Building capacity for WIL through knowledge of graduate workforce characteristics

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Background: The Australian physiotherapy workforce is changing. The ability to build capacity in WIL must be based on relevant up-to-date knowledge of this changing workforce. Knowledge of employment patterns is essential to direct planning of WIL in the undergraduate curriculum.

Aim: The aim of this study was to determine workforce characteristics and job satisfaction for graduates from the School of Physiotherapy, The University of Notre Dame Australia.

Method: An online survey was conducted of all contactable graduates from 2006-2012 with a 50% response rate (n=157).

Results: The analysis of survey results demonstrated the clinical areas, settings, workload, remuneration and job satisfaction of Notre Dame graduates and compared this data to the Australian physiotherapy workforce.

The results identified the links between curriculum, clinical placements and workforce characteristics, highlighting the spread of workforce directly linked to focuses in the undergraduate curriculum. Findings also revealed the areas of job satisfaction linked to clinical streams in the workforce.

Summary: This study highlighted the role of WIL in building capacity in areas in workforce need. The findings will direct the planning of WIL in the undergraduate curriculum with the aim to produce better-equipped graduates with realistic career expectations.

Keywords: WIL, curriculum, physiotherapy, career expectations