

PRESS RELEASE

Croatian Medical Journal
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Only 12% of Croatian junior researchers in medicine obtain their PhD titles

ZAGREB – Only 12% of Croatian junior researchers in medicine obtain their PhD titles, shows a new study published in Croatian Medical Journal.

Junior researchers are coworkers on research projects approved and supported by Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, which provides the salaries for junior researchers. The new study shows that out of 260 junior researchers whose fellowship was terminated between 1999 and 2005, only 34 successfully finished their doctoral dissertations. More than a half (55%) of junior researchers ended their fellowship program in the same month in which they were employed in the health system. According to the authors of the study, this finding indicates that many junior researchers in medicine use their fellowship as a temporary employment solution until they manage to secure a position within the health system.

The main reason for terminating the fellowship program is the necessity to advance in the professional career by obtaining a residence. Since simultaneous scientific and professional advancement is considered hardly achievable, fellows tend to make a choice between one of these career options. Given that residence has a limited duration (of usually four years) and that there is a much longer time period for PhD submission (of ten years), it seems that most

junior researchers choose to advance in profesional career and leave the completion of the PhD degree for later career stages.

An important finding of this research is that junior researchers who terminated the fellowship program were equally scientifically productive as those who remained. This suggests that, despite ending their fellowship program, these fellows remained scientifically active and productive.

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