A Dramatic Decrease of Graduates from U.S. Allopathic Schools in the Family Medicine Workforce Since 2000

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Context/Study Aims

- Creation of an adequate primary care workforce has continued to be a challenge for a variety of reasons.
- This study aimed to examine the composition of practicing family physicians by the source of their medical education.
- This study compared the source of education among those entering the workforce before and after the year 2000.

Design and Methods

- AMA physician Masterfile data was used to identify the medical schools of practicing family physicians in 2013 by three categories: U.S. allopathic, osteopathic and international medical graduates.
- The categories were stratified into two groups by year of entry into the workforce, before and after 2000.

Results

- 73% of those entering the workforce before 2000 were graduates of U.S. allopathic schools and after 2000, the percentage shrank to 46.1%.
- More than one third entering the workforce after 2000 are international graduates compared to 13% prior to 2000.
- Osteopathic graduates entering the family physician workforce before and after 2000 increased from 14% to 20%.

Conclusions

- This study reveals the dramatically decreased contribution of U.S. allopathic medical schools to the nation’s primary care physician capacity as exemplified by family medicine.
- Graduates’ primary care career interest and choice can be enhanced by policy and funding strategies that:
  - recruit primary care oriented students
  - enhanced primary care curricula and training experiences
  - engage and promote primary care faculty