Doctors Voice Biggest Frustrations with Practicing Medicine

The results of our 2013 Great American Physician Survey indicate how physicians' frustrations with the profession vary depending on practice environment.

Source: Physicians Practice

What's your biggest frustration with your career as a physician? If it's too much third-party interference you're not alone.

That's according to the results of Physicians Practice's 2013 Great American Physician Survey, in which we asked readers: "If you had to pick one reason above all others for not becoming a physician, what would it be?"

Too much third-party interference received the highest percentage of responses, with more than one-third of our 1,100 physician survey takers citing it as the main reason. Other popular responses included stress (16 percent cited this as the main reason); declining ability to practice independently (14 percent cited this as the main reason); the profession is not as personally or professionally rewarding as I thought it would be (14 percent cited this as the main reason); and compensation is not high enough (10 percent cited this as the main reason).

To gain further insight, Physicians Practice analyzed the survey findings to determine how physicians' frustrations varied depending on whether respondents were employed in hospitals or other institutions, employed in practices, or partners/co-owners of practices. Here are some of the more surprising findings:

**Partners/co-owners**

When asked: "If you had to pick one reason above all others for not becoming a physician, what would it be?" The most popular response among all three groups (partners/co-owners, physicians employed by hospitals or other institutions, and physicians employed in practices) was too much third-party interference. Partners/co-owners, however, cited third-party interference as the main reason more often than the other two groups. In fact, 41 percent of respondents cited it as the main reason.

The second most popular response among partners/co-owners was declining ability to practice independently (with 19 percent of respondents citing it as the main reason). Other popular responses among this group included stress, and the profession is not as personally or professionally rewarding as I thought it would be (each reason was selected by 12 percent of respondents).

**Physicians employed by hospitals, other institutions**

While too much third-party interference was the most popular reason cited for not becoming a physician among this group of respondents, it was the most popular response by a much smaller margin than in the other two groups. Only 22 percent of respondents cited it as the main reason. Stress, the second most popular response among this group of physicians, was cited as the main reason by 19 percent of respondents.

Physicians employed by hospitals and other institutions also cited compensation not being high enough as the main reason they would not become a physician more often than physicians in the other two groups. About 16 percent of these physicians cited it as the main reason, while 12 percent of physicians employed in practices cited it as the main reason, and only 7 percent of partners/co-owners cited it as the main reason.

Physicians employed by hospitals or other institutions also cited long hours as a key frustration more often than other groups. Eleven percent cited it as the main reason they would not become a physician, about twice the percentage of partners/co-owners and as physicians employed in practices who cited it as the main reason.

**Physicians employed in practices**

Similar to the other two groups, too much third party interference received the highest percent of responses (35 percent) when physicians employed in practice were asked to name the main reason.
they would not become a physician. A higher percentage of physicians employed in practices, however, cited professional or personal reward not aligning with expectations as the main reason they would not become a physician. In fact, 21 percent of these physicians said it was the main reason, while only 13 percent of physicians employed in hospitals or other institutions, and 13 percent of partners/co-owners cited it as the main reason.

The next most popular reason cited by physicians employed in practices was stress, with eighteen percent citing it as the main reason. That's about the same percentage of physicians employed in hospitals who cited it as the main reason.

*Full data for this year's survey will be available online in mid-August 2013 and in the September 2013 issue of Physicians Practice.*

*How do the survey responses match up to what you're experiencing in your practice setting?*

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