

Advancing Research Capacity in post-graduate Medical Education

Elena Rudnik^{1,2}, Hakan Muyderman¹, Karen Piper^{1,3}, Lucie Walters^{1,2}

¹ Flinders University College Medicine & Public Health,

² Flinders Rural Health SA,

³ Flinders NT

Introduction/background:

Universities are increasingly offering post-graduate medical education through Doctorate of Medicine (MD) programs. To achieve accreditation as a level 10 Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) a MD program must provide students with specialised research skills including the ability to generate and disseminate findings that contribute to the discipline of medicine. In 2014 the Flinders University MD introduced Advanced Studies as a core subject requiring students to select course-work or research project activities equating to 135 hours per year during years 2, 3 and 4 of the four-year course. Research activity of faculty staff affiliated with medical education are influenced by individual, institutional and leadership factors. More discussion is required to identify and share strategies to up-skill faculty, including medical and clinical educators to ensure students have access to research supervisors. This symposium will present an overview of the implementation of research education for students and Faculty staff based in metropolitan, rural and remote locations.

Contemporary medicine promotes consideration of social determinants of health and interprofessional practices that often require students to use research methods that deviate from traditional positivism and quantitative methods. No longer are students limited to sitting in science labs, but instead they have opportunities to interact with communities, patients and engage in research conversations. The broadening of acceptable research methods creates curriculum decisions and the need to individualise research education to suit the research project allocated to the student. This symposium will provide examples of research skill capacity building provided to students by supervisors and topic coordinators.

Challenges for discussion:

- Supporting students with a variation of research skills and experience. This may be further exaggerated in a post graduate program that includes students with non- research Degrees as well as accomplished early career researchers.
- Designing a curriculum and assessment methods that compliment an established medical education program with a full timetable.
- Faculty development and engagement of clinical educators with limited research experience.
- Assessment methods that capture student and community impact

Aim/ objectives:

The aim of the symposium is to:

- (1) present an overview of the past and current management systems used to introduce and progress Advanced Studies throughout the Flinders University MD program
- (2) describe strategies being used by the leadership team to engage supervisors and various urban, rural and remote communities that our students are located
- (3) summarise the fields of research and methods included in student projects to generate debate about research education curriculum

List of Presentations

Dr Elena Rudnik, Senior Lecturer Rural Health Research & Education. Co-ordinator of research capacity engagement activities for MD Advances Studies students and supervisors in rural South Australia.

Dr Hakan Muyderman, Senior Lecturer and Advanced Studies Topic Coordinator based in metropolitan Adelaide.

Dr Karen Piper, Lecturer and Advanced Studies coordinator in remote Australia, based in Darwin.

Professor Lucie Walters is GP-obstetrician, coordinator of 4th Year Advanced Studies Capstone and a medical education leader across rural South Australia.

Discussion: Issues/questions for exploration or ideas for discussion:

1. What assessment methods promote individual student advancement while also ensuring that the program produces consistently high student research outcomes
2. How can we increase the status of research amongst student and clinical education staff to promote allocation of the time needed to produce quality research outputs required for sustained AQF accreditation and graduate EBP skills?
3. What research outputs are suitable for a MD.
4. Is there collaboration potential to explore assessment methods that capture community and academic impact of student research.