ABSTRACT — Information was obtained for about 95% of 1974 and 1977 qualifiers from British/UK medical schools. The percentages giving medicine as a career choice were much lower some years after qualifying than in the pre-registration year. A third of those working in medicine 13 years after qualifying were consultants, but 9 years after qualifying almost 90% of those who had initially given medicine as a first career choice had not become senior registrars or consultants in a medical discipline. Just over 6% of respondents had obtained medical experience abroad at some stage. Only 10 consultants in medical disciplines described having worked in general practice. Among 1974 qualifiers who had been medical registrars, 34% were medical consultants, 6% were consultants in non-medical specialties and 20% were general practitioners, when surveyed 13 years after qualifying. Details are given of individual medical specialties.

As a major part of a large survey of career choices and career progress, we sent questionnaires at 2-yearly intervals to doctors who qualified from British medical schools in the calendar year 1974, and from UK medical schools (ie including Queen’s University, Belfast) in the calendar year 1977. The most recent questionnaires were sent to 1974 qualifiers in 1987 and to 1977 qualifiers in 1986. Altogether we identified 2,350 qualifiers in 1974 and 3,157 in 1977. Of these, 2,272 (96.7%) and 2,988 (94.6%), respectively, replied to one or more of our questionnaires; they are referred to as respondents. Since each questionnaire asked for retrospective information about jobs and qualifications, we have been able to build up an almost complete picture of the career progress of these cohorts of qualifiers. This paper deals with their intentions and experiences in relation to medicine and the medical specialties.

The term medicine is used in this context to comprise all the 'medical' specialties shown in Table 1. It therefore includes, for example, communicable diseases, genito-urinary medicine, haematology and tropical medicine, but does not include paediatrics or occupational health. The term ‘general medicine’ is used to include all respondents who gave their career choices or jobs as ‘medicine’, ‘general medicine’, ‘academic medicine’ or medicine/general medicine with a special interest, for example in gastroenterology or diabetes. ‘Other medicine’ includes doctors who specified career choices or jobs in allergy, aviation medicine, metabolic medicine, nutrition, sports medicine, terminal care and underwater medicine.

Career choices

Table 1 shows the percentages of respondents giving various branches of medicine as their first choice of career at different times after qualifying. It shows a striking decline in the number of choices as the years go by, and demonstrates that this falling off is almost entirely due to the smaller number of choices for general medicine. Among the individual medical specialties, proportions of choices remain fairly constant over the years except for the substantial rise in choices for geriatrics which appear to level off after 8 or 9 years.

Career progress

Table 2 shows the medical posts held by 1974 and 1977 qualifiers at equivalent times after qualifying — in April of the ninth year after leaving medical school, which is the latest time for which we have comparable data for the two cohorts. Of the 1974 qualifiers working in medicine, 9.4% had achieved consultant status, compared with 7.6% of 1977 qualifiers. This difference is reflected in the fact that 32.1% of 1977 qualifiers were in the senior registrar grade, compared with only 23.9% of 1974 qualifiers. Substantial numbers of people from both years were in academic posts, and these include appointments variously described as research assistant, research associate, research registrar etc. Also, 20% of those working in medicine occupied clinical assistantships or similar posts and 76.3% of these doctors were combining their medical commitment with general practice.

Table 3 shows the latest information available from our data — the medical posts held by 1974 qualifiers 13 years after leaving medical school. By this time 33.8% have achieved consultant status. The numbers
Table 1. Medicine: percentages of first choices of career (tied or untied) corrected for ties.

| Specialty                     | Year of qualifying | Years after qualifying |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
|                               | 1  | 3  | 5  | 7  | 9  | 11 | 13  |
| General medicine              | 1974| 18.4| 8.5| 5.4| 4.2| 3.8| 4.2| 4.0|
|                               | 1977| 16.2| 7.5| 4.8| 3.5| 3.6| NA | NA |
| Cardiology                    | 1974| 0.7 | 0.4| 0.7| 0.7| 0.6| 0.5| 0.6|
|                               | 1977| 0.7 | 0.6| 0.7| 0.7| 0.6| 0.5| NA |
| Clinical pharmacology         | 1974| 0.4 | 0.2| 0.2| 0.4| 0.3| 0.3| 0.3|
|                               | 1977| 0.1 | 0.1| 0.1| 0.1| 0.1| 0.1| NA |
| Communicable diseases         | 1974| -   | -  | 0.1| 0.2| 0.2| 0.3| 0.2|
|                               | 1977| 0.2 | 0.2| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2|
| Dermatology                   | 1974| 0.8 | 1.1| 1.0| 0.9| 0.9| 0.9| 0.8|
|                               | 1977| 0.6 | 1.1| 1.1| 1.1| 1.1| 0.9| 0.8|
| Endocrinology                 | 1974| 0.1 | 0.4| 0.1| 0.5| 0.3| 0.1| 0.1|
|                               | 1977| 0.2 | 0.3| 0.4| 0.4| 0.4| NA | NA |
| Gastroenterology              | 1974| 0.2 | 0.5| 0.3| 0.3| 0.2| 0.3| 0.3|
|                               | 1977| 0.2 | 0.1| 0.1| 0.1| 0.1| 0.1| NA |
| Genito-urinary medicine       | 1974| -   | -  | 0.2| 0.2| 0.3| 0.3| 0.3|
|                               | 1977| -   | -  | -  | 0.1| 0.2| NA | NA |
| Geriatrics                    | 1974| 0.3 | 0.4| 0.8| 0.9| 1.1| 1.1| 1.2|
|                               | 1977| 0.3 | 0.8| 0.6| 0.8| 1.1| 1.1| 1.2|
| Haematology                   | 1974| 1.1 | 0.7| 1.3| 1.5| 1.3| 1.5| 1.3|
|                               | 1977| 0.9 | 1.3| 1.3| 1.4| 1.3| 1.3| 1.3|
| Medical genetics               | 1974| 0.2 | 0.2| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2|
|                               | 1977| -   | -  | 0.1| 0.1| 0.2| NA | NA |
| Nephrology                    | 1974| 0.1 | 0.4| 0.2| 0.3| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2|
|                               | 1977| 0.1 | 0.1| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2|
| Neurology                     | 1974| 0.7 | 1.5| 0.9| 0.8| 0.8| 0.9| 0.9|
|                               | 1977| 0.5 | 0.6| 0.5| 0.5| 0.5| 0.5| 0.5|
| Rheumatology                  | 1974| 0.2 | 0.5| 0.7| 0.7| 0.6| 0.7| 0.9|
|                               | 1977| 0.2 | 0.7| 0.4| 0.5| 0.6| 0.7| 0.9|
| Thoracic medicine             | 1974| 0.1 | 0.3| 0.5| 0.6| 0.6| 0.4| 0.2|
|                               | 1977| 0.2 | 0.5| 1.0| 0.8| 0.5| 0.4| 0.2|
| Tropical medicine             | 1974| 0.2 | 0.3| 0.1| -  | -  | -  | 0.1|
|                               | 1977| 0.3 | 0.2| 0.1| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2| 0.2|
| Other medicine                | 1974| 0.2 | 0.4| 0.3| 0.3| 0.6| 0.5| 0.5|
|                               | 1977| 0.4 | 0.6| 0.4| 0.4| 0.6| NA | NA |
| Medicine Total                | 1974| 23.6| 15.8|12.8|12.6|12.0|12.3|12.2|
|                               | 1977| 21.0| 14.9|12.1|11.0|11.3|NA | NA |

NA = No information available; 1977 qualifiers were not surveyed at 11 and 13 years.

occupying clinical assistants have also risen, from 20% to 29.9% of those working in medicine, although there were only three more general practitioners in this group than 4 years earlier. Fewer academic posts were held, and this is in accordance with the transient nature of many of these appointments, and the fact that they tend to be occupied en route to a senior registrarship or consultant appointment.

Of all respondents from the two years, 6.2% had at some time held medical appointments overseas, most of them in general medicine, with cardiology as the next most popular specialty. Of those who had been abroad, 29.3% had spent more than 2 years overseas and 9.9% had held four or more jobs abroad. The commonest location of medical jobs abroad was the USA (122 posts), closely followed by New Zealand (112), and the next commonest were Australia (89 posts) and Canada (69); 10.0% of the medical posts abroad were classed as academic.

Senior registrars and consultants in medicine

Table 4 shows the approximate time taken to achieve a substantive (ie non-locum) senior registrar or consultant post for the first time. Although most respondents gave the month and year of obtaining the relevant posts, we did not, in many cases, know the exact month of qualifying from medical school. The numbers of years shown in the table are therefore derived by subtracting the year of qualification from the year of first substantive appointment in the grade concerned. The figures in Table 4 exclude holders of
Table 2. Medical posts held by 1974 and 1977 qualifiers, 9 years after leaving medical school.

| Specialty                        | SHO | Reg. | Sen. reg. | Cons. | Academic | Clinical asst etc (GP)* | Other† | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----|------|-----------|-------|----------|-------------------------|--------|-------|
| General medicine                 | 2   | 11   | 80        | 14    | 41       | 19 (14)                 | 34     | 201   |
| Cardiology                       |     | -    | 5         | -     | 19       | 9 (7)                   | 6      | 39    |
| Clinical pharmacology            |     | -    | 1         | -     | 11       | -                       | 2      | 14    |
| Communicable diseases            |     | -    | 2         | -     | 1        | -                       | 2      | 5     |
| Dermatology                      |     | 7    | 17        | 6     | 7        | 15 (12')                | 1      | 53    |
| Endocrinology                    |     | -    | 1         | -     | 11       | 8 (8ª)                  | 6      | 26    |
| Gastroenterology                 |     | -    | 1         | -     | 6        | 9 (9)                   | 3      | 19    |
| Genito-urinary medicine          |     | 1    | 3         | 4     | 2        | 7 (2)                   | -      | 17    |
| Geriatrics                       | 2   | 5    | 16        | 15    | 3        | 23 (19')                | 6      | 70    |
| Haematology                      | 1   | 4    | 31        | 10    | 10       | 3 (2)                   | 3      | 62    |
| Medical genetics                 |     | -    | -         | 2     | 1        | 1 (-)                   | 3      | 7     |
| Nephrology                       |     | 1    | 3         | 1     | 3        | 1 (-)                   | 2      | 11    |
| Neurology                        |     | 7    | 7         | 1     | 8        | 7 (4')                  | 5      | 35    |
| Rheumatology                     | 2   | 3    | 12        | -     | 7        | 8 (6)                   | 3      | 35    |
| Thoracic medicine                |     | 2    | 5         | 2     | 9        | 6 (5)                   | 3      | 27    |
| Tropical medicine                |     | -    | -         | -     | 2        | -                       | -      | 2     |
| Other medicine                   |     | 2    | -         | 1     | 3        | 15 (12ª)                | 13     | 34    |
| **Medicine Total**               | 7   | 43   | 184       | 56    | 144      | 131 (100)               | 92     | 657   |

* Number of general practitioners in brackets (including six in general medicine and one in cardiology abroad)
† Including posts abroad and in the armed forces
ª Including one clinical assistant in dermatology and community paediatrics
§ Including seven clinical assistants in diabetes
≤ Including one clinical assistant in geriatrics and orthopaedics, and one in geriatrics and psychiatry
ª Including one clinical assistant in neurology, accident and emergency, and ultrasound
ª Including eight clinical assistants in two different medical specialties, and one in terminal care

An important point to note about Table 4 is that 1977 qualifiers had only been followed for 9 years, while 1974 qualifiers had been followed for 15 years. Among the 1977 qualifiers, therefore, those who had become senior registrars by the time they last replied to us, and even more so those who had become consultants, tended to be the fast-moving 'high fliers' within their various specialties. For this reason, the average times for the two cohorts are not strictly comparable, and this is confirmed by the fact that, as a whole, the 1977 qualifiers were moving less rapidly towards consultant appointments than the 1974 qualifiers at 9 years after leaving medical school.

Table 4 shows that, for medicine as a whole, the rate of progress towards senior registrar and consultant appointments was very much the same as the average for all hospital specialties. In some medical specialties, such as neurology, progress was slower than average.

General medicine was the specific first choice of career 1 and/or 3 years after qualifying of 79.0% of those doctors who had achieved senior registrar or consultant status in this specialty. Likewise, neurology had been the first choice of almost 70% of senior registrars or consultants in neurology. By contrast, considerably less than half the doctors who became senior registrars or consultants in the majority of medical specialties had named the specific discipline as a career choice soon after leaving medical school — only 16.3% of those in geriatrics. This fits with the changes in choice over the years shown in Table 1, and reveals once more the prevailing lack of opportunity for finding out about many branches of medical work during the undergraduate course and soon after qualifying. It also reflects the reappraisal of career opportunities in general medicine as compared with some of the medical specialties, and the awakening of interest in specific aspects of medical work as more clinical experience is gained. Some idea of the size of the career problem for medicine as a whole is given by the fact that, of the 1977 qualifiers who gave medicine as their first choice of career 1 and/or 3 years after qualifying, 88% had not achieved senior registrar or consultant status in a medical discipline 9 years after leaving medical school.

Table 5 shows the variety of experience obtained on the way to becoming a consultant in a medical discipline. Outside general medicine and the medical specialties, this appeared to be quite limited: only ten people altogether, from both cohorts, had had experience in general practice, and only seven in the basic sciences. This no doubt indicates that the generality of 'medicine' is a very wide field, within which most doctors feel that they can obtain as much variety of rele-
Among the doctors who had been senior registrars in medicine, twelve 1974 qualifiers and seven 1977 qualifiers were known to have worked part-time at some stage. Seventeen of these nineteen respondents were women. At their latest replies to us, five were working in dermatology, all of whom were 1974 qualifiers; four were in haematology, three being 1974 qualifiers; eight others were each in a different branch of medicine; one was in general practice and one was unemployed. Thirteen were currently part-time senior registrars and two were full-time senior registrars, one after doing part-time sessional work in genito-urinary medicine and one with concurrent locum registrar sessions. One was a part-time consultant following a part-time senior registrarship, one was a part-time clinical assistant, one had become a general practice trainee and one, previously working in haematology, was unemployed as a result of moving with her husband.

Five respondents specifically mentioned maternity and family commitments as a reason for breaks in employment and part-time work, and the same could be inferred in some other cases. Five respondents mentioned moves with a husband, and in one case this problem was complicated by ill-health. Two respondents mentioned having used the women doctors' retainer scheme.

Table 3. Medical posts held by 1974 qualifiers in 1987.

| Specialty                        | SHO | Reg. | Sen. reg. | Cons. | Academic | Consult etc (GP)* | Other/?b | Total |
|---------------------------------|-----|------|-----------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------|-------|
| General medicine                | 1   | 2    | 19        | 43    | 13       | 6 (6)             | 10       | 94    |
| Cardiology                      | -   | -    | -         | -     | -        | 3 (2)             | 4        | 12    |
| Clinical pharmacology           | -   | -    | -         | -     | -        | 5                  | -        | 6     |
| Communicable diseases           | -   | -    | -         | -     | -        | 1                  | -        | 2     |
| Dermatology                     | -   | -    | 2         | 7     | 1        | 12 (9)            | 2        | 24    |
| Endocrinology                   | -   | -    | 1         | -     | -        | 8 (6)*            | 1        | 11    |
| Gastroenterology                | -   | -    | -         | 2     | -        | 8 (7)             | 2        | 12    |
| Genito-urinary medicine         | -   | -    | -         | 4     | 1        | 6 (2)*            | -        | 11    |
| Geriatrics                      | 1   | -    | 2         | 15    | 1        | 11 (11)*          | 1        | 31    |
| Haematology                     | -   | -    | 4         | 15    | 4        | 2 (1)*            | 1        | 26    |
| Medical genetics                | -   | -    | -         | -     | -        | 2                  | -        | 4     |
| Nephrology                      | -   | -    | -         | -     | -        | 1 (6)*            | 1        | 2     |
| Neurology                       | -   | -    | 4         | 4     | 5        | 2 (2)             | 2        | 17    |
| Rheumatology                    | -   | -    | 1         | 7     | 3        | 10 (7)            | 2        | 23    |
| Thoracic medicine               | -   | -    | -         | 2     | -        | 5 (5)             | -        | 7     |
| Tropical medicine               | -   | -    | -         | -     | -        | 2                  | -        | 3     |
| Other medicine                  | -   | -    | -         | 2     | 1        | 18b (11)          | 5        | 26    |
| **Medicine Total**              | 2   | 2    | 33        | 105   | 42       | 93 (69)           | 34       | 311   |

* Numbers of general practitioners in brackets (including two in general medicine abroad)

b Including posts abroad and in the armed forces

 Including one also working in occupational medicine

 Including five clinical assistants in diabetes

 Including one senior registrar in community medicine

 Including one also clinical assistant in orthopaedics, one also clinical assistant in ENT, and one also clinical assistant in casualty

 Including one also clinical assistant in general surgery

 Including thirteen clinical assistants in two different medical specialties (five general practitioners)

vant experience as they need. A number of those who had become consultants had not, according to our records, held regular NHS senior registrar posts but had obtained equivalent experience in other ways, including appointments abroad.

Taking 1974 and 1977 qualifiers together, 45.1% of those who had become senior registrars in medicine held their senior registrarships in the region of their medical school, 31.4% of those who had become consultants in medicine held their consultant posts in the region of their medical school, 20.7% had held both senior registrar and consultant posts in the region of their medical school, and 40.5% had been senior registrars and consultants in the same region, regardless of which region it was. The inclusion of Belfast graduates in the 1977 survey affects these figures, since fourteen out of fourteen Belfast graduates had become senior registrars in medicine in Northern Ireland, and four out of four had become consultants in medicine in Northern Ireland. Even when these figures are excluded from the 1977 data, 45.6% of 1977 qualifiers had become senior registrars in the region of their medical school, compared with 40.2% of the 1974 qualifiers. Similarly, 34.5% of 1977 qualifiers had become consultants in their medical school region compared with only 27.9% of 1974 qualifiers.
Table 4. Years taken to achieve first non-locum senior registrar and consultant posts.

| Specialty                | 1974 qualifiers | 1977 qualifiers | 1974 qualifiers | 1977 qualifiers |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                          | No. | Range | Mean | No. | Range | Mean | No. | Range | Mean | No. | Range | Mean |
| General medicine         | 60   | 4-12  | 7.8  | 49  | 5-9   | 7.1  | 42  | 7-13  | 10.6 | 9   | 8-10  | 8.7  |
| Cardiology               | 3    | 8-10  | 9.0  | 4   | 5-9   | 7.0  | 1   | 11    | -    | -   | -     | -    |
| Clinical pharmacology    | 3    | 5-6   | 5.3  | 2   | 5-9   | 7.0  | -   | -     | -    | -   | -     | -    |
| Communicable diseases    | 2    | 5-8   | 6.5  | 1   | 6     | -    | 1   | 9     | -    | -   | -     | -    |
| Dermatology              | 11   | 5-11  | 7.2  | 14  | 4-8   | 6.2  | 8   | 8-12  | 9.8  | 4   | 7-9   | 8.3  |
| Endocrinology            | -    | -     | -    | 3   | 5-8   | 6.3  | -   | -     | -    | -   | -     | -    |
| Gastroenterology         | 2    | 4-9   | 6.5  | -   | -     | -    | 2   | 11-12 | 11.5 | -   | -     | -    |
| Genito-urinary medicine  | 6    | 4-7   | 5.5  | 1   | 5     | -    | 5   | 6-9   | 8.2  | 1   | 9     | -    |
| Geriatrics               | 18   | 4-12  | 6.9  | 20  | 4-9   | 6.7  | 15  | 6-13  | 8.9  | 10  | 7-9   | 8.1  |
| Haematology              | 20   | 4-12  | 6.6  | 27  | 4-9   | 6.1  | 16  | 8-13  | 9.5  | 4   | 8-9   | 8.8  |
| Medical genetics         | 1    | 4     | -    | 1   | 5     | -    | 2   | 7-12  | 9.5  | 1   | 7     | -    |
| Nephrology               | 1    | 3     | -    | 4   | 5-7   | 6.0  | -   | -     | -    | 1   | 9     | -    |
| Neurology                | 11   | 6-11  | 8.9  | 4   | 6-9   | 7.3  | 4   | 8-13  | 10.8 | -   | -     | -    |
| Rheumatology             | 9    | 5-10  | 6.6  | 6   | 4-9   | 7.0  | 7   | 11-13 | 11.6 | 1   | 10    | -    |
| Thoracic medicine        | 2    | 6     | 6.0  | 5   | 6-9   | 8.2  | 3   | 7-10  | 8.3  | -   | -     | -    |
| Tropical medicine        | -    | -     | -    | -   | -     | -    | -   | -     | -    | -   | -     | -    |
| Other medicine*          | -    | -     | -    | -   | -     | -    | -   | -     | -    | -   | -     | -    |
| **Medicine Total**       | 149  | 3-12  | 7.3  | 141 | 4-9   | 6.7  | 107 | 6-13  | 10.0 | 32  | 5-10  | 8.3  |
| All hospital specialties  | 579  | 3-13  | 7.4  | 593 | 3-10  | 6.5  | 407 | 6-13  | 10.1 | 190 | 5-10  | 8.3  |

* Terminal care

Table 5. 1974 and 1977 qualifiers combined: experience obtained before becoming consultants in a medical discipline.

| Specialty                | No. of respondents | Experience of general medicine | Additional experience | Sen. reg. equivalent |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
|                          |                     | >1 yr | 1-2 yrs | >2 yrs | Other medical specialties | Other hospital specialties | GP | Academic | Basic sciences | Other (incl. overseas) |
| General medicine         | 52                  | -     | -       | -      | 46     | 17    | 2       | 34       | 3        | 12   | 4          |
| Cardiology               | 1                   | -     | -       | -      | -      | -     | -       | -        | -        | -    | -          |
| Clinical pharmacology    | 1                   | -     | 1       | -      | 1      | -     | -       | -        | -        | -    | -          |
| Communicable diseases    | 1                   | -     | 1       | -      | 1      | -     | -       | -        | -        | -    | -          |
| Dermatology              | 12                  | 1     | 6       | 3      | 2 (1)  | 5     | 3       | 4        | 2        | 3    | -          |
| Endocrinology            | -                   | -     | -       | -      | -      | -     | -       | -        | -        | -    | -          |
| Gastroenterology         | 2                   | -     | 1       | -      | 2      | -     | -       | 1        | -        | 1    | -          |
| Genito-urinary medicine  | 6                   | 1     | 1       | 4 (4)  | 3      | 5     | 3       | 3        | 1        | 1    | 1          |
| Geriatrics               | 25                  | 4     | 19      | 2      | 16     | 12    | 4       | 6        | 1        | 4    | 4          |
| Haematology              | 20                  | 4     | 7       | 5      | 4 (4)  | 6     | 9       | -        | 8        | -    | 1          |
| Medical genetics         | 3                   | 1     | -       | 2 (2)  | 1      | 3     | 1       | 2        | -        | 1    | 1          |
| Nephrology               | 1                   | -     | 1       | -      | -      | -     | -       | -        | 1        | -    | -          |
| Neurology                | 4                   | 3     | 1       | -      | 3      | 2     | -       | 4        | 1        | -    | 1          |
| Rheumatology             | 8                   | 3     | 5       | -      | 4      | 5     | -       | 5        | 1        | 1    | -          |
| Thoracic medicine        | 2                   | -     | -       | 2      | -      | -     | -       | -        | 1        | -    | -          |
| Tropical medicine        | -                   | -     | -       | -      | -      | -     | -       | -        | -        | -    | -          |
| Other medicine*          | 2                   | 1     | -       | -      | 1      | 2     | -       | -        | 1        | 2    | -          |
| **Medicine Total**       | 139                 | 6     | 26      | 39 (11)| 87     | 58    | 10      | 70       | 7        | 25   | 20         |

* Numbers in brackets are those not recording any post-registration experience specifically in general medicine
Table 6. Respondents in 1987 who had held, at any time, substantive registrar posts in general medicine: posts held in 1987 (1974 qualifiers).

| Specialty                          | No. of respondents | Grade | Location |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------|----------|
|                                   | Reg. | Sen. reg. | Cons. | Academic | Principal | Other | UK | Abroad |
| General medicine                  | 65   | 2         | 15    | 39       | 7         | 2     | 63 | 2      |
| Cardiology                        | 4    | -         | -     | 1        | 2         | -     | 1  | -      |
| Clinical pharmacology             | 3    | -         | -     | -        | 3         | -     | -  | -      |
| Communicable diseases             | 1    | -         | -     | -        | -         | 1     | -  | -      |
| Dermatology                       | 10   | -         | 2     | 4        | 1         | 3     | 10 | -      |
| Endocrinology                     | 1    | -         | -     | -        | -         | 1     | -  | 1      |
| Gastroenterology                  | 2    | -         | -     | 1        | -         | 1     | 1  | 1      |
| Genito-urinary medicine           | 1    | -         | -     | -        | 1         | 1     | -  | -      |
| Geriatrics                        | 17   | -         | -     | 14       | 2         | 1     | 16 | 1      |
| Haematology                       | 9    | -         | 2     | 5        | 2         | -     | 9  | -      |
| Nephrology                        | -    | -         | -     | -        | -         | -     | -  | -      |
| Neurology                         | 8    | -         | 1     | 3        | 4         | -     | 7  | 1      |
| Rheumatology                      | 10   | -         | -     | 6        | 3         | 1     | 9  | 1      |
| Thoracic medicine                 | 2    | -         | -     | 2        | -         | -     | -  | 2      |
| Tropical medicine                 | 1    | -         | -     | -        | 1         | -     | -  | 1      |
| Other medicine                    | 3    | -         | -     | 1        | 1         | -     | 3  | -      |
| GP/medicine                       | 9    | -         | -     | -        | 8         | 1     | 8  | 1      |
| Accident & emergency              | 1    | -         | -     | 1        | -         | -     | -  | 1      |
| Anaesthetics                      | 4    | -         | 1     | 2        | -         | 1     | 3  | 1      |
| Obstetrics & gynaecology          | 2    | -         | -     | -        | 1         | -     | 1  | 2      |
| Ophthalmology                     | 1    | -         | -     | 1        | -         | -     | 1  | 1      |
| Paediatrics                       | 2    | -         | 2     | -        | -         | 1     | 2  | -      |
| Pathology                         | 2    | -         | 1     | -        | -         | 1     | 1  | 1      |
| Psychiatry                        | 4    | 1         | -     | 2        | 1         | -     | 4  | -      |
| Radiology                         | 7    | -         | 1     | 5        | 1         | -     | 6  | 1      |
| Radiotherapy                      | 3    | -         | 1     | 1        | -         | 1     | 2  | 1      |
| General practice                  | 43   | -         | -     | 36       | 7         | 42    | 1  | -      |
| Community medicine                | 4    | -         | -     | -        | 4         | 3     | 3  | 1      |
| Other medical work                | 5    | -         | -     | -        | 5         | 5     | 5  | -      |
| Not working                       | 2    | -         | -     | -        | 2         | 1     | 1  | -      |
| **Total**                         | 226  | 3         | 23    | 90       | 32        | 44    | 34 | 211    | 14   |

Where were ex-medical registrars?

The main difficulty in career progression, in the highly competitive specialties which show a large imbalance between the numbers of junior and senior posts, is in getting from the registrar to the senior registrar grade. Little follow-up information is available about what actually happens to all the doctors who have been registrars in medicine. Such an analysis is complicated by the fact that many registrar posts in 'general medicine' involve rotation through a variety of medical disciplines such as thoracic medicine, cardiology, neurology etc. On the other hand, other registrar posts in neurology, and almost all those in dermatology, are regarded as specific training posts for their own specialty. Only interim information is available from our studies, but Table 6 gives an analysis of the jobs held by 1974 qualifiers who responded to us in 1987 and who had, at any time, held substantive registrar posts in general medicine; 17.3% were consultants in general medicine and 16.4% were consultants in other medical specialties. Fourteen respondents (6.2%) had become consultants in hospital specialties outside medicine, and 19.5% were principals in general practice. Only 6.2% were working abroad, and only three were still registrars — two in general medicine and one in psychiatry.

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