

# Factors influencing decisions to becoming a supervisor: a qualitative study of early career general practitioners and rural generalists

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## Introduction

- General Practitioner (GP) training in Australia relies on accredited GP supervisors (GPS) facilitating workplace-based training for GP registrars<sup>1</sup>
- Future challenges are likely with a diminishing GP population and impending shortage of supervisors, especially in rural areas<sup>2</sup>



- Lack of research of on the perspectives of the next generation of supervisors, namely senior GP registrars and new GP fellows<sup>3</sup>

## Aims

- Explore senior GP and rural generalist (RG) registrars and new fellows perceptions of factors which influence their decision to become GP Supervisors
- Examine potential variations in these factors based on their training and employment backgrounds

## Methods

- Qualitative approach using focus group discussions or semi-structured interviews

### Participants (n=24)

- 24 newly fellowed GPs and senior registrars of two regional GP training organisations were recruited by email invitation with purposive sampling to ensure diversity in sample

Variable	n (%)	
Participants	New Fellow 20 (83.3)	Senior Registrar 4 (16.7)
Focus group and SSI participants	Focus group 24 (100)	Semi-structured interview 20 (83.3)
Regional Training Organisation	JCU GP Training 9 (37.5)	GPTQ 15 (62.5)
Gender	Female 14 (58.3)	Male 10 (41.7)
Rural generalist/Generalist	Yes 11 (45.8)	No 13 (54.2)

### Analysis

- Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and deidentified
- Data analysis followed inductive approach guided by thematic analysis

## Strengths & Limitations

Strengths	Limitations
Good response rate among new fellows	Queensland-only sample
Findings congruent with national and international research	Very low response rate from GP registrars

## Findings - Identified Themes (6)

### Being a good supervisor

- "...someone who has the emotional intelligence to deal humanely with individuals as a base, and then the combination of clinical skills developed over a long period of time and that means both bookish knowledge and on the ground knowledge, merged together..." (New fellow, RG)

### Motivated by past experiences of supervision

"A bad supervisor is actually a really good motivation to not be a bad supervisor. So you see what was done wrong, then you try and do the right thing..." (New fellow)

### Financial implications of being a supervisor

"...if you're spending time supervising you're seeing less patients yourself which means less billing and less income." (New fellow, RG)

### Factors unique to rural settings

"...often the rural centres are...the least wanted and so you tend to get registrars who are more difficult to teach and difficult to engage ... that's a barrier [to becoming a supervisor]..." (New fellow, RG)

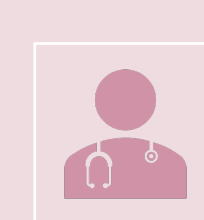
### New models of supervision

- "If there was to be ... a contingency plan for when I'm not around, then I'd be much happier to engage in that as a collective ... why not teach us all how to educate new doctors and sort it through that, as a collective supervision, [rather] than a sole responsibility on one doctor." (Registrar, RG)

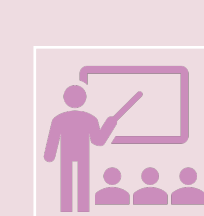
### Becoming a supervisor - How and when?

"I just thought you said, yes, I'll be one [a supervisor] and they said, "Right, here's your registrar..." (New fellow)

## Practical applications



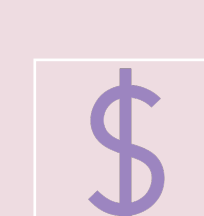
Establish **clear pathways** to becoming a GP supervisor



Nationally consistent (mandatory) training modules and **paid professional development**



**Flexible** supervision models



**Remuneration** that reflects the importance and time commitment of the role

## References

- Ingham, G. and Johnson, C., MJA, 2022. doi: 10.5694/mja2.51411
- Deloitte Access Economics. General Practitioner workforce report 2022. Prepared for Cornerstone Health Pty Ltd. 2022
- Ingham, G., et al., BMC Med Educ, 2015. doi: 10.1186/s12909-015-0474-3

