

The award of CHF 50'000.-- is granted to the following project:

Exploring general internal medicine career choice during undergraduate and early postgraduate training: A mixed-methods study

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Abstract

Background

Switzerland faces a shortage of general internists, with a potential impact on population health. The main drivers of this shortage are increasing demand due to population development, ageing and retirement of the physician population, and an insufficient supply of young general internists to fill this gap. It is thus crucial to increase the attractiveness of general internal medicine careers, and more specifically primary care, during undergraduate and postgraduate medical training. Several aspects are known to influence career choice during medical school, but the extent to which students and young physicians are influenced by various factors needs to be explored in detail.

Objectives

Our study aims to improve our understanding of the mechanisms that act on students' career choice processes and how they influence the choice of postgraduate training. The objectives are to explore the development of career preferences during undergraduate and early postgraduate training.

Methods

We plan to use a mixed qualitative and quantitative design, using our recently published framework of primary care career choice as a conceptual basis. In the quantitative part, career choice data from a cohort study will be analysed and used to describe trajectories of

career choice during medical school. This will be used as a basis for the qualitative part, in which semi-structured interviews with cohort participants will be conducted. Participants will be in their first year of postgraduate training. Interviews will be based on our conceptual framework and explore participants' views on their career choice development and different levels of influence.

Expected outcomes and benefits

Study results will enhance our understanding of the mechanisms behind the development of career choices during medical school with a focus on general internal medicine careers, and their impact on choices relating to postgraduate training. The findings will be used for planning general internal medicine curricula, with the aim of increasing the number of graduates choosing to pursue their postgraduate training in a generalist specialty such as general internal medicine. The findings will also serve as a basis for a larger-scale follow-up study aiming to understand career choice during postgraduate training.

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