

Questions regarding the paper

- What is the background and main purpose of the paper you published / to which you contributed?

We were concerned about internal brain drain and felt that there were no good systematic studies to quantify the phenomenon. We measured all brain drain from the public system (internal and external) though we were particularly concerned with accelerated internal brain drain due to disease specific funding.

- Do/did you intend the paper to influence policies in the field of mobility, migration and international recruitment of health personnel? If, yes, in which sense?

We wanted to first see what the data showed, and then on that basis share it with others in the health sector to generate discussion about policy. We hoped that the paper would stimulate discussion on funding mechanisms and their impact on public sector health systems.

- What kind of evidence did you use for / refer to in the paper, and how did you generate / access it?

We gathered original data from several Ministry sources and databases to capture objective facts about where physicians had gone in Mozambique. We also engaged key informants to populate the roster of MDs trained outside of Moz, and current work status/location.

- Were there any particular challenges in the making of the paper (access to data, collaboration, finances, etc.)?

Tracking down where individual doctors actually were at the time was challenging in some cases and required fairly significant follow-up and tracking, especially for the most recent graduates due to large graduating classes and their district service locations. We had good collaboration from our Ministry counterparts and physicians themselves.

General assessment of evidence based advocacy and policy

- How relevant are data and scientific evidence for policy makers compared with political interests and power relations? How would you define evidence based policy?

Unfortunately, data and evidence are frequently trumped by power and political interests. However, good solid objective evidence is still vital but must be channelled to the right folks to be used and promoted effectively.

- What evidence is missing when it comes to translating commitments (such as the adoption of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the international recruitment of health personnel by all WHO member states) to political action? Or is the lack of evidence rather used as an excuse for inaction?

We need more data and evidence to support efforts to stem the loss of health personnel. We could still use more data on how the loss of personnel affects actual health outcomes – and it would be good to show, with evidence, how brain drain actually costs us more in the long run...

- What role does evidence play for your own advocacy work?

In our own advocacy work we try to ground all of our work and outreach in solid evidence, data, and studies. Evidence is not sufficient but it is necessary to good advocacy work.