Occasional reports

Career prospects in medical gastroenterology in the UK: a follow up survey 1980-2

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SUMMARY In 1980 there were 279 physicians with a special interest in gastroenterology distributed through the United Kingdom and 102 trainees of senior registrar status who aspired to a consultant post in general medicine with this special interest.¹ A survey has been undertaken in September 1982 to record changes over the subsequent two year period.

NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF PHYSICIANS WITH A SPECIAL INTEREST IN GASTROENTEROLOGY (Table 1)

The total has risen to 310 with 38 new appointments (30 NHS and eight university or research), only seven of which were replacements. Six of the people appointed were not included among the trainees recorded in 1980.

STATUS IN 1982 OF THOSE WHO WERE SENIOR REGISTRARS IN 1980 (Table 2)

Twenty of the 51 who were in NHS senior registrar posts, and 12 of the 51 who were in university or research posts have become consultants. Only 11 of the 102 trainees have taken up another specialty or ceased to hold a training post.

NUMBER OF SENIOR REGISTRAR POSTS IN 1982

Most of those senior registrars who obtained consultant posts have been replaced and in 1982 there were 48 NHS senior registrars and 42 honorary senior registrars who aspired to a career with a special interest in gastroenterology.

Comment

The three consultant posts which became vacant by retirement during the two years were correctly anticipated,¹ but some other vacancies occurred by death or transfer. The net gain of 31 posts was mostly because of the appointment of a physician with a special interest in gastroenterology to 21

Table 1 *Number of consultant physicians with a special interest in gastroenterology at 1 October, 1982*

	1980	1982	New appointment	Retirement, transfer or death
England	235*	259	30	6
Wales	10	11	1	—
Scotland	26	30	4	—
N Ireland	8	10	3	1
Total	279	310	38	7

* Eight were not included in 1980 survey.

hospitals at which the speciality was not previously represented and the creation of seven new academic appointments. In 1982 the ratio of NHS senior registrar posts (48) to NHS consultant posts (273) was 1:5.7, and of all senior registrars to all consultant posts (NHS and academic) was 1:3.4. The contribution of the 42 honorary senior registrars

Table 2 *Status in 1982 of senior registrars recorded in 1980*

Type of post	1982					
	1980	Consultant		Senior registrar		
		NHS	Honorary	NHS	Honorary	Other
NHS	51	19	1	26	1	4
Honorary	51	5	7	2	30	7

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to the career structure is difficult to assess because some enter NHS posts (as senior registrar or consultant) and some enter university posts. The number of new NHS consultant posts created in the future will be determined by local demand for the specialty, the need for a balance between different specialties and financial factors. The optimum number of trainees can be gauged only when the total number of physicians with a special interest in gastroenterology reaches a constant level so that the number of vacancies likely each year by retirement, death and other reasons, can be forecast.

I thank all the correspondents who have answered my enquiries and the Committee on Gastroenterology of the Royal College of Physicians (London) which encouraged publication of this survey.

Reference

- 1 Career prospects in medical gastroenterology in the United Kingdom. *Gut* 1981; **22**: 677-81.