difficult physical conditions, and the lack of ability to balance between work and family life.

The principal conclusions arising from this research:

1. Abandoning the practice of medicine exists and could increase, if doctors’ working conditions do not change significantly.
2. The combination of a firm intention to leave the profession, low levels of satisfaction with working conditions and wages and the inability to balance between work and family life paint a gloomy picture of the attitudes adopted by those remaining in the profession towards their jobs and the ability/likelihood that they will remain when faced with alternative, more prestigious and more rewarding, employment prospects.