

# STUDENTS GET REAL LIFE EXPERIENCE WITH GP PLACEMENT

*Second year medical student Jingjing Fan is taking part in the University of Queensland's Urban Longitudinal Integrated Community Care (LInCC) program, where students can spend time each week getting a real-life look at a GP in action.*

The program allows students to experience continuity of patient care; to view the complexities of managing patients with multiple problems in the community; and to develop their clinical skills in history taking, physical examination, management, follow-up and prevention across the broad range of patient presentations spanning all disciplines.

Jingjing has been visiting Dr Ian Williams at Camp Hill Health Care for this semester to see an experienced GP at work and gain some valuable experience.

"One of the reasons I decided to join the program was because I wanted to gain more experience interviewing and examining patients in a real-world setting.

"During my first year in medical school, we were taught how to take a medical history and perform various examinations, but I feel that year two is the time to practise these skills and interact with real patients in the clinic, which was something we had been unable to do in our first year.

"Second, I wanted to have a better understanding of what general practitioners do. Until then, I could only see general practice from the perspective of a patient. However, if I wanted to consider general practice as a potential career choice, I needed more information and I felt that Urban LInCC was able to help me with that."

"I am extremely fortunate to be in this program because it has exceeded my expectations by so many folds. Not only was I able to see medical conditions that I had only read about in textbooks, but the placement was also an eye-opener in terms of what general practice entails. It made me realise that there is so much more a general practitioner does than I had previously imagined.

"For example, I was able to witness firsthand the role GPs play in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, which is quite a historical moment. Moreover, now that I have seen how it is like behind the scenes, I have a better understanding of how the Australian health care system works and a greater appreciation for the role of GPs in this system.

"One of the biggest takeaways that I have from observing Dr Williams is the art of treating the person, not the condition. Rather than adopting a tunnel vision and focusing on one specific parameter on the blood test results, Dr Williams considers the whole patient when coming up with an explanation.

"This reminds me of the need to be proficient in my medical knowledge so that I can arrive at the right diagnosis for the patient.

"More importantly, I have seen how Dr Williams really listens to his patients. He truly understands the concerns and needs of his patients, even those that are not explicitly expressed, and he does his best to address them. Sometimes the patient has different priorities from their doctor, but I have learnt from observing Dr Williams that addressing the expectations of both parties is what leads to the best outcome," she said.

Dr Williams said he has taken on several students over the years and explains:

"By having their first clinical attachment in general practice, students are exposed to medical practice in a setting where undifferentiated disease is the norm, and they learn to understand how their medical training can create order out of chaos. This allows them to have a fuller understanding of where non GP clinical practice sits in the medical landscape as their studies progress."

