

Predictors of Return Among Israeli Medical Graduates Trained Abroad

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1 BACKGROUND

Many countries rely on internationally trained physicians. In Israel, approximately 58% of physicians are foreign-trained, making the return of Israeli graduates trained abroad important for workforce stability.

Some graduates remain abroad after graduation, potentially worsening projected physician shortages. Identifying predictors of return may help inform physician retention policies.

2 METHODS

A cross-sectional survey was conducted between January and July 2025 among Israeli medical graduates trained abroad. A total of 342 eligible participants completed an anonymous questionnaire assessing demographics, motivations, and policy-related factors.

Analyses included descriptive, comparative, correlation, and multivariable Firth logistic regression analyses.

3 RESULTS

Among 342 eligible participants, **86.5% returned to Israel after graduation, while 13.5% remained abroad.**

- Non-returnees were more likely to hold dual citizenship and report stronger motivations to remain abroad, particularly cost of living and work-life balance factors.
- Return was positively associated with policy-related motivations, while higher faculty-year non-return rates and dual citizenship were associated with lower odds of return.

The final multivariable model demonstrated high predictive performance (AUC=0.93).

**86%
RETURNED**

**14%
STAYED ABROAD**

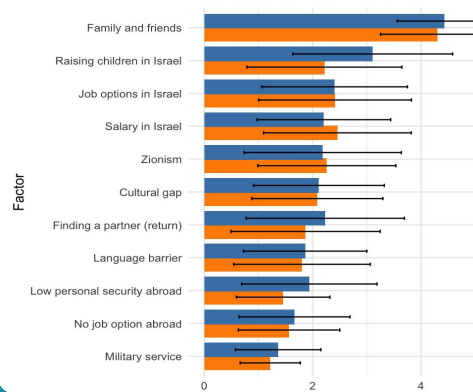
Key motivations

Return: Family & social ties (**strongest**)

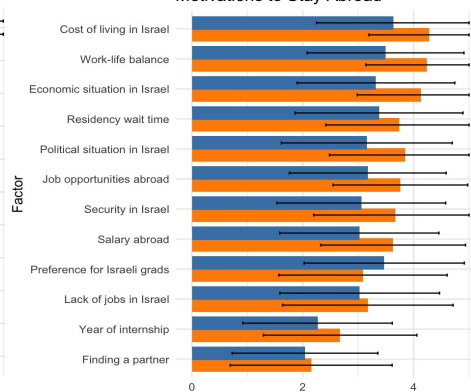
Stay abroad: Cost of living in Israel and Work-life balance abroad

Policy factors: Equal access to residency and Equal rights vs domestic graduates

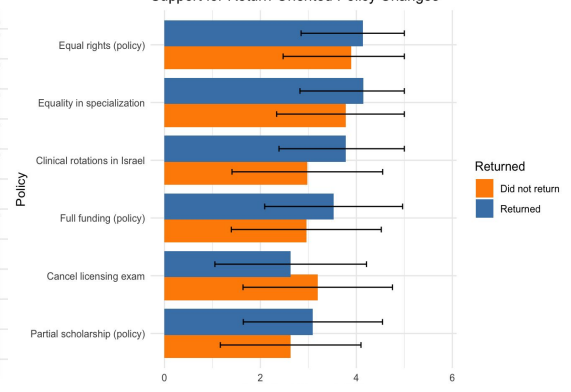
Motivations to Return to Israel



Motivations to Stay Abroad



Support for Return-Oriented Policy Changes



4 DISCUSSION

Return decisions were shaped by both personal and structural factors. Family and social ties promoted return, while economic and professional considerations were associated with remaining abroad. Policy-related factors, particularly equal residency access and equal rights, may represent modifiable workforce policy targets.

Limitations:

The study relied on convenience sampling and self-reported cross-sectional data, introducing potential selection and recall bias and limiting causal inference.

5 CONCLUSION

Return decisions were associated with policy-related, economic, and social factors. Improving equity in residency access may strengthen physician retention in Israel.

- Family and social ties** were the strongest motivations for return.
- Equal residency access** and **equal rights** were the most supported policy measures.

