

Impact of clinical placement sites on general practice as a career preference for Australian medical students

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Background

The general practice (GP) workforce in Australia is in shortage, and will continue to remain so if current trends continue. Previous literature has demonstrated that the presence of GP placements, especially rural placements, can have a positive influential factor in consideration and intent to be a GP, and has even been identified as a potential intervention strategy. However, there is a lack of research to compare the impact of urban versus rural GP placements, which this study aims to do.

Aim/Objectives

This study seeks to investigate and compare whether a GP placement in a rural area, in an urban area, versus no placement, has an impact on intent to be a GP in Australian medical students.

Methods

With the understanding of research based on similar aims, further and more relevant research was conducted with recent survey data from GPRA. Through statistical analysis of survey information on SPSS software, with the use of chi-squared testing, directional measures and ANOVA, a correlation was derived between allocation of placement and desire to become a GP.

Findings

Based on 2009 data, the region where GP placement was undertaken did not significantly increase the likelihood of pursuing GP as a career $\chi^2 (2, N = 452) = 2.706, p > 0.05$. Conversely, according to data collected in 2019, the location of GP rotation had a significant impact on the dependent variable $\chi^2 (1, N = 892) = 9.939, p < 0.05$. However, using a multivariate regression analysis for both data sets, the medical students' rating of their GP rotation experience more significantly increased the likelihood of pursuing GP as a career. $\chi^2 (1, N = 888) = 147.156, p < 0.001$.

Implications

The demand for GPs are increasing especially within rural areas where there is greater workforce shortage. Conducting research on the influence of placement allocation with the desire to become a GP allows for further reconsideration of the benefits of placements for society and expands scope for further research in the future when trends may change.