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This is a 'keeping connected' initiative of 'Advancing health service delivery through workforce': A strategy for Queensland 2017-2026

Included in this issue:

- peer-reviewed articles of interest
- links to reports and opinion pieces
- events and updates

Articles of interest

Expanded Practice in rural community pharmacy in Australia: pharmacists' perspective

Living in rural and remote Australia presents many challenges including accessibility to quality healthcare; higher death rates; higher disease burdens and lower rates of health literacy. With the role that pharmacists play in the provision of primary healthcare services expanding globally, this paper investigated the perspectives of rural and remote pharmacists on community health and expanded service provision issues.

Expanding the scope of practice for rural and remote pharmacists has been proposed as a way of improving health outcomes for these communities with an American study finding that pharmacists in rural and remote areas were four times more likely to change their employment to cater for the expanded services than their city counterparts. This study also discusses the enablers and barriers to pharmacists in expanding the services provided.

Although there is widespread support from rural pharmacists in Australia for expanded practice more work will be required at both the local and national levels to determine the best way forward.

[Find out more](#)

Diabetes Capabilities for the Healthcare Workforce Identified via a 3 Staged Modified Delphi Technique

The prevalence of diabetes in Australia is on the rise and by 2030 is expected to be Australia's leading cause of health condition burden. This study aimed to identify the capabilities required by health professionals to effectively deliver diabetes education and care, and to develop a nationally consistent capability-based framework to guide workforce training.

Building capability and greater health literacy within the health workforce around diabetes is essential to improving the care provided by health professionals. This study highlighted the need for a greater emphasis on diabetes within

undergraduate health related courses; the adoption of a nationally consistent capability framework for diabetes education and care; and mentoring programs that link new graduates and generalists with professionals who specialise in diabetes care.

A prepared diabetes health workforce will improve early detection of diabetes and complications; improve referral processes and access to care, and reduce healthcare costs.

The consultation led to the design and validation of a Capability Framework for Diabetes Care that addresses workforce enablers identified by the [Australian National Diabetes Strategy](#).

[Find out more](#)

High levels of psychosocial distress among Australian frontline healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-sectional survey

Workplace demands and stressors leading to poor mental health within the health workforce often stretch beyond impacts on the individual to include impacting quality of care provision, patient safety and workforce retention and engagement. The study analysed over 9000 survey responses received between August and October 2020 from health workers in all streams. This cross-section study sought to investigate the ongoing mental health impacts being experienced by Australia's health workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

Although resilience within the workforce remained high, symptoms of depression and anxiety were common with disruptions to family life, social relationships and financial worries identified as contributing factors. Predictors of poor mental health amongst health care workers were identified and include gender; years of experience within the profession; pre-existing psychological illnesses, profession and whether the role was frontline or not.

With the health workforce being an indispensable asset the impacts of occupational factors on mental health cannot be ignored. Better crisis preparedness and psychological support services are critical to ensure the mental health of our health care workforce is appropriately supported.

[Find out more](#)



Increasing doctors working in specific rural regions through selection from and training in the same region: national evidence from Australia

Endorsed by the World Health Organisation, Grow Your Own (GYO) strategies have emerged globally as a critical solution to increase rural workforce capacity and capability. Data from a cross-sectional study of Australian doctors training and working locations was used to test association with returning to work in communities of the same region.

Findings from this study include that the value of GYO strategies for medicine was strengthened through increasing the duration of training periods within the regions with the greatest needs for more medical practitioners and that greater efficiencies were gained when medical schools specifically targeted students with a rural background.

Unsurprisingly the biggest beneficiary of GYO strategies within the medical workforce were General Practitioners. Increasing opportunities for non-GP specialist training positions in regional areas is vital to further strengthening the success of GYO strategies within the medical workforce.

[Find out more](#)

The challenges of becoming and being a clinician manager: a qualitative exploration of the perception of medical doctors in senior leadership roles at a large Australian health service

With the clinical performance of hospitals, a key factor in determining funding allocations, clinical managers with medical backgrounds are considered an essential component in the successful operation of a health service. To better understand the drivers and factors influencing the progression of doctors into management roles this study undertook a qualitative study on 18 Australian clinical managers with a medical practitioner background. Survey respondents represented 80% male.

Interestingly, many study participants did not feel prepared or ready to take on a clinical management role at first, with a key driver being encouragement from colleagues to take on a leadership position. Challenges in transitioning to clinical management roles included the high administrative burden, juggling priorities, and the maintenance of a clinical load, which was considered of high importance.

The findings from this study are consistent with similar studies conducted overseas with outcomes including a more structured approach to training up the next generation of clinical managers. More research is required within this field, including a greater focus on the experiences of female clinical managers.

[Find out more](#)

Events

13th National Closing the Gap First Nations Health Conference

09 – 11 May 2022

Gold Coast

[Find out more](#)

National Palliative Care Week 2022

22 – 28 May 2022

Online and various locations across Australia

[Find out more](#)

First Nations Allied Health Conference

08 – 10 June 2022

Cairns

[Find out more](#)

21st International Conference on Emergency Medicine

14 – 19 June 2022

Melbourne

[Find out more](#)

Food for thought

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health-workforce-strategic-framework-and-implementation-plan-2021-2031>

Future-proofing Australia's medical workforce (National Medical Workforce Strategy)
<https://insightplus.mja.com.au/2022/3/future-proofing-australias-medical-workforce/>

The burnout is 'absolutely real': A look at the state of Australia's nursing workforce amid labour shortage
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-11-19/australia-nurse-burnout-labour-shortage-supply-demand/100566430>

Will this pandemic deter future generations of nurses?
<https://news.csu.edu.au/opinion/will-this-pandemic-deter-future-generations-of-nurses>

PODCAST: The Public Health Workforce – Episode 57
<https://soundcloud.com/meaningofhealth/episode-57-the-public-health-workforceaims-to-attract-health-professionals-to-rural-australia>

Contact

We welcome your comments and contributions.
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