



Medical Schools Council

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Press release

Medical Schools welcome progress in clinical academic staffing levels

Data published today by the Medical Schools Council (MSC) reveal a 1% increase in the number of clinical Professors, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers during the 2008-09 academic year, to a total of 3087 Full Time Equivalents (FTE).

Medical Schools are encouraged by the increase in staffing levels for the third consecutive year, yet remain concerned that this is still 12% fewer than in 2000. The MSC is especially encouraged by the 20% increase in the number of FTE Clinical Lecturers. The majority of this is in England (72 FTE), with an increase of 5% (6 FTE) in the Devolved Administrations. Despite this, there are still 43% fewer Clinical Lectures than nine years ago.

The increase provides evidence that sustained investment into early career grades is enabling more medical trainees to enter the clinical academic pathway. There is also encouraging evidence that younger clinical academics are being drawn from a more diverse population in terms of gender, age and ethnicity.

However, there are still areas of concern:

- Despite a 4% increase in the number of women lecturers (to 25% in 2009), women continue to be underrepresented at senior clinical academic grades, representing just 14% of all clinical professors
- 62% of clinical academics are aged over 46, compared with 53% in 2004
- Unless the level of recruitment of new clinical academics is sustained or increased, expertise and leadership in clinical academia will be lost through retirement

In addition, the very low staffing levels in some specialties – notably Anaesthetics, Paediatrics & Child Health, Pathology and Psychiatry - must be addressed urgently.

Professor Tony Weetman, Chair of MSC, said 'Clinical academia is one of the most rewarding medical careers involving, as it does, research, teaching and patient care. We are delighted by the increase in number of clinical academics reported by this year's annual survey, in particular by the increase in the number of Lecturers'.

'The challenges in delivering high quality research and teaching, alongside clinical service to the NHS, will be undoubtedly become greater in the context of budget cuts to both the health and higher education sectors. It is therefore vital that schemes to support researchers and aspiring clinical academics continue to receive support'.

The survey can be accessed online at: www.medschools.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/Staffing-survey-2009.aspx

Notes to editors:

1. Medical clinical academics are those doctors who treat patients in the NHS, and are also responsible for educating the doctors of the future and for carrying out research into all aspects of health and disease. UK Clinical Academics enjoy an unparalleled international reputation that must be protected. Clinical academics are at the forefront of medical discoveries. NHS clinicians also make a significant commitment to teaching and research in the service environment and it is vital that they too are supported and not overwhelmed by clinical commitments.
2. This is the eighth data update to be published by the Medical Schools Council since 2000. 33 Medical Schools returned data on clinical academic grade, specialty, percentage full-time, Clinical Excellence Award, source of funding, age, gender and ethnicity for each individual in post as at 31 July 2009.
3. The Medical Schools Council represents the interests and ambitions of UK Medical Schools as they relate to the generation of national health, wealth and knowledge through biomedical research and the profession of medicine. For further information about the work of the Medical Schools Council please see www.medschools.ac.uk
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