

Medical students and prevocational junior doctors on placement in general practice: perspectives of supervisors and practice teams

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Background

Medical students and prevocational junior doctors are more likely to be attracted to general practice as a speciality of choice if they have high quality placement experiences. Sustaining a commitment to quality requires substantial investment by GP supervisors and practice teams, but little is known about their experiences and intentions to continue in the future. Advancing understanding of the perspectives of those involved in hosting medical students and junior doctors has important implications for future high quality learning in general practice.

The aim of this study was to explore the perspectives of supervisors and practice teams towards the supervision/hosting of medical students and junior doctors on clinical GP placements and their intentions to continue in the future.

Methods

Consenting respondents anonymously completed GPSA's online national survey titled "ENGAGE 2024 - Building a better future together" about their socio-demographics and supervision experience, their attitudes and perceived norms relating to supervising/hosting medical students and junior doctors on clinical GP placement, and intentions to supervise/host in the future.

Conclusion

A total of 517 respondents participated in the survey (56% women, mean age = 55±10 years; 67% GP supervisors), with representation across all Australian States/Territories and metropolitan/non-metropolitan locations. Most respondents agreed that supervising/hosting medical students/prevocational junior doctors was worthwhile and satisfying, but many also thought it was onerous and underpaid. Most agreed that supervising/hosting medical students is the norm/expected in general practice (69%), but less so for junior doctors (47%). A large proportion of respondents were unsure of their attitudes towards junior doctors. Preliminary analyses suggest that past supervision/hosting experience was the strongest predictor of intentions to supervise/host medical students/junior doctors in the future. The findings have important implications for improving support and reducing the perceived burden on supervisors and practice teams. Future research is needed to identify experiential factors that promote retention of GP supervisors and practices, and those attract new ones, to maintain the pipeline towards a general practice workforce.

Toukhsati S, Kippen R, Taylor C, Morgan S, McArthur L. Medical students and prevocational junior doctors on placement in general practice: perspectives of supervisors and practice teams. Paper presented at Australia and New Zealand Prevocational Medical Education Forum 2024; 2024 Nov 11-14, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia