



Pathways to Progress: Healthcare Access in Rural Victoria

Data capability:
From Data to Action

Abstract title: Enhancing rural registrar training for improved sustainability pilot project: A mixed methods study

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Overview

Recruitment and retention of general practitioners remains an endemic problem in rural, regional and remote communities across Australia. Positive factors identified to impact retention of healthcare professionals include minimisation of change of practice location, attractive remuneration packages, and professional and educational support.

The Enhancing Rural Registrar Training for Improved Sustainability is a 12-month pilot led by RWAV in collaboration with Charles Sturt University and a regional Victorian healthcare service (the site of the intervention). The service is in a MMM5 area, with an ASGS remoteness area classification of Outer Regional Australia. This location is a priority area for GPs and has a population of approximately 21,000 people.

The pilot is an alternative model of in-practice training aimed at improving exam success and retention of latter year GP registrars. A mixed-methods evaluation investigated the suite of interventions to determine the impact and viability of the project on retention of general practice registrars, after fellowship, in rural and regional Victorian locations.

Registrars received the following:

- Additional education resources;
- Additional top-up payments;
- Exam support with a college examiner; and
- Additional exposure to clinical scenarios

Methods

The study recruited registrars enrolled in general practice/rural generalist fellowships and supervisors from the regional Victorian healthcare service.

Registrars completed an online survey on commencement and at completion of the research project and participated in semi-structured interviews at commencement, midpoint and on completion of the project.

Supervisors participated in semi structured interviews at commencement and on completion of the project.

Results

The findings provide further context for literature published relating to barriers and enablers of retention of the rural medical workforce and explore the impact of remuneration and additional training resources on GP registrar retention, perceived confidence levels and exam success. The findings on the impact of registrar training on supervisors will also be presented.