

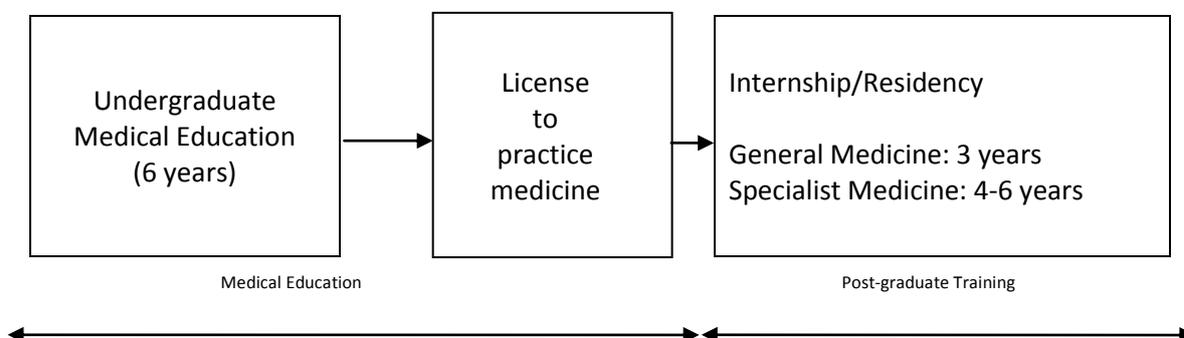


Trends in Medical Education and Training in Italy

1. Brief Overview of Medical Education and Training Pathways

- Entry to medical education in Italy follows the completion of high-school education and the grades obtained in a national exam, and it is subject to a *numerus clausus* (i.e., annual quota) set by the Ministry of Education, University and Research. It takes about six years for students to complete the first medical degree. The initial three years comprise nonclinical basic medical and scientific education, with the following three years including both clinical and nonclinical training.
- Upon completion of this medical degree and a six months clinical placement, students must pass a national exam (*Esame di Stato*) to become registered physicians with the medical professional association (*Ordine dei Medici*). Following the successful completion of the exam, physicians are licenced to practise and can pursue their post-graduate specialisation training.
- The number of post-graduate specialisation training is also subject to a *numerus clausus* determined by the Ministry of Economy together with the Ministry of Health, according to the total budget available and the needs identified in each region (Castagnone et al., 2015). The length of specialty training varies from three to six years, depending on the area of specialisation. Prior to 2014, the allocation of students to post-graduate specialist training was determined locally. However, since August 2014, following a ministerial decree designed to increase transparency in training placements, the allocation to specialist training positions is determined by a national exam. Candidates are ranked according to their exam results, with those having the best results having greater chances of being granted a place in their preferred area of specialisation.
- On average, to become a doctor in Italy, it therefore takes between nine to twelve years of higher education and post-graduate training (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Medical education and training paths, Italy

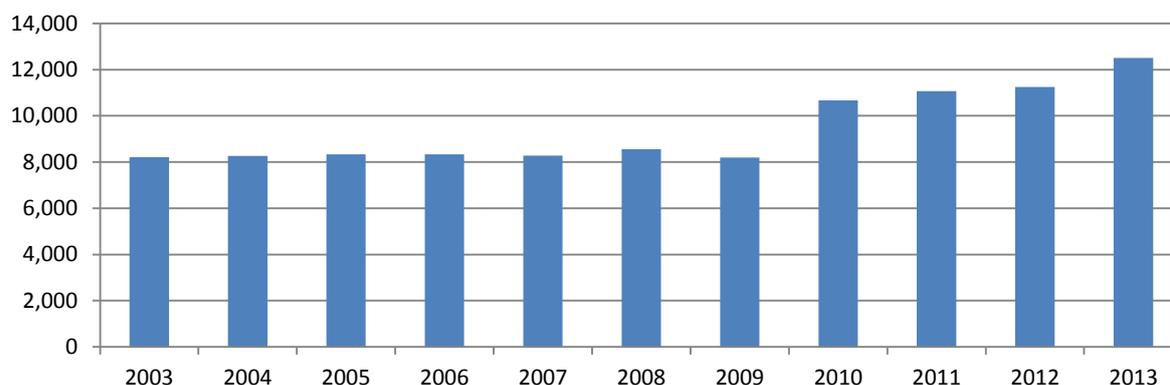


Source: Ferre et al., 2014.

2. Trends in Admissions to Medical Schools

- Since 1999, entry into medical education in Italy is regulated by the Ministry of Education, University and Research, with the selection based on a competitive entry exam (Ferre et al., 2014). The Italian Ministry of Health consults with regional authorities before formulating recommendations concerning the future need for doctors. These recommendations are then communicated to the Ministry of Education which controls the number of students admitted to medical schools.
- Figure 2 shows trends in the number of students admitted to medical education in Italy from 2003 to 2013. Between 2003 and 2009, the number of students admitted in medical schools remained relatively stable. The large increase in 2010 is due mainly to the fact that the data from this year cover all 40 medical schools, while the data before 2010 only covered 34 schools. However, there has been a significant real increase in student intakes in 2013, with the number rising by more than 10% compared to 2012. This recent increase was driven by concerns that the number of newly-trained doctors may not be sufficient to replace all those who will be retiring over the next decade. About 50% of all doctors in Italy were aged over 55 in 2013 (OECD, 2015a).

Figure 2. Admissions to medical education, Italy, 2003 to 2013

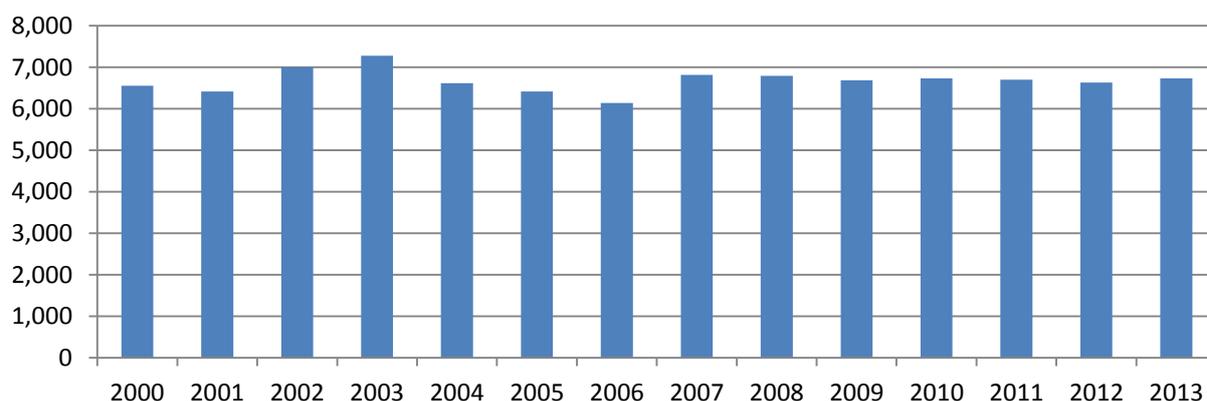


Note: The large increase in 2010 is due to the fact that the admission data cover all 40 medical schools, while the data in the previous years only covered 34 schools.

Source: Ministry of Education, University and Research, available at <http://anagrafe.miur.it/> (accessed on 21.07.2015).

- It is also important to note that the number of foreign students pursuing medicine in Italy more than doubled between 2003 and 2010, rising from 2 000 to 4 500 students. The majority of these foreign medical students come from non-European Union countries. However, since 2010, the number of foreign medical students in Italy has come down (Castagnone E et al., 2015).
- Figure 3 depicts the number of medical graduates in Italy from 2000 to 2013. Given the length of the training period, changes in the number of medical graduates will generally reflect changes in admissions six years earlier. The number of graduates from medical schools reached a peak in 2003 with nearly 7 300 new graduates, but since then has fallen in the range of 6 000 to 7 000 per year. The significant increase in the number of students admitted in 2013 will only show up in higher graduate numbers in 2019 and beyond.

Figure 3. Graduates from Medical Education, Italy, 2000 to 2013



Source: OECD Health Statistics (2015).

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Read the report online:

<http://www.oecd.org/health/health-workforce-policies-in-oecd-countries-9789264239517-en.htm>

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