

“Landarztzukunft” The future of rural doctors - a program to motivate students to do their general practice internship in a rural area

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Introduction:

We began working on this project in March 2017, with the aim of strengthening medicine in rural areas and encouraging students to do their general practice internship during their clinical practical year in a rural practice.



Methods:

We conducted a focused literature search and studied an existing German program in order to find out what makes programs to strengthen medicine in rural areas effective.

Results:

We identified the characteristics of effective programs and found out that accommodation and the cost of transport to the rural area should be free of charge, teaching doctors should be highly motivated, and the program should be voluntary and part of a long-term program that is carried out throughout medical studies. The project should therefore include a clinical traineeship at the beginning of studies and an internship during the clinical practical year at the end. We did a survey of the 15 students that participated in our project till now, which showed, that they were very satisfied with the program. The students were an average of 25.3 years old. Ten of them came from Austria, and four from Germany. None had children and three had relatives who were GPs. All the students said the project had been a positive experience and should be continued over the long-term.

Table 1: Characteristics of the students

How old were the students on average?	25,3 years
Where do the students come from?	Austria (10) Germany (4) Croatia (1)
Do the students have children?	No
Do the students have relatives who are GPs?	No (12) Yes (3)

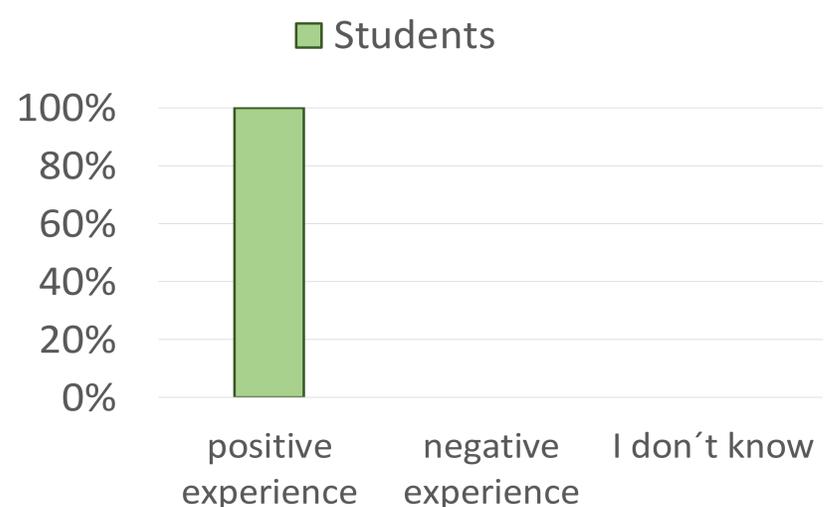


Figure 1: Answer to the question if the project had been a positive or negative experience

Discussion:

More such programs should be carried out in order to make a career in medicine in rural areas more attractive. We plan to include 21 participants in a similar program in 2019.