

#Millennialsgorural

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Background: How do we encourage today's generation of health students to go rural?

What do we know about what motivates them to consider a career in rural communities, what has changed for them and what does this mean for future funding investments for medical and allied health professionals?

Despite increasing medical student numbers, data from the latest Medical Schools Outcome Database highlights that <1% of graduating medical students (or around 20 graduates per annum) state a preference to work as a GP in smaller communities (pop<25,000).

Rural maldistribution is even more marked for the allied health workforce, with the number of professionals falling from 22 per 100,000 people in capital cities to 12 in remote areas and 6 in very remote areas.

Quotas on students with rural backgrounds—even if expanded from current levels—are unlikely to be sufficient to meet workforce needs for an ageing population.

New strategies to persuade Australian-trained graduates to 'go rural' will be needed, but what will work and what needs to change to see "millennials go rural"?

Aims: A recent qualitative study found today's medical students and junior doctors ('millennials') value 'professionally advantageous' rural experiences that will benefit their longer term career goals. The research aims to quantify these findings amongst a large sample of medical and allied health students.

Specific research questions include:

- factors considered in undertaking rural placements (eg reputation of placement, mentor) and which are of greater relative importance?
- do students actively seek rural placements that are seen to offer professional advantages?
- are there differences in attitudes towards rural placements between medicine and allied health students or between students from rural and non-rural backgrounds?
- what would make them consider a career in rural Australia?

Methods: An online survey developed to quantify the findings from recent qualitative research will be emailed to over 10,000 multi-disciplinary health students at Australian universities.

Results: This will be the first survey of its kind and provide valuable information for future health workforce planners and policy-makers. The research hypothesises that millennial students see themselves in a competitive environment and are highly career-focused. When considering a rural placement or rural practice, they want answers to questions such as *'how will this benefit my career?'* and *'what is the reputation of this hospital/mentor/ placement?'*

Conclusions: It is expected that when complete in March 2015 the research findings will provide recommendations of how best to develop and refine programs and initiatives to attract urban health students to rural practice.