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GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION AND EFFECTS ON THE RECRUITMENT OF PSYCHIATRISTS IN AUSTRIA

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**Objectives:** The recruitment of medical graduates into and retention within the specialty will be one of the major problems confronting psychiatry.

**Aim:** The aim of the study was to explore how many physicians intended to be psychiatrists and how many of those physicians practising as psychiatrists originally desired this area of expertise

**Methods:** For this cross-sectional survey, a self-administered questionnaire with 12 items was sent to all licensed physicians (n=8127), based on the register of the Vienna Medical Chamber in June 2000

**Results:** 2736 respondents (34%) completed the questionnaire validly. 50.3% (m: 43.2%; f: 58.6%) of all physicians in Vienna did not achieve their desired subject, whilst 86% of psychiatrists did so. These study results represent the highest percentage compared to other medical specialisations. Further, 6% of all physicians (m: 5%; f: 7%) initially defined psychiatry as their desired medical career regardless whether they attained this specialty later on or not. An average of 9% of all physicians changed their minds about their preferred specialty during their training.

**Conclusions:** Compared with other specialties the average number of physicians who practice a specialty different from the one desired is low in psychiatry. We think that this fact constitutes a favourable aspect with regard to recruitment of graduates for specialty training in psychiatry. Data found in this survey are similar to other studies conducted in German speaking countries, when focussing on psychiatry as desired career.