

## **Drivers of family doctor shortages across Canada as a function of medical student graduates per province**

Jamie Magrill,<sup>1</sup> Kaiyang Li,<sup>2</sup> Anna Frumkin,<sup>3</sup> and Wei Guang Bi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Human Genetics, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Medicine, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada

<sup>3</sup> Max Bell School of Public Policy, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada

<sup>4</sup> Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University, London, ON, Canada

**Background:** Family physicians provide comprehensive care for members of the community. There is a shortage of Canadian family care practitioners, driven in part by an apparent lack of desirability of the profession due to overbearing expectations, lack of resources, stagnant payment, and high clinic operating costs. An additional and yet-unexplored aspect of the family physician shortage is the shortage of medical student graduates, as the number of spots in medical schools in Canada has remained mostly stagnant for the past 15 years, with only few exceptions, and no new medical schools have been opened.

**Methods:** StatsCAN and the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) were used to identify provincial populations and the number of physicians. The Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) Canadian Medical Education Statistics report was used to identify the number of seats for medical schools across Canada.

**Results:** Family physician shortages are the highest in the Territories (>55%), QC (21.5%), and BC (17.7%). Among the provinces, ON, PE, MB, and QC have the fewest family doctors per population. Among the provinces that offer medical education, BC and ON have the fewest medical school seats per population, while NS, NL, and QC have the most.

**Conclusions:** BC has the smallest medical class size as a function of population, and a high percentage of residents without family doctors. Surprisingly, QC has a relatively large medical class size as a function of population, but with a high percentage of residents without family doctors.