

Specialist training in rural—does setting impact on quality of training?

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Over the past seventeen years the Australian Government has undertaken a major expansion of its investment in medical education. This expansion has resulted in medical education being delivered in a range of non-traditional settings such as rural areas and private hospitals.

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) has been contracted by the Australian Government to expand the range of training experiences and settings through the Specialist Training Program. In addition to ANZCA this program supports 12 medical colleges across 18 vocational training programs, varying in duration from three years (eg. general practice) to six years (eg. neurosurgery).

Persistent geographic maldistribution of the medical workforce has been documented in recent reports such as *Health Workforce 2015* and the Senate Inquiry into *The factors affecting the supply of health services and medical professionals in rural areas*. The majority of specialist vocational training still occurs in public sector metropolitan hospitals. In this presentation, I discuss the key elements of the Specialist Training Program and how it is helping address the shortages of specialist anaesthetists and specialist pain medicine physicians in rural and regional areas.

Currently there is limited evidence on the quality of training in more diverse training settings such as rural and remote hospitals. The College is keen to understand the impact that the diversification of training settings may have on the quality of service offered in those settings and the quality of training. Factors to be considered include barriers and benefits of training in rural and regional areas and possible safeguards required to ensure high quality training is not compromised.

To help answer this question, we have commenced a study to answer the following question: *Does setting impact on quality of training?*

The study will also explore issues of training in expanded settings for anaesthetists and pain medicine specialists. The presentation will deliver an outline of the study and its methodology, as well any early research findings.