

Title: Patient-centeredness as an indicator of program impact: The JCU GP training experience

Background

James Cook University's Generalist Medical Training Program is committed to selecting 'values-aligned' applicants for GP Registrar training, then fostering the development of the skills required for regional, rural or remote practice. Patient-centeredness is a key Australian health practitioner value. This study examined the values and beliefs of JCU GP registrars about patient-centredness in healthcare.

Methods

JCU GP registrars completed a validated online survey in 2017 (n=427; response rate=51%) which included the validated Patient-Practitioner Orientation Scale (PPOS). The PPOS measures self-reported attitudes to the patient as a person; in particular, sharing power and responsibility in a therapeutic alliance (Sharing subscale) and biopsychosocial dimensions of health (Caring). Registrars' mean PPOS scores were compared to demographic variables and analysed using independent T test and ANOVA in SPSS.

Results

The JCU GP Registrar cohort with the longest duration of training (commenced 2015 and earlier) had significantly higher mean PPOS scores (and sharing and caring subscale scores) than the 2016 cohort and higher again than the most recent 2017 cohort (p=0.010 and p=0.016, respectively). In addition, JCU GP Registrars currently practicing in rural and remote training posts (MMM 3-7) had significantly higher mean PPOS scores (and sharing and caring subscale scores) than those in urban (MMM 1-2) posts. For the cohort that had completed training (Fellowship), no association was found between their mean PPOS score and the rurality of their final training post.

Conclusions

Patient-centredness increases significantly with registrars' time in the JCU GP training program, and suggests that the training experience enhances registrars' PC care skills.

Registrars practicing in rural and remote communities exhibit patient-centered attitudes to a significantly greater degree than other locations. Patient-centered (PC) health practitioners individualise care, support collaborative patient participation in care, and value the patient experience; all which can be improved through training. It is possible a rural and remote training experience enhances registrar patient-centredness.