

Exploring the impact of the JCU/GMT rural health workforce pipeline

Introduction: James Cook University recently developed an integrated regional training pipeline by establishing the Generalist Medical Training (GMT) program. This program adopts a distributed model to the delivery of general practice training in order to involve local communities in growing a rural and remote medical workforce that more closely meets community needs and attracts and retains local graduates.

Objectives: This study aimed to examine the efficacy of the JCU/GMT rural pipeline by exploring the training experiences of the registrars who were JCU graduates.

Methods: Demographic data of JCU graduates enrolled in the GMT AGPT program were collated and descriptive summary statistics calculated. In addition, 15 JCU graduates in the GMT program were purposively selected and interviewed to explore their perceptions of the benefits of the JCU/GMT training pipeline, its impact on their work readiness; and how it has influenced their intention to serve in underserved communities.

Results: Of the 588 GMT registrars, 123 (21%) of them are JCU graduates. Seventy-one percent (71%) are females, 92% are enrolled in the rural GP pathway and 43% are serving in remote Queensland locations. Interviews revealed that a strong rural curriculum focus and exposure to extensive rural clinical placements are some of the strengths of the JCU/GMT pipeline and have influenced participants' values and their intentions to work in rural and remote communities. Both programs have fostered the development of clinical skills, and good access to role models/clinical supervision, with ten of the GMT graduates going on to become medical educators and supervisors.

Conclusion: The JCU/GMT medical education and training model has provided a streamlined pipeline for JCU graduates into general practice by fostering the graduation of socially accountable and 'fit for purpose' GPs who are competent to address the public and population health needs of the communities that they serve.

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