A comparative study of examination performance at the five Deakin University School of Medicine clinical school sites.

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Summary

A critical lack of medical workforce has developed in rural and remote Australia over recent decades. Various efforts have been made to address this worsening situation, culminating in the quite recent rapid increase in the number of medical student places, within a significantly increased number of medical schools.

The Deakin University School of Medicine was developed as a rurally focused medical school, admitting its first cohort of students in 2008, and adopted several innovative approaches to medical education. This original research was designed to examine whether the school's decision to base its clinical education on small, dispersed, student cohorts, in rural settings disadvantaged students in comparison to the traditional large group tertiary clinical training setting.

A quasi-experimental design was employed to assess the students' academic performance at the five, geographically dispersed, clinical training sites within the medical school. An internationally validated questionnaire was also employed to provide quantitative analysis of the students' perception of their educational environment. Analysis of the gathered data indicates that not only are students, who were educated at the small rural sites, not disadvantaged, they appear to perform to a higher standard than those trained at the traditional tertiary site.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgement, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

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