

# Impact of undergraduate medical training on rural general practice in the North of Scotland



## Aim

- ✓ Recruitment and retention of medical practitioners to work in remote and rural areas of Scotland continues to be of concern (1).
- ✓ Various incentives and programmes at both an undergraduate and postgraduate level have been introduced to address these staffing issues (2).
- ✓ Studies from Australia and New Zealand have demonstrated rural GPs are more likely to report having rural training compared to urban GPs (3).
- ✓ Our aim was to investigate the association between undergraduate medical training and distribution of general practitioners in the North of Scotland.

## Methods

### Data source

Analysis of all permanent general practitioners listed on the publicly available July 2024 NHS Highland List of General Medical Practitioners was performed.

### Data Collection

All general practices were divided by region. Information including gender and location of primary medical qualification was obtained from the GMC register.

### Data Analysis

A topographical map was created to visualise the data.

## Results & Discussion

### Number of GPs

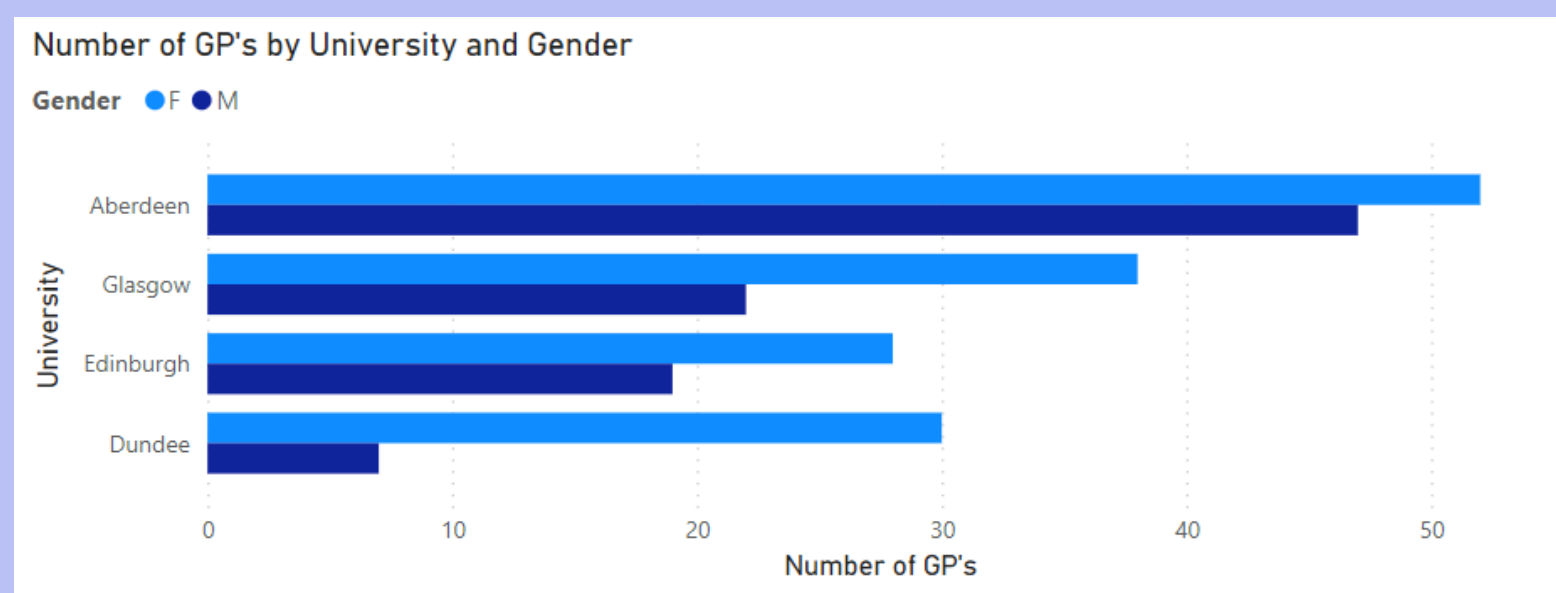
364 permanent general practitioners were identified in total, the majority of which were female (59%).

### Graduate University

Most GPs graduated from a Scottish University (68%) with the University of Aberdeen being predominant (41.4%).

### Topography

Areas of Scotland that are more sparsely populated would appear to attract graduates from other countries.



Graph 1. Number of permanent GP's by university and gender in the North of Scotland

### Graduate location of general practitioners in NHS Highland

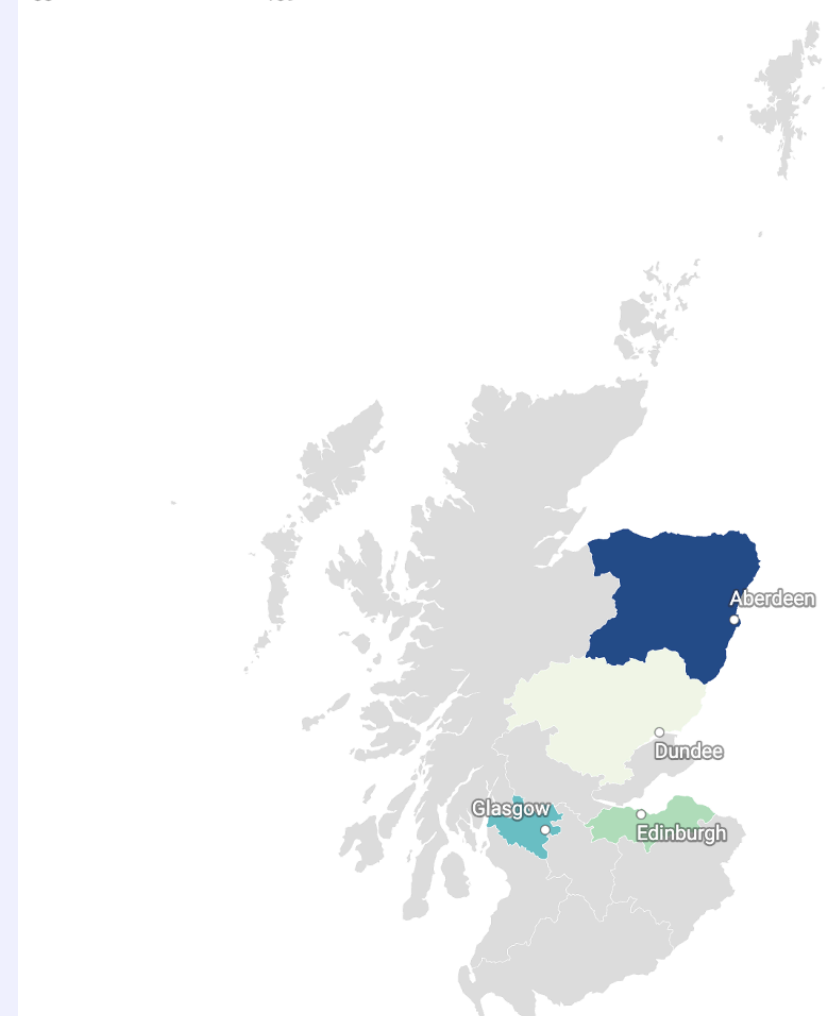


Figure 1. Map of Scotland showing graduate location of general practitioners in the North of Scotland

## Conclusion

- ✓ The University of Aberdeen, which has a defined remote and rural undergraduate programme, is most associated with substantive rural general practice.
- ✓ Areas needing recruitment and retention of staff are highlighted with continued support for rural undergraduate training opportunities in medical school allowing expansion into postgraduate practice for doctors.

## References

1. NHS Education for Scotland (2023) *General Practice Workforce Survey 2023, Annual Report* | Turas Data Intelligence.
2. General Practitioner Recruitment and Retention Action Plan 2024 - 2026.
3. Wilkinson D, Laven G, Pratt N, Beilby J. Impact of undergraduate and postgraduate rural training, and medical school entry criteria on rural practice among Australian general practitioners: national study of 2414 doctors. *Med Educ.* 2003 Sep;37(9):809-14