The fate of ophthalmology trainees in the UK—CCT Holders 2017 to 2021

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Purpose

The Ophthalmologists in Training Group (OTG) first conducted a survey to ascertain the outcomes of CCT holders in the years 2007 to 2010 [1] to determine the impact of the "new" ophthalmic training programme at the time.

The group has completed a recent survey for the CCT holders between the years of 2017 to 2021, noting the fate of the final generation of trainees in what we now call the "old" curriculum.

We wish to use this exercise to highlight the trend of post-CCT holder in their consultant SIA choice, and the region they have taken-up a consultant post.

Method

A list of candidates and their respective deaneries attaining CCT between the years of 2017 to 2021 was provided by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists.

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401 trainees in Ophthalmic Specialist Training (OST) attained CCT

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Information regarding their fellowship post, consultant posts was collated with respect to the specialist interest areas and location by deanery.

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Analysis was made to:

- proportion of consultant posts by specialist interest areas and trends during this period
- location of candidates taking up a consultant post in relation to their region of training and region of post-CCT fellowship

Figure 1: Methodology

Results

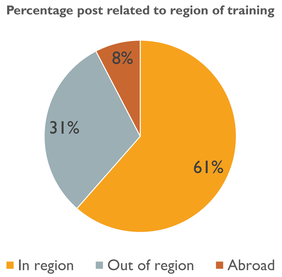


Figure 2: Consultant posts by region

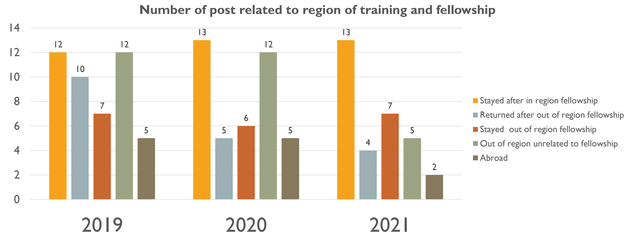


Figure 3: Consultant posts by region per year

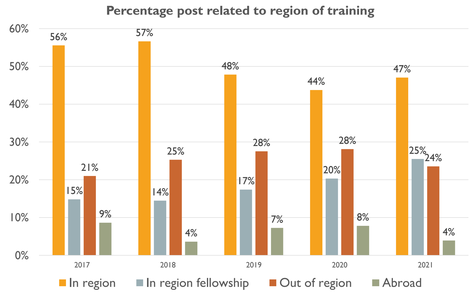


Figure 4: Consultant posts by training region and fellowship

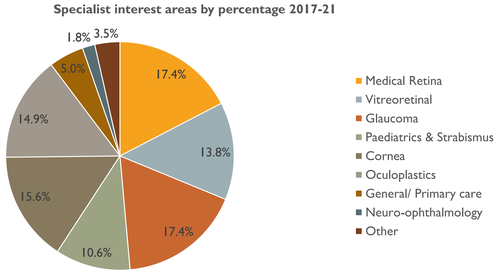


Figure 5: Consultant posts by specialist interest areas

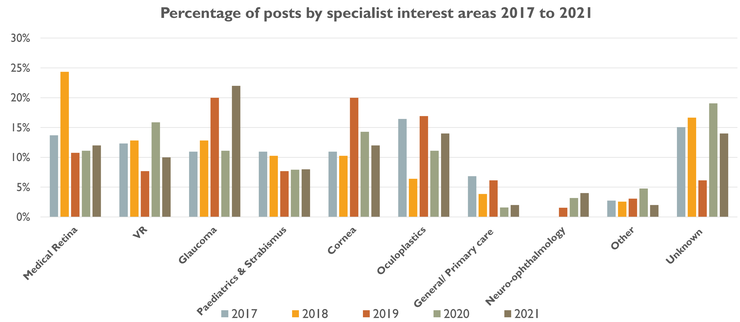


Figure 6: Consultant posts by specialist interest areas per year

Discussion

Compared to the previous period of 2011 to 2016[2], uptake of consultant posts within the region of training remains strong and comparable (Figure 4). About 2/3 of trainees stayed in their region of training.

Further analysis was conducted on a subset of available data from period 2019-2021, about 1/3 (35%) of trainees stayed in their deanery to undertake fellowship training.

Interestingly, 19% (20/108) trainees that undertook a fellowship outside of their region of training and took up a consultant post there. 18% (19/108) of post-CCT holders return to their original region of training to take up a consultant post after an out-of-region fellowship.

Region of OST training and fellowship training plays a significant part in influencing consultant post uptake by trainees. Level 4 training in the new curriculum may impact patterns of post-CCT fellowship uptake and the effects are yet to be seen.

Compared to previous period of 2011 to 2016, distribution of specialist interest areas remains evenly distributed (Figure 2). One notable trend observed is the reduction of medical retina posts in this period.

We hope this data will inform us on what the current state of the ophthalmic training is towards consultant practice. We will continue to keep a keen eye on how the new curriculum may change the trend of consultant post uptake within region and the number of fellowship/level 4 training that takes place in or out of region.

Conclusions

- Region of OST training is a major determining factor of area trainee take up their consultant post, but significant number choose to remain in the area where they undertook their fellowship.
- Distribution of specialist areas are stable, except for medical retina which has declined from the previous years.[2]
- We are interested to see the effect of the new curriculum in post-CCT fellowship numbers and areas trainees take up a consultant post.

References

1. Bowes O, Pradeep A, Lim LT, Grant S, Dean WH, O'Gallagher M, et al. The fate of ophthalmology trainees in the UK—CCT Holders 2007 to 2010. Eye. 2015; 29(3): 445.

2. McCullagh D. Response to "The fate of ophthalmology trainees in the UK—CCT holders 2007 to 2010". Eye. 2020; 34(4): 785.

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