END-OF-CAREER PRACTICE PATTERNS OF PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS IN ONTARIO

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Understanding how medical practice patterns change over time will help to more accurately predict physicians' retirement behaviours. This, in turn, will facilitate more effective physician workforce planning and enhance Canadian health workforce policy decision-making.

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PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are twofold: 1 – To characterize the process of physician attrition from the workforce. 2 – To generate knowledge that will facilitate prediction of physician workforce trends and enhance physician workforce planning.

FINDINGS/IMPACT/OUTCOMES

A sample of 21,240 primary care physicians who provided office-based comprehensive care in Ontario between 1992 and 2012 has been identified and data analysis is in progress. Workload indices – billings, services provided, full-time equivalent status, number of days worked, and panel size – and participation in office-based care are examined longitudinally. Key career milestones are identified, including: the age range through which physicians demonstrate peak workload, the average age at which physicians begin to decrease workload, the length of the period of phased retirement, and the average ages at which physicians stop providing office-based care and stop practising entirely. Antecedents to attrition from office-based practice and retirement and the influence of various factors on physician practice patterns are also examined.

CONCLUSIONS

In rural and remote Canada, a significant percentage of nurses plan to retire within the next 5 years and a substantial number are retired and still working. Strategies that are specifically tailored to the realities of rural and remote communities, workplaces, and the nursing workforce are needed.