

“They Liven The Place Up”

Tasmanian Rural GP Medical Student Placements

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- **78% of UTas rural GP teaching practices (51 GPs from 21 practices) participated in a survey about medical student placements. This is 32% (21/65) of all rural GP practices in Tasmania.**
- **GP supervisors value their own learning during medical student placements and enjoy the interaction with young people from different backgrounds.**
- **Academic detailing (individualised practice visits) is successful in providing support for GP supervisors.**

Introduction

The University of Tasmania (UTas) has a five-year undergraduate medical program. Rural general practice (GP) placements occur in years two to five. Rural general practice placements vary from two-week rural community visits, to six month longitudinal placements where the student attends the same rural general practice for one day every week.



Figure 2: Map showing location of rural GP teaching practices that participated in the survey

Methods

At the end of 2015, the University of Tasmania undertook an evaluation of GP teaching and supervision for medical students on GP placements as part of a continuing professional development (CPD) activity for GP supervisors. As part of this CPD activity, supervisors were asked two qualitative questions: “What do you enjoy most about teaching medical students in your practice?” and “How could you be assisted and supported in this activity”. These qualitative survey responses were analysed thematically.

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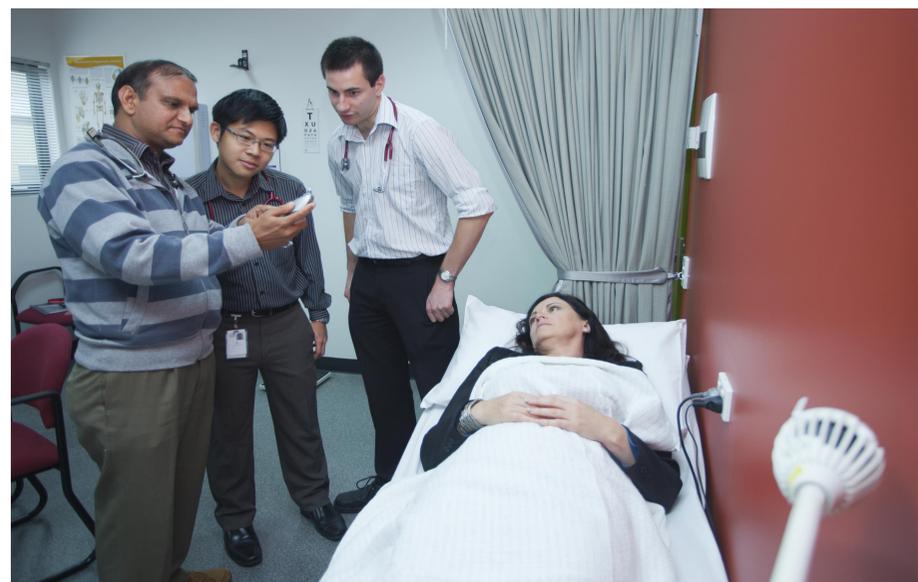


Figure 1: General practice supervisor (Dr Satish Kumar) and medical students (Jin Chew Chin and Jacob Wilson) from the Rural Clinical School (Burnie) teaching with a patient (Therese Evans)

Results

Themes from the two qualitative questions with percentage of respondents were:

A. What do you most enjoy about teaching medical students in your practice?

- 1a. I learn myself/I reflect on my own practice (59%)
- 2a. I enjoy the interaction (57%)
- 3a. Seeing students learn and develop (24%)
- 4a. Teaching about the role of the rural GP (20%)

B. How could you be assisted and supported in this activity?

- 1b. Currently happy with role and support (37%)
- 2b. Feedback from students (16%)
- 3b. Teaching from experienced medical educators (16%)
- 4b. Reduce workload and time demands (10%)
- 5b. Formal university training courses (6%)
- 6b. Increased financial support (4%)

Conclusions and Future Work

- GP supervisors value the learning they get from student placements and enjoy the interaction and relationships they build with medical students.
- Rural GP supervisors wanted to show medical students the rewards of rural general practice and felt it could encourage them to work in rural areas in the future.
- Only a small number of GP supervisors raised financial support as a concern, although time pressure impacts on teaching
- Dedicated administrative logistical support and personalised academic detailing - provided by visiting experienced medical educators to each rural practice – is successful. This will continue as the main form of rural GP supervisor support at the University of Tasmania.
- Areas for improvement are increasing student feedback to practices (feedback is currently provided as grouped data in de-identified form) and providing flexible access to university learning programs for interested GP supervisors