

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 registrars¹
- Future challenges are likely with a diminishing GP population and impending shortage of supervisors, especially in rural areas²



- Lack of research of on the perspectives of the next generation of supervisors, namely senior GP registrars and new GP fellows³

Aims

1. Explore senior GP and rural generalist (RG) registrars and new fellows perceptions of factors which influence their decision to become GP Supervisors
2. 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	Senior Registrar
	20 (83.3)	4 (16.7)
Focus group and SSI participants	Focus group	Semi-structured interview
	24 (100)	20 (83.3)
Regional Training Organisation	JCU GP Training	GPTQ
	9 (37.5)	15 (62.5)
Gender	Female	Male
	14 (58.3)	10 (41.7)
Rural generalist/Generalist	Yes	No
	11 (45.8)	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

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