

Centre for Research Excellence
in Medical Workforce Dynamics

Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life (MABEL)

Changes in doctors' working hours: A longitudinal analysis

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Background

- Doctors' working hours have been declining
- Possible explanations:
 - Changing gender balance
 - Generational shifts in expectations about 'work-life balance'
 - Changing professional culture – attitudes to long hours
- Few studies follow individuals over time

Objective: To examine changes in working hours over time and the factors associated with changing hours

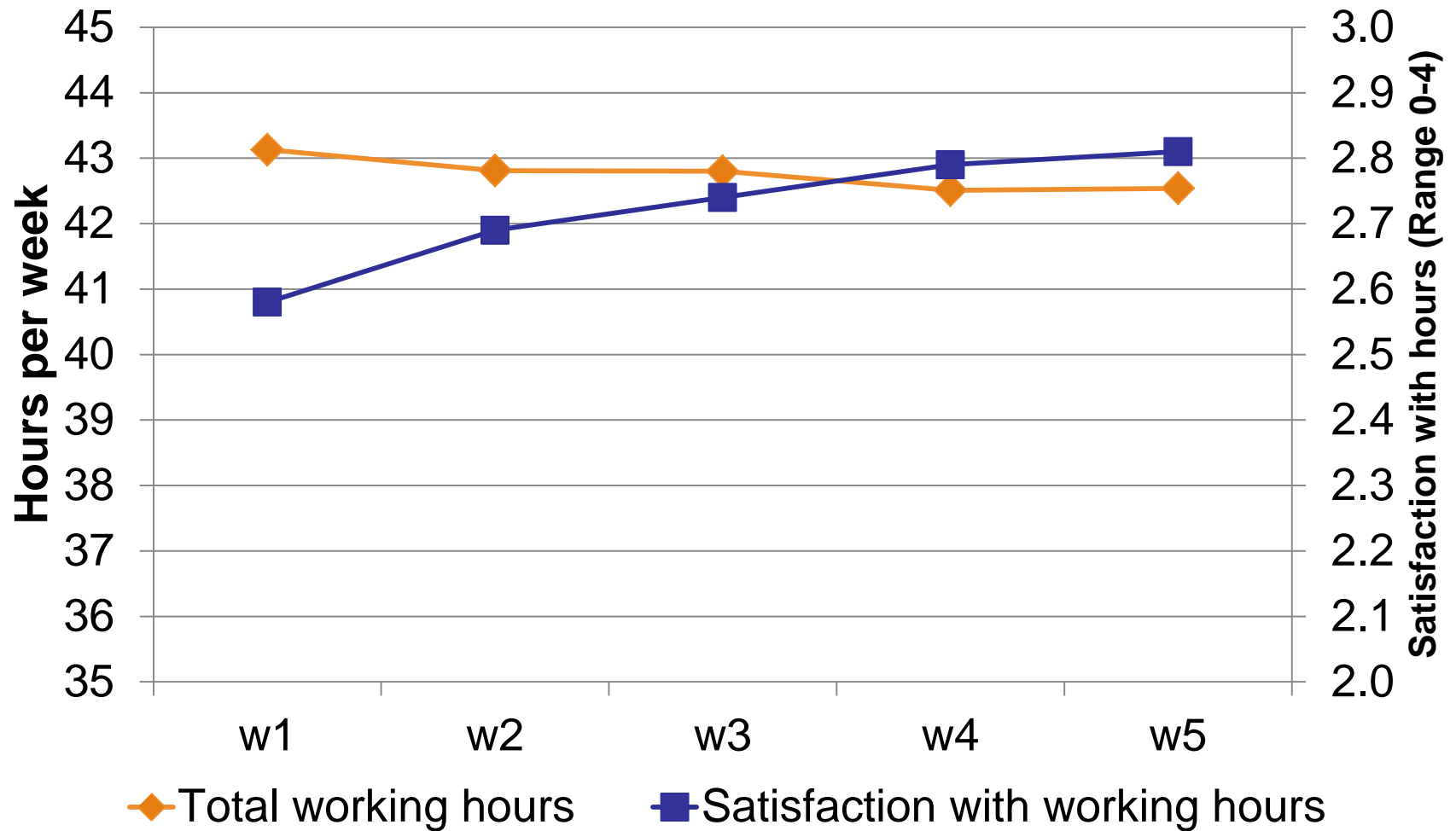
Methods

- MABEL wave 1 (2008) to wave 5 (2012)
- Fully qualified doctors: GPs and specialists
- Key outcome measures: Total hours worked per week **and** satisfaction with hours worked
- Analysis: Latent Growth Curve Modelling
- Covariates (measured at Wave 1):
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Health status
 - Doctor type (GP/specialist)
 - Partner's employment status
 - Number of dependent children
 - Age of youngest child

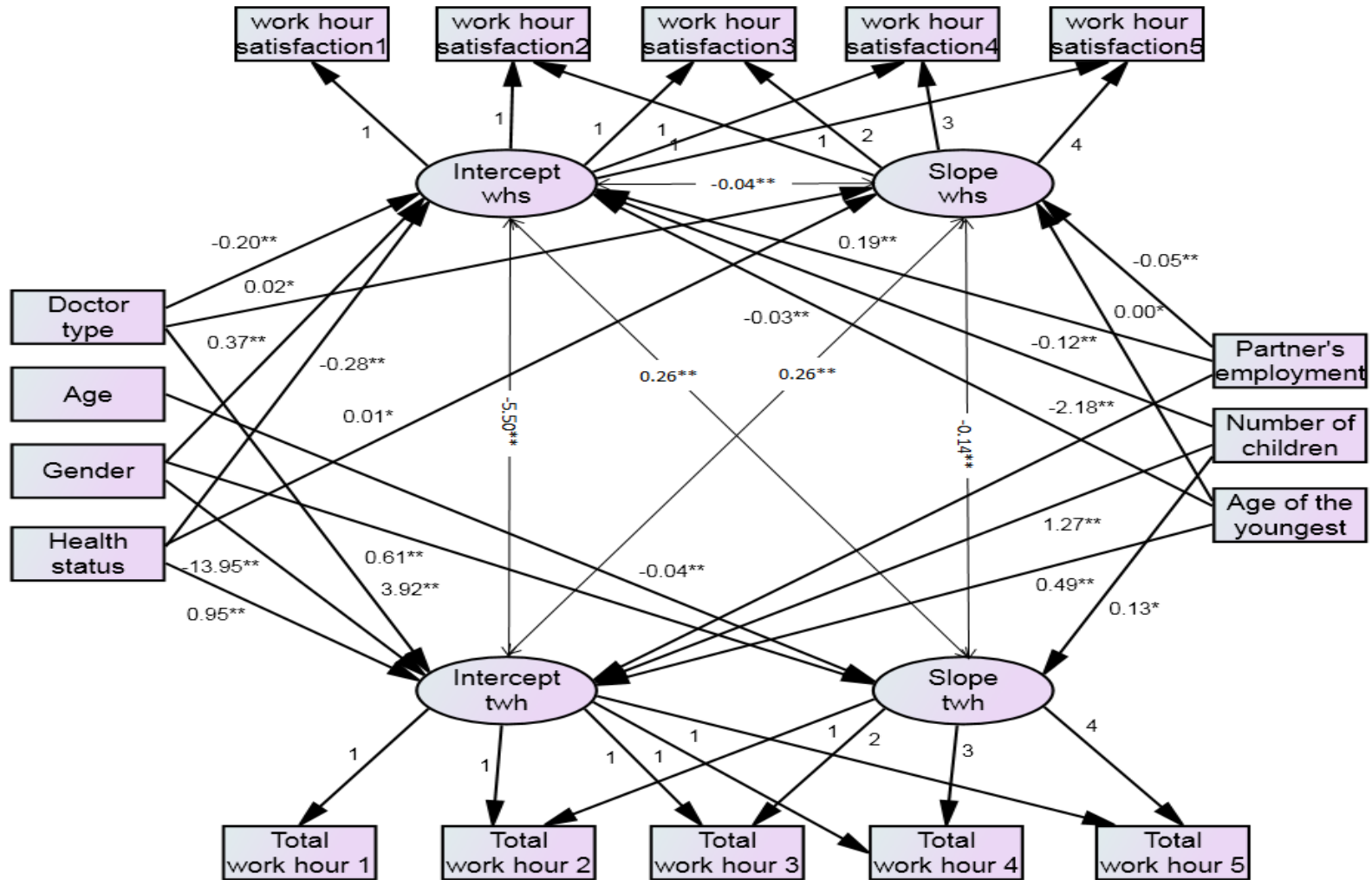
Sample: $n = 2319$ doctors

Characteristics at wave 1	Percent
Age: Generation X: 29-43 years	28.6%
Baby boomers: 44-62 years	68.3%
Older generation: 63 years & older	3.1%
Gender: Male	62.6%
Doctor type: GP	46.1%
Health status: Good, very good or excellent	93.3%
Partner's employment: Full time	36.4%
Number of dependent children: 2	40.5%
Age of youngest child: mean (sd)	10.18 (6.19)

Outcome measures by wave



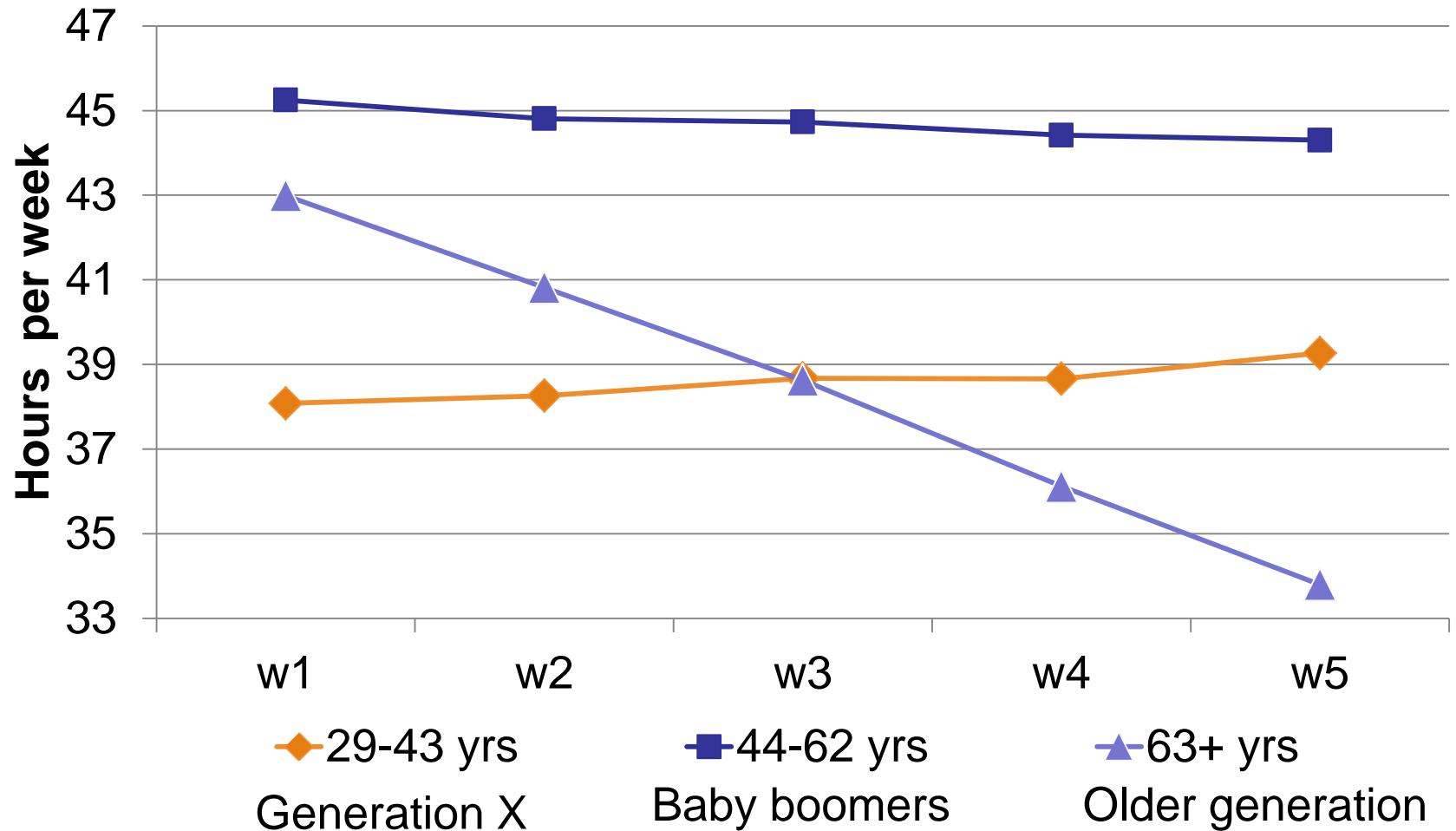
Latent Growth Model



Key findings

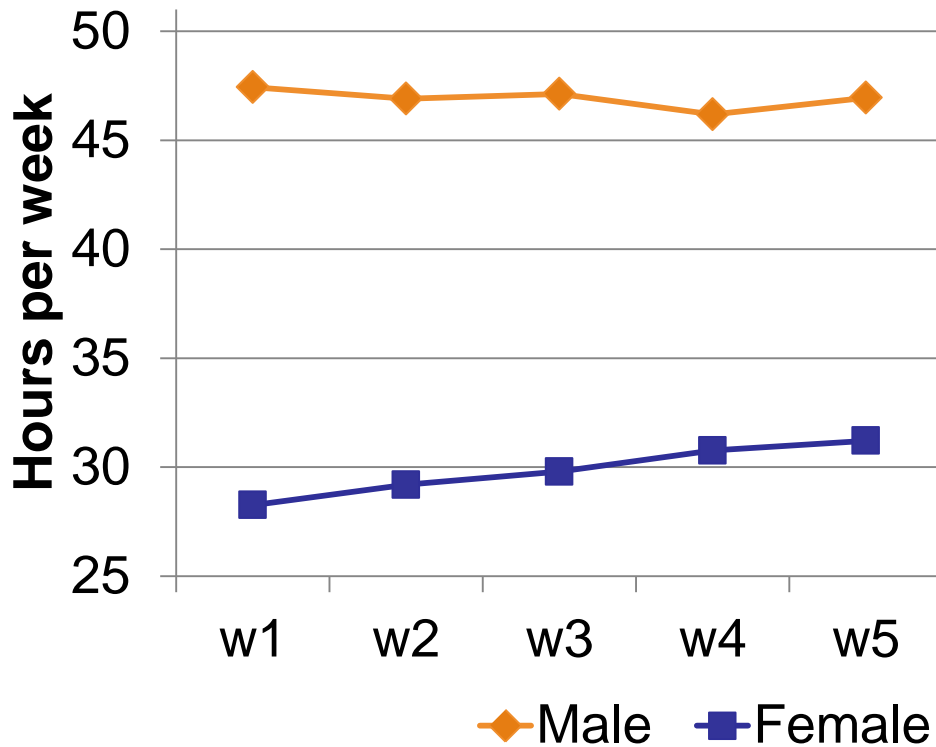
- Significant decrease in hours over time
- Larger declines over time:
Males, older doctors, those with fewer children
- Working longer at baseline was associated with:
 - Being male, a specialist, reporting poor health, partner not working full time, more children, and the youngest child being older.
 - Lower satisfaction with hours
 - Higher increase over time in satisfaction with hours

Working hours by age cohort

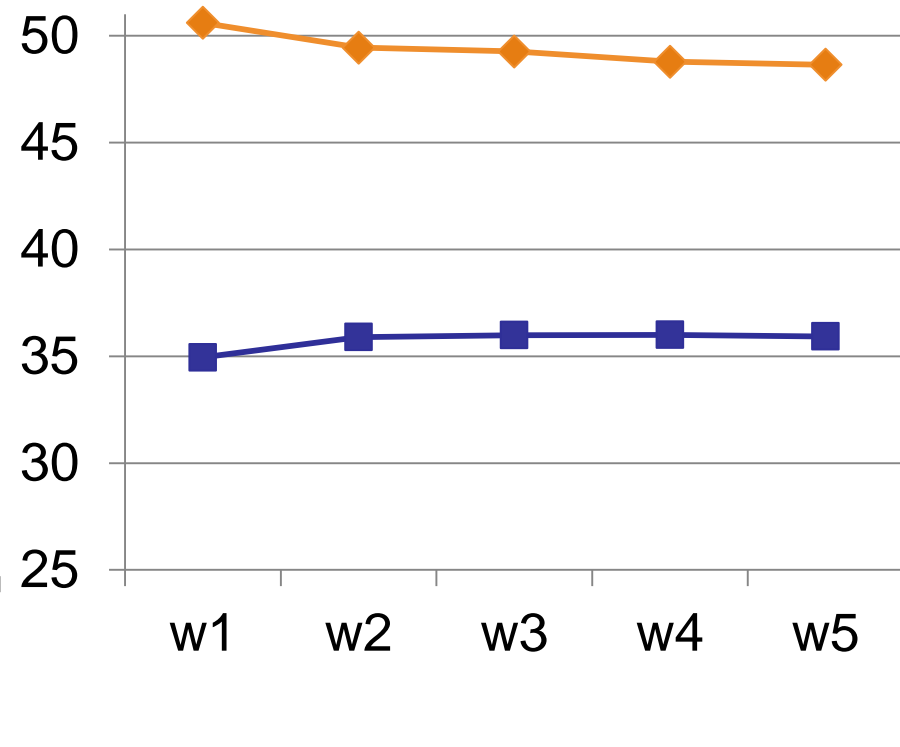


Working hours by age cohort & gender

Generation X (29-43 years)



Baby boomers (44-62 years)



Conclusion

- Significant gender gaps remain
- Cohort differences are also evident
- Attitudes/norms about long working hours in the profession are changing

Implications

- Workforce planning: assume continued reductions in Full Time Equivalents
- Organisational: employment practices to accommodate more part time doctors