INTRODUCTION:

- It is important that there is adequate provision of generalist and subspecialty ophthalmic services to meet population demands in Ontario.
- It is important that decisions regarding the future size of academic residency and fellowship programs are data-driven and consider regional population needs.
- To better prepare for the future delivery of ophthalmic services in the province, this study aimed to explore the geographical distribution of Ontario’s ophthalmologists from 2010-2019.

METHODS:

- Using validated healthcare databases, all actively practicing ophthalmologists in Ontario from 2010-2019 were identified.
- Ophthalmologists were categorized into their respective area of care and then sorted into one of the province’s fourteen Local Health Integrative Networks (LHINs) using billing data.
- The proportion of ophthalmologists in each LHIN, overall supply of ophthalmologists in each LHIN (Figure 1), supply of generalist and subspecialty ophthalmologists in each LHIN, and changes over time were examined using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS:

- Yearly median of 295 generalist and 158 subspeciality ophthalmologists in Ontario.
- LHINs with academic programs were generally well serviced.
- Erie St. Clair had lowest supply of generalists; North Simcoe Muskoka & Central East had lowest subspecialist supply.
- Low vision rehabilitation specialists, neuro-ophthalmologists and pediatric ophthalmologists were available in only 5, 6 and 7 of the 14 LHINs, respectively.

CONCLUSIONS:

- Significant geographic disparities in ophthalmologist supply remain across Ontario.
- Evidence-based recommendations are needed to ensure the recruitment of generalist and subspecialty ophthalmologists in key areas to meet population needs.

Figure 1: Number of ophthalmologists/100,000 people in each LHIN