

## „New vision for primary health care and sustainable development“

# Timing matters: family medicine exposure in Latvian undergraduate medical education

<sup>1</sup>Riga Stradiņš University, Riga, Latvia

# Introduction

# What Do We Know About Timing of Specialty Choice?

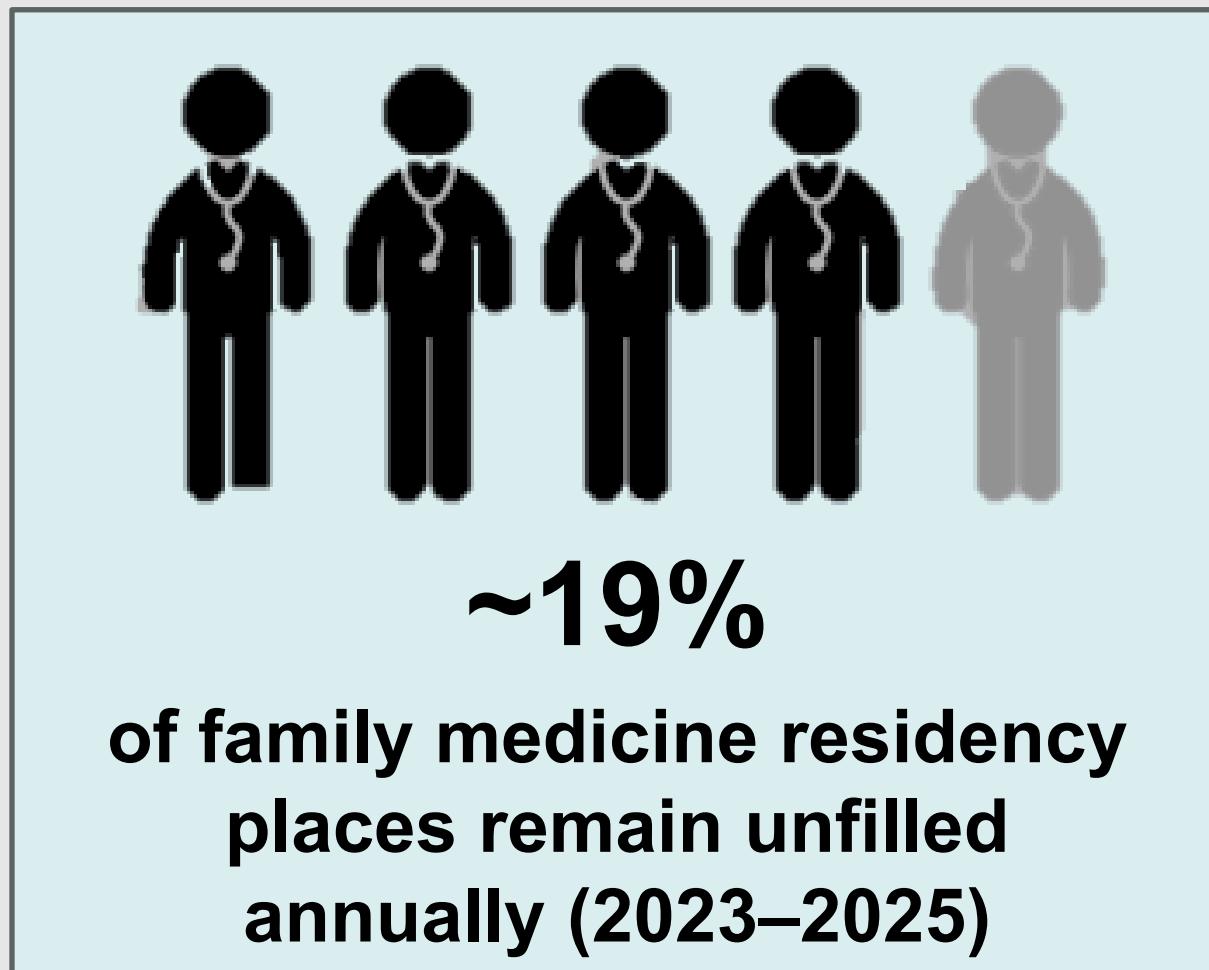
- ✓ Evidence shows that specialty preferences begin forming during early clinical years and become more stable over time.
- ✓ Students are more likely to choose specialties they:
  - encounter earlier in training.
  - experience for a longer duration.

# Why does this thesis matter in Latvia?

# Mismatch between national healthcare needs and medical student trajectories.

**Latvia is facing growing shortage of family doctors, but students are not choosing this specialty.**

**62%**  
of practicing  
family doctors  
are aged 55+



# Aim

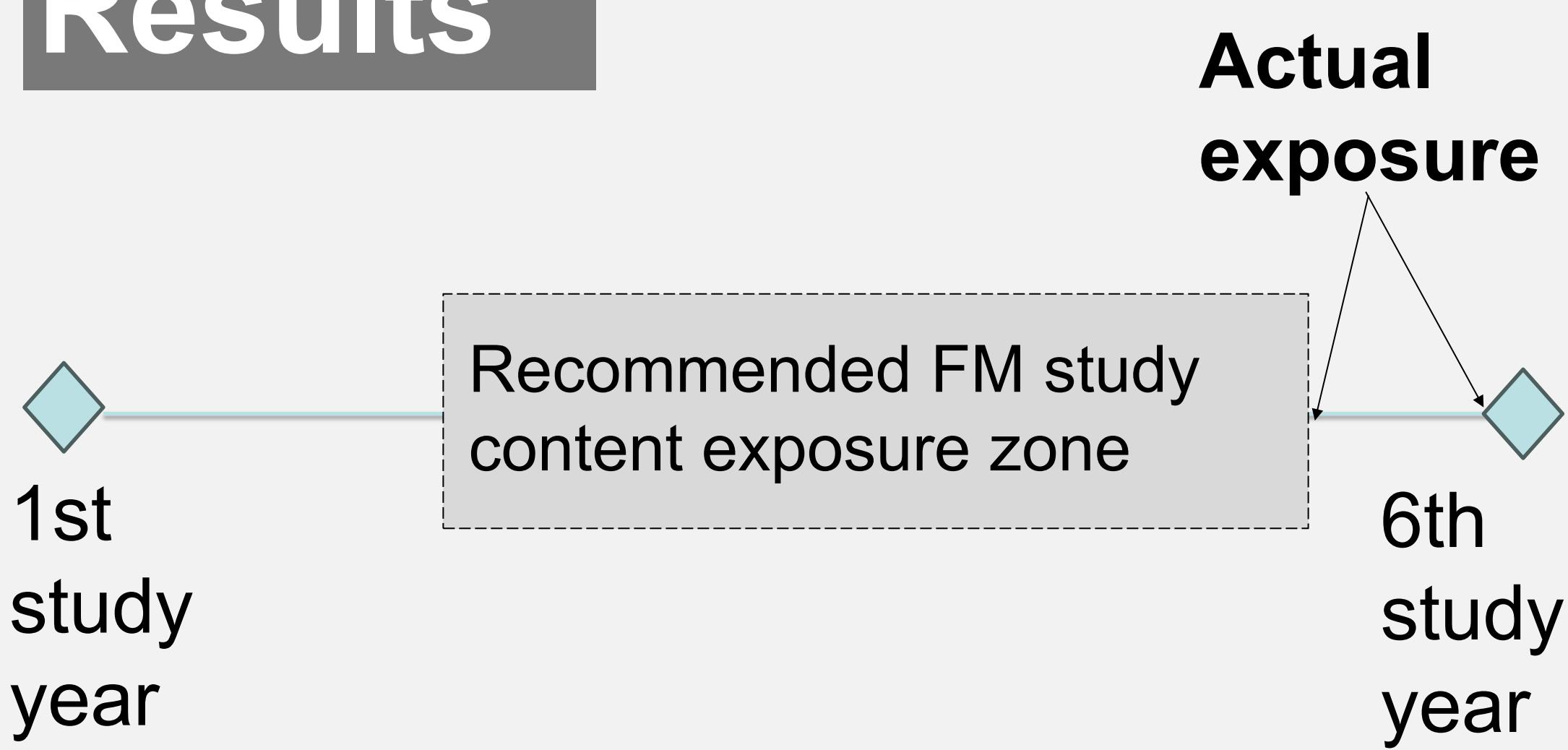
To examine timing and extent of exposure to family medicine in Latvian undergraduate medical education curricula.

# Methods

# Semi-structured interviews with curriculum coordinators at Riga Stradins university (RSU) and University of Latvia (LU).

# Focus: timing and structure of family medicine exposure.

# Results



- Clinical studies begin in Year 3 at both universities.
- Structured exposure to family medicine appears:
  - In the 5th year at Riga Stradiņš University (RSU).
  - In the 6th year at the University of Latvia (LU).
- Both universities require a 2-week mandatory clinical practice in family medicine during the 6th year.
- Elective opportunities:
  - RSU offers a limited-choice elective in family medicine (6th year).
  - LU offers no elective FM courses.
- Early engagement with family medicine is:
  - Minimal.
  - Not systematically promoted.

In Latvia, structured exposure to family medicine begins only in the final years of medical school, which may limit students' familiarity with the specialty amid a growing need for new family doctors.

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