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2014 Work locations of Memorial graduates: Where are the family doctors?

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Purpose: Due to continuing concern over physician shortages and poor retention, particularly in rural areas, closer examination into the migration patterns and practice locations of medical school graduates is warranted. This study updates information about the contribution of the Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) medical school to physician supply in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and in Canada. It will also describe any changes to the distribution of the physician workforce over time, and identify predictors of practice location. **Methods:** We linked data from graduating class lists, the alumni, and post-graduate databases with Scott's Medical database. Our sample included all MUN graduates from the class of 1973 to 2008, with the exclusion of those who had died, retired, those who were sponsored by the military or Malaysian government, and those whose 2014 practice locations were unknown. We then examined the 2014 work locations to identify the predictors of working in 1) Canada, 2) NL, 3) rural Canada, and 4) rural NL. We used chi-square analyses to identify the differences between each outcome and the predictor variables, and multiple logistic regression to identify significant ($p < 0.05$) predictors. **Results:** In 2014, 1647 (88.1%) of MUN graduates were working in Canada, 638 (34.2%) in NL, 217 (11.6%) in rural Canada, and 92 (4.9%) in rural NL. Graduates with rural backgrounds, Newfoundlanders, and 1980s-2000s graduates were more likely to work in Canada. Physicians with rural backgrounds, Newfoundlanders, 2000s graduates, and former MUN residents were more likely to work in NL. Graduates with rural backgrounds and family physicians were more likely to work in rural Canada. Lastly, physicians with rural backgrounds, Newfoundlanders, former MUN residents, and family physicians were more likely to work in rural NL. **Conclusions:** Although MUN graduates comprise a growing proportion of the NL physician workforce, they form only one-fifth of the rural physician workforce in NL (unchanged since 2004). The study highlights the downstream work location impacts of the changing characteristics of medical school graduates in NL, who increasingly opt for specialist practice and residency training outside the province.