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Research Update

First years out of residency filled with personal, professional changes

from the AAP Department of Research

While the early professional lives of pediatricians are stressful as they launch their careers and start their families, they are satisfied with their work life, according to findings from a new research initiative called the Pediatrician Life and Career Experience Study (PLACES).

The longitudinal study was launched in 2012 by the AAP Department of Research. It includes two cohorts — “early career” pediatricians who are approximately eight to 10 years post-residency (average age 40 years) and “recent residency graduates” who are approximately one to three years post-residency (average age 33 years) and include both post-training and in-training (e.g., fellowship) participants. PLACES has approximately 900 participants in each of the two cohorts and includes both AAP members and nonmembers.

Findings from the first year of PLACES indicate that 89% of the early career cohort and 77% of recent residency graduates are married or partnered. While 85% of the early career pediatricians have at least one child, 51% of the recent residency graduates also are parents. Women and men are just as likely to be a parent and a pediatrician (see Figure 1). Seventy percent of the early career cohort and almost one in four of the recent residency graduates have two or more children (see Figure 2).



Recent residency graduates reported many changes in the past year: 41% started a new job, 30% moved, and 34% got pregnant, had a baby or adopted.

“The first years out of residency are extraordinarily busy for pediatricians,” said Amy Jost Starmer, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, a member of the PLACES project advisory committee. “So many changes occur at such a dizzying pace in both our personal and professional lives, finding the right balance can be challenging.”

Pediatricians with children are more likely than those without children to report being moderately or very stressed in their efforts to balance work and personal responsibilities (53% and 36%, respectively) but are similarly likely to be satisfied with their career as a physician (85% and 83%, respectively).

The longitudinal nature of PLACES will allow the Academy to understand and respond to the needs and interests of younger pediatricians, whether they are in primary care, subspecialty training, subspecialty care or hospitalist practice.

For more information on PLACES, visit www2.aap.org/research/places.htm or contact Mary Pat Frintner, in the AAP Division of Health Services Research, at 800-433-9016, ext. 7664, or mfrintner@aap.org.



Dr. Starmer

Figure 1: Proportion of younger pediatricians who are parents (n=1,803)

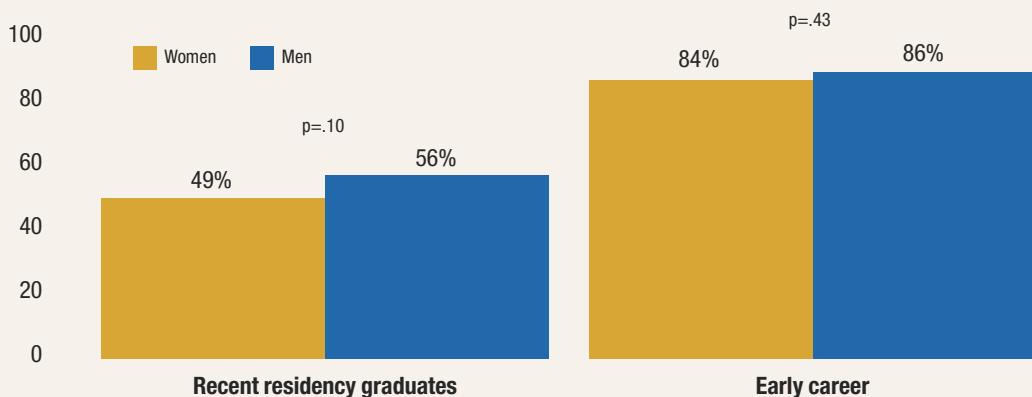
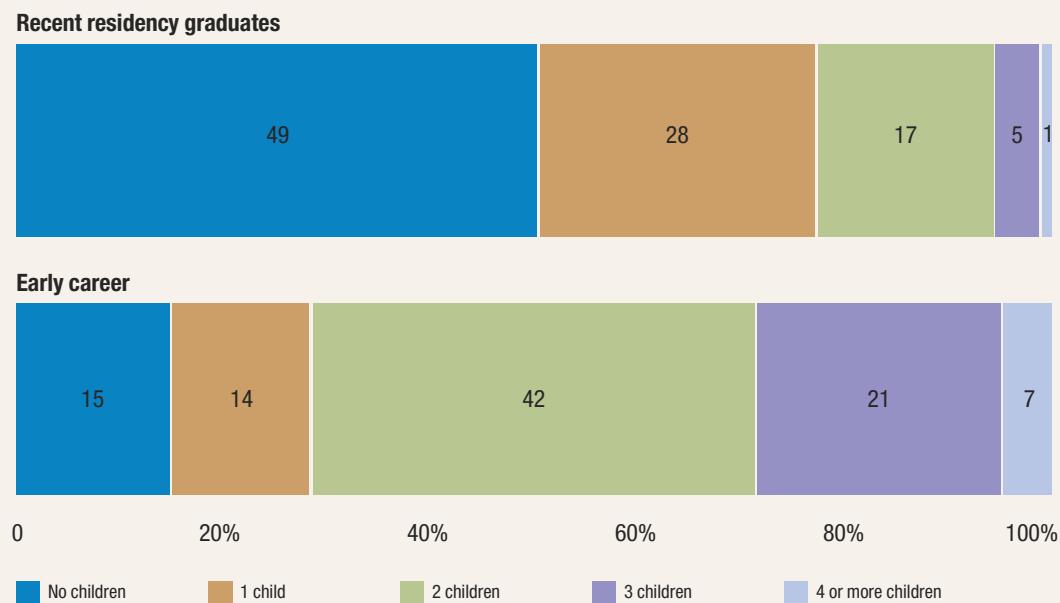


Figure 2: Number of children reported by pediatricians (n=1,795)



Source: AAP Places, Intake Survey 2012