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Social Science & Medicine

Volume 47, Issue 9, November 1998, Pages 1383-1387

Short report

Becoming a doctor – Was it the wrong career choice?

Harri Hyppönen ... Mauri Isokoski

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(98\)00208-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(98)00208-1)

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to investigate the social background of physicians, the reasons that influenced doctors to enter medicine, and the association between those reasons and satisfaction in career choice of young Finnish doctors. An extensive postal questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of 2632 young Finnish doctors in 1988 and to 2332 doctors in 1993. We found out that majority of the respondents reported that interest in people, a wide range of job opportunities, the fact that medicine is a highly-appreciated profession, and success at school had influenced their decision to enter medicine quite a lot or very much. In 1988, 8% and in 1993, 7% of the respondents reported that interest in people had not influenced their career choice at all or only slightly. More women than men were influenced quite a lot or very much by factors like interest in people, success at school and vocation, meaning the lifelong calling to physicians' profession. A total of 22% of respondents would not enter medicine again. Vocation, interest in people and wide range of job opportunities were

medicine again. vocation, interest in people and wide range of job opportunities were significantly more rarely mentioned as an important career choice motive by these respondents. It seems that interest in human beings and vocation are important to would-be doctors, and also help them to get along in the physicians' profession. Medical schools should develop their curricula towards more humanistic medicine in order to maintain their students' interest in people.



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Keywords

medical education; career choice; Finland

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