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WRIGHT, Chris and WILKINSON, Ruth

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Modelling the Migration Patterns of Radiography Undergraduates

Dr Chris Wright PhD, MSc, HDCR, CertEd & Ruth Wilkinson MSc, HDCR, PGCLTHE

Chris Wright & Ruth Wilkinson are both Senior Lecturers at Sheffield Hallam University, England (chris.wright@shu.ac.uk Direct: 0114 225 5488)

INTRODUCTION

The rationale for this study is a follow up to the annual survey of the SCoR 'Analysis of Students and Recent Graduates'. Whilst the survey asks many pertinent questions relating to student experiences and pressures during their training it does not allow an assessment of migration patterns. The UCAS system enables applicants to apply to up to five Universities and most take advantage of this. Universities spend a great deal of time and money recruiting students but there is little evidence of large scale modelling to consider the value. This research therefore aims to compare a candidates home town with their University of study and first post workplace in order to assess geographical migration patterns.

Methodology

A quantitative methodology was adopted. All UK graduates who had previously responded to the SCoR student survey were included in the population (n=448) and contacted via Survey Monkey in partnership with the SCoR. 82 completed responses were received. All Universities offering undergraduate training for Radiographers were represented. All students consented to their anonymised data being used for research purposes.

RESULTS

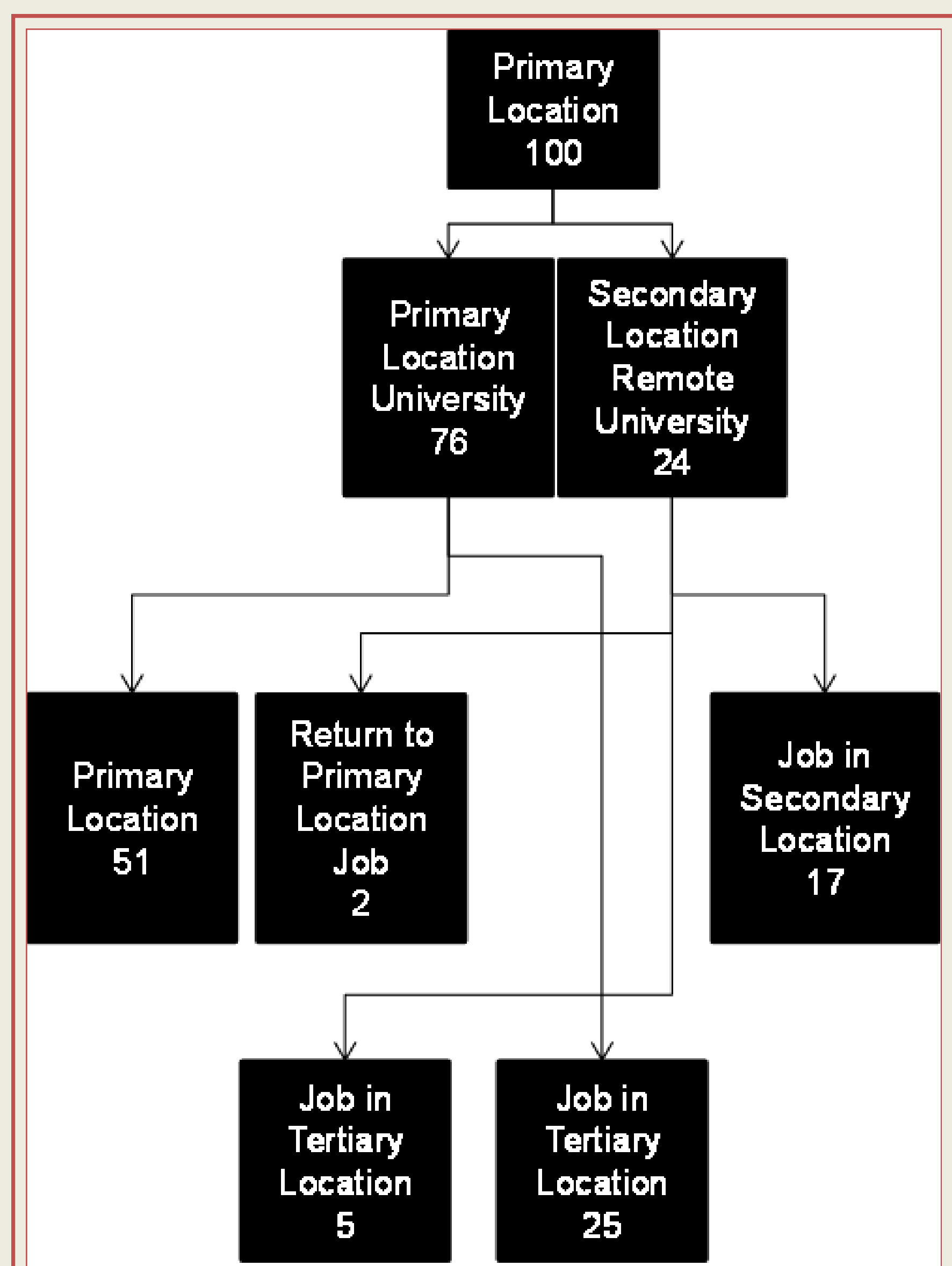
80% of the responses were from Diagnostic and 20% Therapy.

71% were female and 29% male.

75.6% of the population elected to study at the closest University to their home location. Of these, 67.1% gained employment upon graduation in the same home location, whilst 32.9% moved away to other parts of the UK.

Of the 24.4% of the population who elected to study at Universities outside their local area, 70.4% gained employment upon graduation close to this location. 8.5% returned back to their home location and 21.1% migrated on to a different city in the UK.

The chart below models the effect these findings would have on a population of 100 people;



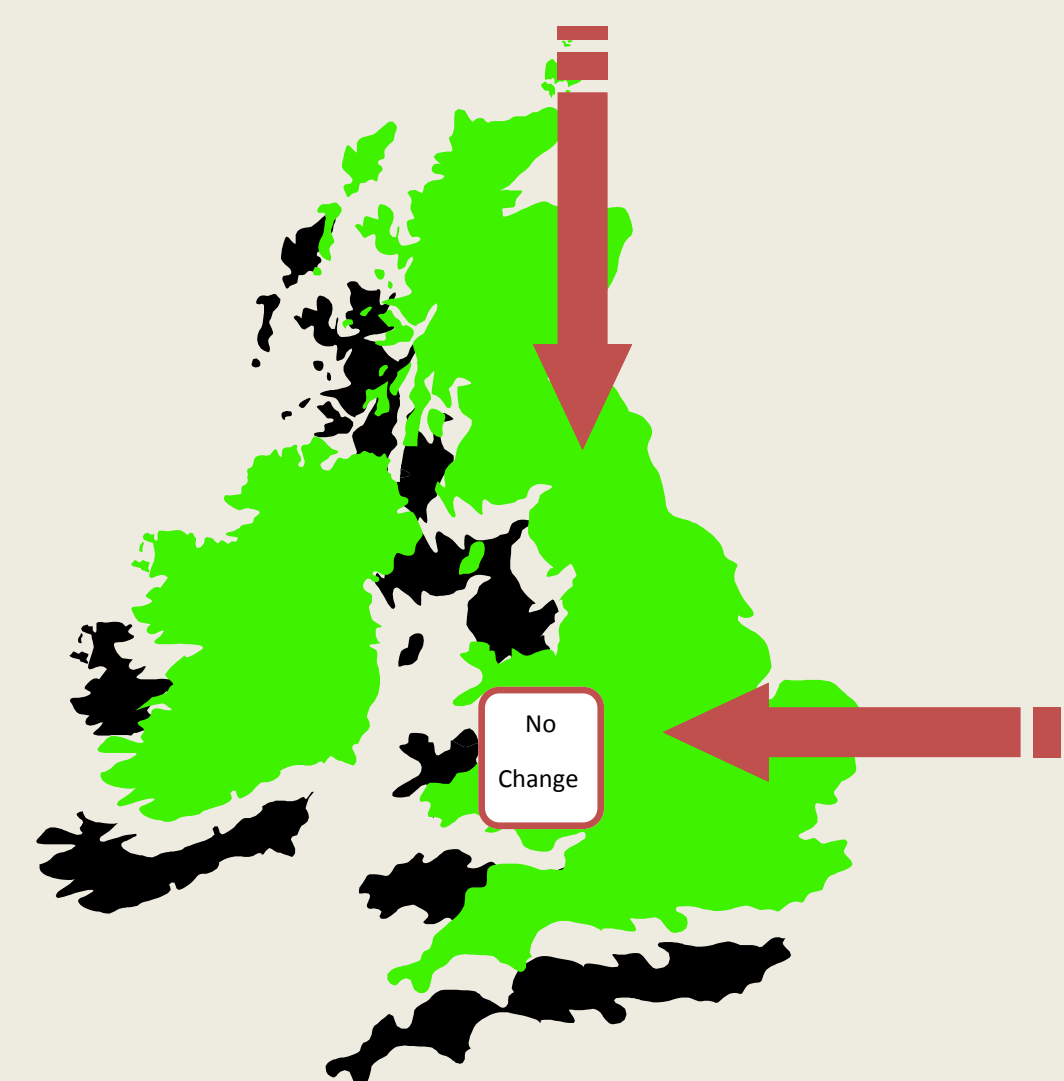
The evidence demonstrates how higher education affects population size. For every 100 students who enter University, only 53 will still live in the local area at the point of first post employment. Only 2 return to their primary location having moved away to study. Of the 24 students who moved away to study, 17 will gain employment close to their University location. 30 students will ultimately reside in a tertiary location remote from their home or University cities.

DISCUSSION

The logic for students entering higher educations have changed. Traditionally high flying students perhaps sought to attend the best Universities their grades would allow and went on to develop careers with little regard for geography. Today expectations are very different. The results have demonstrated that 76% per cent of undergraduates attend the nearest University to their home.

76% of students choose to study locally

Reflecting on the Society of Radiographers Annual Graduate Survey (2012) which highlighted that finance was the biggest concern for students, this finding is perhaps of no surprise. Whilst the 18.3% response rate could affect the reliability of the results being biased towards those with good degree awards, it is unlikely to have had an effect on where people live and first post location. Where graduates have moved locations to gain work, migration patterns in England are more prominent east/west rather than north/south; in Wales no net change can be demonstrated; in Scotland a migration to England is evident.



International students who come to study in the UK at undergraduate level almost exclusively stay in this country and tend to settle in England regardless of their University location: Ireland forms the largest immigrant population.

A limitation of the study is that the population is restricted to 2012 graduates restricting the reliability of the findings. It is recommended that geographical information should form part of the standard SCoR survey such that migration patterns can be monitored as a matter of routine.

CONCLUSION

The evidence suggests that the population of University cities is likely to grow because whilst still conceptually they lose around twenty four per cent of students at the entry point to Higher Education, a small proportion return home, numbers are boosted by the seventy per cent of graduates who stay in the area. An implication for clinical practice and the NHS is that recruitment of newly qualified Radiographers is likely to continue to be more difficult in areas remote from University cities. This situation is exacerbated in areas where the number of graduates per University is far less than the number of available jobs in the area. In terms of student recruitment, Universities could seemingly be justified in focussing on local recruitment as this provides the dominate proportion of their cohorts.

REFERENCES

- SCoR (2012) 'Analysis of Students and Recent Graduates'.
- Wright,C. (2013) 'An Analysis of Migration Patterns of Radiography Undergraduates & Return on Investment. June. Society & College of Radiographers