


# **Factors affecting attraction and retention of physicians in rural areas**

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# Background

- ▶ It has been recognized that human resources for health are critical element in improving the health outcomes.
  - ▶ A total of 65 out of 115 (56.5%) health centers in area other than Duhok city are not run by physicians while only 3/17 centers (17.6%) in Duhok city are not run by physicians.
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# Background

- ▶ Limited access to health care in rural remain a challenge that face health policymakers in Kurdistan region.

Partly, due to failure of the current health care system to find effective ways to retain physicians in rural areas.

- ▶ According to KRG-MoH regulations, physicians' work in rural areas is compulsory without incentives.

# Methods

- ▶ Inclusion criteria: Physicians recently being distributed to rural areas and those recently transferred from rural areas to Duhok city.
  - ▶ List of names of physicians obtained from Department of Planning in Duhok DOH.
  - ▶ Self administered questionnaire used to collect data.
  - ▶ Response rate 63/73 (86.3%)
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# Key findings

## Background information

		Physicians who left rural areas (n= 28) No. (%)	Physicians who are currently in rural areas (n= 35) No. (%)	Total (n= 35) No. (%)
Gender No. (%)	Male	19 (67.9)	21 (60.0)	40 (63.5)
	Female	9 (32.1)	14 (40.0)	23 (36.5)
Permanent residency No. (%)	Duhok city	18 (64.3)	20 (57.1)	38 (60.3)
	District	4 (14.3)	8 (22.9)	12 (19.0)
	Sub-district/ village	6 (21.4)	7 (20.0)	13 (20.7)
Marital status at the time of serving in the rural No. (%)	Single	15 (53.6)	18 (51.4)	33 (52.4)
	Married	13 (46.4)	17 (48.6)	30 (47.6)

# Key findings

## Background information

		Physicians who left rural areas (n= 28) No. (%)	Physicians who are currently in rural areas (n= 35) No. (%)	Total (n= 35) No. (%)
The geographical location of the health care center physicians are working in or had worked in No. (%)	District	5 (17.9)	15 (42.9)	20 (31.7)
	Sub-district/village	23 (82.1)	20 (57.1)	43 (68.3)

# Key findings

## Factors affecting retention of physicians in rural areas

	Physicians who left rural areas (n= 28) No. (%)	Physicians who are currently in rural areas (n= 35) No. (%)
Compulsory rural service required by health directorates	2 (7.1)	3 (8.6)
Having family and tribal relations to the location	8 (28.6)	14 (40.0)
Spouses (husband and wife) working in the same or adjacent locations	11 (39.3)	17 (48.6)
Presence of good quality schools for children	9 (32.1)	20 (57.1)
Presence of housing	19 (67.9)	27 (77.1)
Presence of easy transport	18 (64.3)	26 (74.3)

# Key findings

## Factors affecting retention of physicians in rural areas

	Physicians who left rural areas (n= 28) No. (%)	Physicians who are currently in rural areas (n= 35) No. (%)
Presence of other doctors in your health center or your rural area to reduce workload on you	19 (67.9)	23 (65.7)
Having good income in rural practice setting	20 (71.4)	31 (88.6)
Greater freedom in taking decisions in rural practice setting (No strict supervision by higher authorities)	17 (60.7)	16 (45.7)
Opportunity for private practice in the present location	11 (39.3)	17 (48.6)
Having good relationship with local community	18 (64.3)	20 (57.1)
Having greater opportunities for further academic postgraduate training and scholarships	13 (46.4)	23 (65.7)
Having greater opportunities for further professional development (e.g. conferences, workshops)	11 (39.3)	21 (60.0)

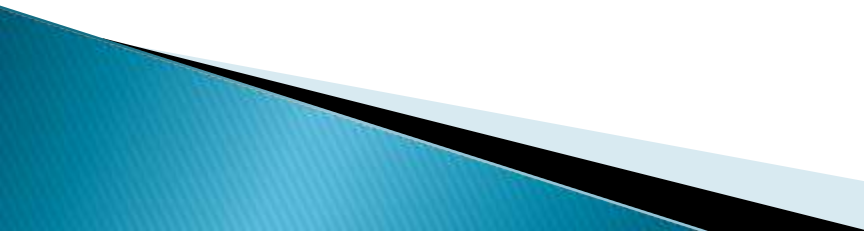


# Key findings

## Factors affecting retention of physicians in rural areas

	Physicians who left rural areas (n= 28) No. (%)	Physicians who are currently in rural areas (n= 35) No. (%)
Presence of adequate laboratory facilities in rural areas	20 (71.4)	23 (65.7)
Presence of adequate medicines in rural areas	19 (67.9)	24 (68.6)
Presence of ambulance in rural areas	25 (89.3)	26 (74.3)
Presence of adequate number of qualified supporting staff	19 (67.9)	24 (68.6)
Presence of nearby specialists for consultation	15 (53.6)	22 (62.9)
Better acknowledgement and appreciation of work in rural areas by health authorities	14 (50.0)	17 (48.6)

## Key findings

- ▶ Surveyed physicians who were no longer practicing in rural areas stayed for an average of 12 months.
  - ▶ 54 (88.5%) of the surveyed physicians preferred a fixed salary plus additional service based financial benefits as a source of their income.
  - ▶ The median reasonable income for the surveyed physicians that would encourage them to stay in rural areas was 3,000,000 ID; 170% more than their current salary.
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## Conclusions for policymakers

- ▶ The current physician distribution system failed to retain physicians in rural settings.
  - ▶ Results indicated that there are variety of factors, financial and non financial, that could increase willingness of physicians to stay in rural areas.
  - ▶ Physician are not satisfied with current income system and salaries; An adequate increase in the salaries is essential to motivate them to stay in rural areas.
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