The Change in Full-Time EMS Provider Career Satisfaction in their First Three Years of Employment
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Objectives: Career satisfaction is an important component of retaining an adequate and productive workforce. This study endeavors to describe the change in full-time EMS provider career satisfaction in their first three years of certification.

Methods: This is a longitudinal study of over 5,000 randomly selected and stratified Nationally Registered EMT-Basics and Paramedics from across the nation. Initial enrollment began in 1999 and continued through 2004. Once enrolled, subjects were surveyed annually on a variety of demographic and attitudinal questions. One question asked respondents to rate their ‘satisfaction with the EMS profession’ on a four-point Likert scale (very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied). For this study, we compared full-time EMS workers responses in the initial year of certification to their satisfaction two years later. We included in the analysis all subjects who indicated that they were working full-time and for which we had a satisfaction rating in their initial certification year and two years later (n=490).

Results: When considering all EMT-Basics and Paramedics, there was no significant change in career satisfaction (-0.07; p=.149) in the first three years of full-time EMS work. Sub group analysis indicated that full-time EMT-Basics had no change in career satisfaction (0.00; p=.987), however, full-time paramedics has a highly significant (p<.0001) decreased in career satisfaction (-0.18). Of providers working in rural settings, there was a decrease in career satisfaction of both EMT-Basics (-0.08) and paramedics (-0.22). This decrease approached statistical significance for EMTs (p=.081), but was highly significant (p<.0001) for Paramedics.

Conclusion: There appears to be a significant decrease in career satisfaction of full-time Paramedics in their first three years of employment. This decrease in career satisfaction appears to be more dramatic in rural settings. More study is needed to determine the causes of career dissatisfaction among full-time EMS workers and to develop strategies to retain a satisfied workforce.