

2023 Health Manpower Survey

Summary of the Characteristics of Doctors Enumerated

I. Doctors with Full Registration Covered

1.1 The doctors covered in the 2023 Health Manpower Survey on Doctors (HMS-DR) were doctors fully registered¹ with the Medical Council of Hong Kong under the Medical Registration Ordinance (Chapter 161) as the survey reference date of 31 August 2023 and listed on the resident list² as at 30 November 2023.

1.2 The number of doctors covered was 15 720.

II. Response Rate

2.1 Of the 15 720 doctors covered, 5 187 responded to the HMS-DR, giving an overall response rate of 33.0%.

III. Activity Status

3.1 The responding doctors were classified as either “economically active”³ or “economically inactive”³ based on their status as at the survey reference date of 31 August 2023.

3.2 Economically active (“active”) doctors included:

- (a) “Employed” doctors - doctors practising in the medical profession in Hong Kong as at the survey reference date; and
- (b) “Unemployed” doctors - doctors who (i) were not practising in the local medical profession as at the survey reference date; (ii) had been available for work during the seven days before the survey reference date⁴ AND (iii) had sought work in the local medical profession during the 30 days before the survey reference date⁵.

3.3 Economically inactive (“inactive”) doctors referred to doctors who were not practising in the medical profession in Hong Kong as at the survey reference date, excluding those who were on leave and who were “economically active” but “unemployed”.

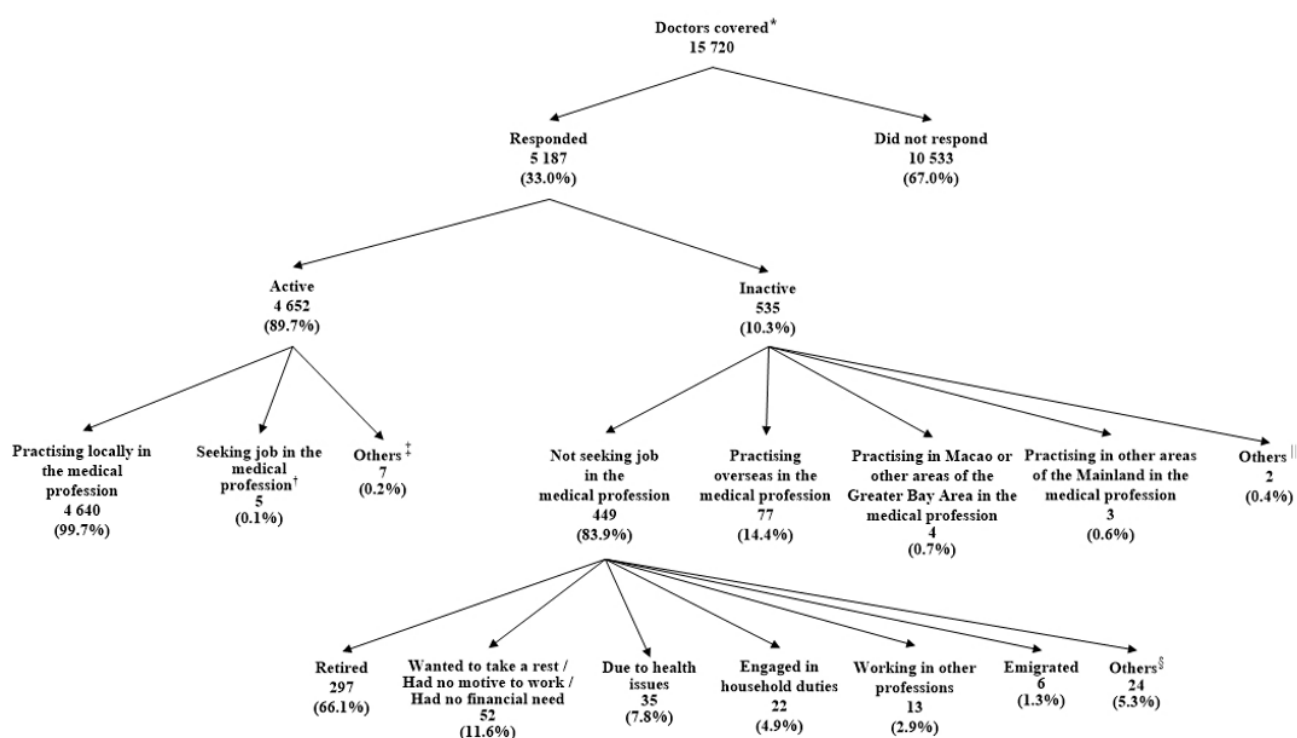
- 1 Refer to doctors registered in Part I of the Medical Register maintained by the Medical Council of Hong Kong under the Medical Registration Ordinance (Chapter 161). These include doctors who hold the qualification of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery issued in Hong Kong (MBBS (HK) / MBChB (CUHK)), Licentiate of Medical Council of Hong Kong (LMCHK) or other overseas qualifications registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong.
- 2 As the 2023 Health Manpower Survey only aimed at covering doctors practicing in Hong Kong, doctors on the non-resident list of the Medical Register were excluded from the survey.
- 3 In the survey, the criteria used in defining economically active / inactive followed those recommended by the International Labour Organisation, which are also being used by the Census and Statistics Department in Hong Kong.
- 4 The respondent would be classified as “unemployed” if he / she had sought work in the local medical profession but had not been available for work because of temporary sickness.
- 5 The respondent would also be classified as “unemployed” if he / she fulfilled conditions (i) and (ii) but had not sought work during the 30 days before enumeration because he / she believed that work was not available; or had made arrangements to take up a new job; or was starting business on a subsequent date; or was expecting to return to the original job in the medical profession.

3.4 Among the 5 187 responding doctors, 4 652 (89.7%) were classified as “active” and 535 (10.3%) were classified as “inactive” as at the survey reference date (Chart A).

3.5 Of the 4 652 active doctors enumerated, 4 640 (99.7%) were practising in the local medical profession, five (0.1%) were seeking jobs, and seven (0.2%) reported to be available for work but had not sought work during the 30 days before the survey reference date due to reasons including: they believed that no work was available in the local medical profession, were expecting to return to their original jobs in the local medical profession or were waiting to take up a new job in the local medical profession.

3.6 Of the 535 inactive doctors enumerated, 449 (83.9%) reported not seeking jobs in the local medical profession during the 30 days before the survey reference date, 77 (14.4%) reported practising overseas, four (0.7%) reported practising in Macao or other areas of the Greater Bay Area, three (0.6%) reported practising in other areas of the Mainland and two (0.4%) were not available for work during the seven days before the survey reference date. The main reasons for not seeking jobs in the local medical profession included: 297 (66.1%) had retired, 52 (11.6%) wanted to take a rest / had no motive to work / had no financial need and 35 (7.8%) were due to health issues (Chart A).

Chart A: Activity Status of Doctors Covered



Notes: * Figure refers to the number of doctors who were fully registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong under the Medical Registration Ordinance (Chapter 161) as at the survey reference date of 31 August 2023 and listed on the resident list of the Medical Register as at 30 November 2023.

† Figure refers to the number of responding doctors who (a) were not practicing in the medical profession in Hong Kong as at the survey reference date; (b) had been available for work in the local medical profession during the seven days before the survey reference date; AND (c) had sought work in the local medical profession during the 30 days before the survey reference date.

‡ Figure refers to the number of responding doctors who (a) were not practicing in the medical profession in Hong Kong as at survey reference date; (b) had been available for work in the local medical profession during the seven days before the survey reference date; AND (c) had not sought work in the local medical profession during the 30 days before the survey reference date because they believed no work was available in the medical profession; were expecting to return to the original job in the medical profession, or were waiting to start a new job in the profession at the subsequent date.

§ Figure refers to the number of responding doctors who reported not seeking work in the local medical profession during the 30 days before the survey reference date because of undertaking study or unspecified reasons.

|| Figure refers to number of responding doctors who were not available for work in the local medical profession during the 7 days before the survey reference date.

Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

IV. Characteristics of Active Local Doctors Enumerated

4.1 The survey results presented in this section were based on the information provided by 4 640 responding doctors who were practising in the local medical profession as at the survey reference date of 31 August 2023 (hereafter referred to as “active local doctor”).

4.2 Of the 4 640 active local doctors enumerated, there were 2 918 (62.9%) males and 1 477 (31.8%) females. The remaining 245 (5.3%) respondents did not indicate their gender. Among the 4 395 respondents who indicated their genders, the overall sex ratio (males per 100 females) is 198. The median age of the 4 483 doctors who reported their age was 53.0 years. Among the 4 293 respondents with known age and gender, the median age was 45.0 years for females and 56.5 years for males.

4.3 The respondents were requested to indicate the characteristics of their main jobs⁶. Among the 4 640 active local doctors enumerated, 2 529 (54.5%) reported that their main jobs were working in the private sector, 1 710 (36.9%) in the Hospital Authority, 224 (4.8%) in the Government, 107 (2.3%) in the academic sector and 40 (0.9%) in the subvented sector. The remaining 30 (0.6%) did not mentioned their sector for their main job.

4.4 Among the 4 640 active local doctors enumerated, 4 402 (94.9%) reported working in clinical fields (including 3 531 (76.1%) in various clinical specialties, 849 (18.3%) in general practice), 171 (3.7%) reported to be working in non-clinical fields (including public health / community medicine / occupational and environmental medicine (2.3%), administration / management (1.2%); and teaching / education / research (0.2%)) while 67 (1.4%) did not specify their main field of practice. Among the 3 531 respondents working in clinical specialties, the most commonly reported specialties were internal medicine (23.4%), surgery (11.5%), family medicine (11.2%) and paediatrics (7.7%).

4.5 Among the 4 527 active local doctors enumerated who reported their weekly working hours, the median number of hours of work (excluding meal breaks) per week was 44.0 hours. Among the 4 640 active local doctors enumerated, 1 740 (37.5%) were required to undertake on-call duty, with a median 16.0 hours of on-call duty per week.

4.6 The respondents were requested to indicate the setting of practice in the survey. Among the 4 399 respondents who indicated the setting of their practice, 3 994 (90.8%) reported working in one main setting only, which included 2 435 (61.0%) working in outpatient clinics and health centres, 438 (11.0%) in hospital inpatient setting and 255 (6.4%) in hospital operating theatre / suite.

4.7 Out of the 4 640 active local doctors enumerated, 3 604 (77.7%) indicated that they had clinical consultation(s). Among the 3 545 respondents who provided valid responses to the number of consultations, 2 314 (65.3%) reported to have 1 to 5 clinical consultations per working hour on average and 1 231 (34.7%) reported to have 6 or more clinical consultations per working hour.

4.8 Of the 4 640 active local doctors enumerated, 3 709 (79.9%) obtained their earliest basic qualification⁷ in Hong Kong China, 746 (16.1%) outside Hong Kong, while the remaining 185 (4.0%) did not provide a response. The most commonly reported issuing countries/territories of the 746 respondents who obtained the relevant qualification outside Hong Kong were the United Kingdom (36.7%), Australia (24.3%) and the Chinese Mainland (22.3%).

4.9 Out of the 4 640 active local doctors enumerated, 4 019 (86.6%) had obtained additional post-graduate qualifications⁸ after obtaining their earliest basic qualification, among which 2 355 (58.6%) obtained one additional qualification, 1 089 (27.1%) held two, 574 (14.3%) held three or more additional post-graduate qualification and the remaining one (0.02%) did not indicate the number of the additional post-graduate qualification he/she obtained.

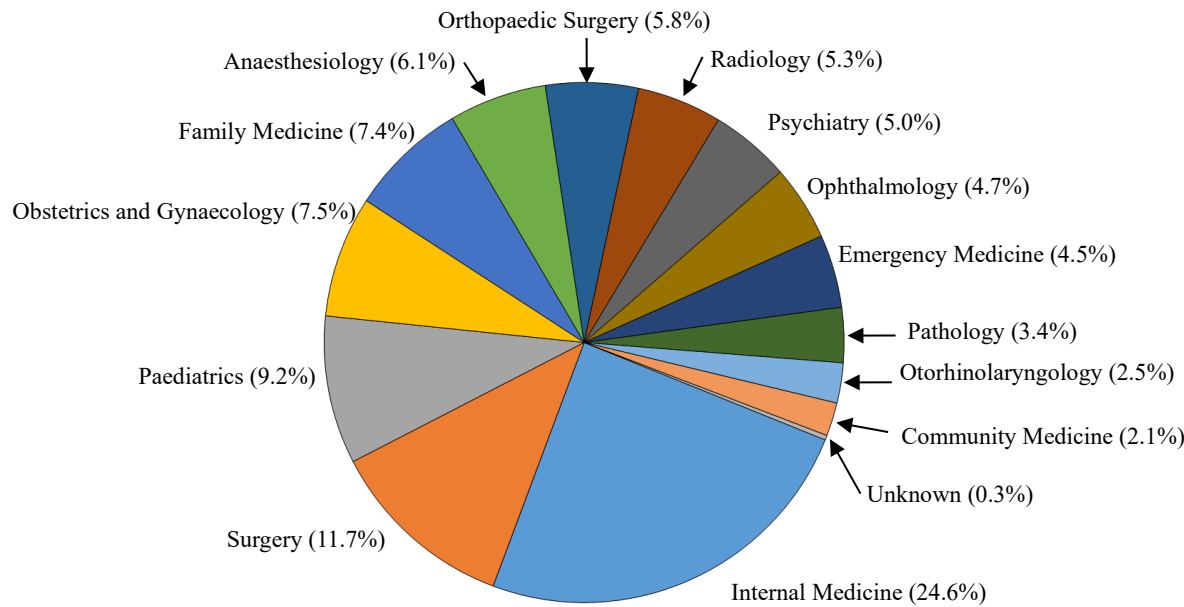
6. Main jobs referred to the jobs in which the doctors had spent most of their working time.

7. The earliest basic qualification refers to the earliest qualification registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong.

8. Refers to the quotable additional qualification which is acceptable to the Medical Council of Hong Kong.

4.10 Of the 4 640 active local doctors enumerated, 3 128 (67.4%) reported being registered as specialists in the Specialist Register of the Medical Council of Hong Kong, and 327 (7.0%) reported receiving specialist training. Among the 3 128 registered specialists, 769 (24.6%) were in the specialty of internal medicine, 367 (11.7%) were in surgery and 288 (9.2%) were in paediatrics (Chart B).

Chart B : Distribution of Specialist Registration Reported Among Active Local Doctors



Number of active local doctors enumerated reported to be registered specialists = 3 128

4.11 Among 4 640 active local doctors enumerated, 4 138 (89.2%) reported that they had participated in Continuing Medical Education (CME) activities during the 12-month period preceding the survey reference date, 389 (8.4%) reported no participation in any CME activities and 113 (2.4%) did not report whether they had participated in any CME activities. Among the 4 138 respondents who had participated in CME activities, the distribution of CME points attained in the past 12 months was: 1 to 10 points (3.9%), 11 to 20 points (10.1%), 21 to 30 points (20.6%) and 31 points or above (65.4%).

V. Trend Observation

5.1 The number of doctors covered in HMS-DR had increased from 3 487 in 1982 to 15 720 in 2023 (Chart C).

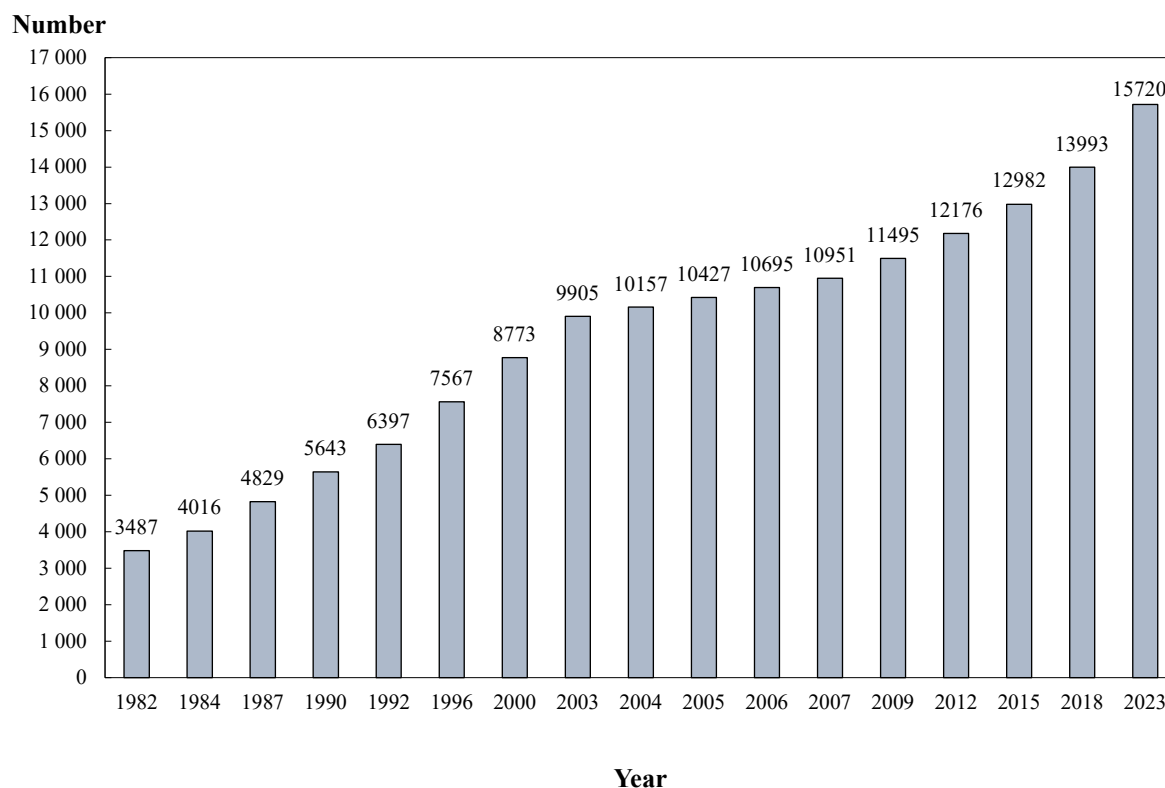
5.2 Selected characteristics of active local doctors collected during the survey years between 1982 and 2023 were tabulated in Table A for reference.

5.3 During the period from 1982 to 1990, the proportion of responding doctors working in the private sector were in the range of 42.3% to 45.0%, which was consistently higher than those reported to be working in the public sector which was in the range of 29.4% to 38.7%. From 1992 to 2007, the proportion of respondents working in the public sector (in the range of 50.9% to 56.7%) became higher than those reported to be working in the private sector (in the range of 38.2% to 45.7%). From 2009 to 2023, the proportion of respondent reporting to be working in the private sector showed an increase. In 2023, 54.5% of respondents reported to work in the private sector while 41.7% reported to work in the public sector.

5.4 Over the past four decades, the sex ratio (males per 100 females) of doctors responding to the surveys has shown a clear downward trend, from 520 in 1982 to 198 in 2023.

5.5 Data on the median age of respondents was available since HMS 2000. Over the past two decades, the median age has shown a steady increase, from 40.0 in 2000 to 53.0 in 2023.

Chart C : Number of Doctors Covered in Health Manpower Surveys by Survey Year (1982-2023)



Note : Figures of 2000 and before refer to the number of doctors fully registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong on the resident list of the Medical Register as at the 1 July of the respective years, with Military was included in the 1984, 1987, 1992 and 1996 HMS-DR, whereas the figure of 2003 refers to that as at the 31 December 2003 and the figures of 2004 to 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018 refer to that as at the 31 August of the respective years. Figures of 2018 refers to the number of doctors registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong on the resident list of the Medical Register as at 31 August 2018 with exclusion of those who were subsequently found to have passed away on or before the survey reference date. Figures of 2023 refers to the number of doctors who were fully registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong under the Medical Registration Ordinance (Chapter 161) as at the survey reference date of 31 August 2023 and listed on the resident list of the Medical Register as at 30 November 2023.

Table A : Selected Characteristics of Active Local Doctors Enumerated in Health Manpower Survey by Survey Year (1982-2023)

Characteristics	Survey Year								
	1982	1984	1987	1990	1992	1996	2000	2003	2004
A. Doctors Covered*	3 487	4 016	4 829	5 643	6 397	7 567	8 773	9 905	10 157
B. Active Local Doctors									
Number Enumerated	3 487	3 490	4 044	4 545	5 094	5 416	5 679	4 941	4 388
Sex									
Male	2 841	2 912	3 311	3 686	4 102	4 240	4 409	3 696	3 249
Female	546	578	733	859	992	1 176	1 270	1 234	1 139
Unknown	100	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	11	N.A.
Sex Ratio (males per 100 females)	520	504	452	429	414	361	347	300	285
Mean Age	-	-	-	-	-	41.2	42.6	43.3	43.7
Median Age	-	-	-	-	-	-	40.0	41.0	42.0
Sector of Work†									
<u>Medical field</u>									
Public‡	1 024 (29.4%)	1 263 (36.2%)	1 443 (35.7%)	1 759 (38.7%)	2 654 (52.1%)	3 072 (56.7%)	3 151 (55.5%)	2 662 (53.9%)	2 298 (52.4%)
Government	1 024 (29.4%)	1 263 (36.2%)	1 443 (35.7%)	1 759 (38.7%)	413 (8.1%)	496 (9.2%)	593 (10.4%)	327 (6.6%)	273 (6.2%)
Hospital Authority	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	2 241 (44.0%)	2 576 (47.6%)	2 558 (45.0%)	2 335 (47.3%)	2 025 (46.1%)
Private	1 474 (42.3%)	1 569 (45.0%)	1 789 (44.2%)	1 989 (43.8%)	2 198 (43.1%)	2 069 (38.2%)	2 293 (40.4%)	1 933 (39.1%)	1 921 (43.8%)
Academic & Subvented§	531 (15.2%)	658 (18.9%)	812 (20.1%)	797 (17.5%)	242 (4.8%)	275 (5.1%)	235 (4.1%)	167 (3.4%)	151 (3.4%)
<u>Non-medical field</u>	170 (4.9%)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Unknown	288 (8.3%)	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	179 (3.6%)	18 (0.4%)

Notes : * Figures of 2000 and before refer to the number of doctors fully registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong on the resident list of the Medical Register as at the 1 July of the respective years, whereas the figure of 2003 refers to that as at the 31 December 2003 and the figures of 2004 to 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018 refer to that as at the 31 August of the respective years. Figures of 2018 refers to the number of doctors registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong on the resident list of the Medical Register as at 31 August 2018 with exclusion of those who were subsequently found to have passed away on or before the survey reference date. Figures of 2023 refers to the number of doctors who were fully registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong under the Medical Registration Ordinance (Chapter 161) as at the survey reference date of 31 August 2023 and listed on the resident list of the Medical Register as at 30 November 2023.

† In 2003 to 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2023 HMS-DR, the sector refers to the sector for the main job.

‡ Before 1992, doctors in the public sector were classified as working for the Government. Since 1992, public sector doctors have been categorised separately under the Hospital Authority and the Government.

§ Military was included in the 1984, 1987, 1992 and 1996 HMS-DR.

There may be slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total due to rounding.

N.A. Not applicable ‘-’ Not available

Table A (cont.) : Selected Characteristics of Active Local Doctors Enumerated in Health Manpower Survey by Survey Year (1982-2023)

Characteristics	Survey Year							
	2005	2006	2007	2009	2012	2015	2018	2023
A. Doctors Covered*	10 427	10 695	10 951	11 495	12 176	12 982	13 993	15 720
B. Active Local Doctors								
Number Enumerated	5 498	5 358	5 444	6 900	5 837	5 566	5 597	4 640
Sex								
Male	4 037	3 880	3 903	4 844	3 979	3 771	3 679	2 918
Female	1 458	1 474	1 541	1 918	1 769	1 726	1 837	1 477
Unknown	3	4	N.A.	138	89	69	81	245
Sex Ratio (males per 100 females)	277	263	253	253	225	218	200	198
Mean Age	43.9	44.3	44.8	46.5	47.9	48.9	50.1	52.7
Median Age	42.0	42.0	43.0	45.0	47.0	48.0	50.0	53.0
Sector of Work†								
<u>Medical field</u>								
Public‡	2 871 (52.2%)	2 752 (51.4%)	2 770 (50.9%)	3 259 (47.2%)	2 791 (47.8%)	2 611 (46.9%)	2 621 (46.8%)	1 934 (41.7%)
Government	302 (5.5%)	303 (5.7%)	288 (5.3%)	348 (5.0%)	347 (5.9%)	286 (5.1%)	285 (5.1%)	224 (4.8%)
Hospital Authority	2 569 (46.7%)	2 449 (45.7%)	2 482 (45.6%)	2 911 (42.2%)	2 444 (41.9%)	2 325 (41.8%)	2 336 (41.7%)	1 710 (36.9%)
Private	2 417 (44.0%)	2 395 (44.7%)	2 490 (45.7%)	3 388 (49.1%)	2 821 (48.3%)	2 720 (48.9%)	2 767 (49.4%)	2 529 (54.5%)
Academic & Subvented§	192 (3.5%)	186 (3.5%)	181 (3.3%)	219 (3.2%)	201 (3.4%)	213 (3.8%)	196 (3.5%)	147 (3.2%)
<u>Non-medical field</u>	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Unknown	18 (0.3%)	25 (0.5%)	3 (0.1%)	34 (0.5%)	24 (0.4%)	22 (0.4%)	13 (0.2%)	30 (0.6%)

Notes : * Figures of 2000 and before refer to the number of doctors fully registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong on the resident list of the Medical Register as at the 1 July of the respective years, whereas the figure of 2003 refers to that as at the 31 December 2003 and the figures of 2004 to 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018 refer to that as at the 31 August of the respective years. Figures of 2018 refers to the number of doctors registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong on the resident list of the Medical Register as at 31 August 2018 with exclusion of those who were subsequently found to have passed away on or before the survey reference date. Figures of 2023 refers to the number of doctors who were fully registered with the Medical Council of Hong Kong under the Medical Registration Ordinance (Chapter 161) as at the survey reference date of 31 August 2023 and listed on the resident list of the Medical Register as at 30 November 2023.

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‡ Before 1992, doctors in the public sector were classified as working for the Government. Since 1992, public sector doctors have been categorised separately under the Hospital Authority and the Government.

§ Military was included in the 1984, 1987, 1992 and 1996 HMS-DR.

There may be slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total due to rounding.

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