Developing clinical teacher’s self-efficacy in Australian general practice

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Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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<tr>
<td>AGPT</td>
<td>Australian General Practice Training</td>
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<td>AJDCF</td>
<td>Australian Junior Doctor Curriculum Framework</td>
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<td>APLS</td>
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<td>BEST</td>
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ABSTRACT

Developing clinical teacher’s self-efficacy in Australian general practice

The Australian health system, including general practice as the main primary health care provider, faces many challenges. This includes a rapidly ageing population, the increasing burden of chronic disease and co-morbidities, increased community expectations, technological advances and balancing a burgeoning evidence base with holistic, patient centred care.

Concurrent changes include the shift from apprenticeship to competency-based education, competitive tender processes for general practitioner (GP) training with increased accountability for government funding and workforce distribution.

Though high professional standards of general practice in Australia provide a strong foundation for a mature GP training program, in addition to the clinical and financial, there are wider educational challenges.

There is an increased expectation that a GP clinically supervises and teaches undergraduate and postgraduate medical and allied health students. The GP supervisor role is pivotal, underpins all the learning, yet is complex, demanding and at times, potentially conflicting. Ageing GP supervisors, the lack of recognised qualifications, limited clinical teaching professional development and training capacity saturation, especially in rural and remote areas, are impacting on the quality of clinical teaching.

Beyond being the medical expert, GPs have other important roles in the Australian health system and are uniquely placed to lead and respond to these challenges and changes. An important pillar underpinning quality primary health care is high quality training. For the GP supervisor to function effectively in primary health care provision and be the cornerstone of GP training, there needs to be an evidence based understanding of their roles, competencies and professional development.

A consensus-developed national competency based framework provides the foundation to align clinical practice, accreditation, clinical teaching, student training, quality assurance and ongoing professional development. Articulating the GP role as a scholar, recognises the essential clinical teaching domains and defines the knowledge, skills, attitudes and attributes of a clinical teacher. Identifying these competencies informed descriptors of quality, required training, professional development and potential assessment approaches.

A new unified conceptual construct of clinical teacher self-efficacy provides a new dimension for medical education research. Clinical teacher self-efficacy is the confidence and belief that their teaching will positively influence and impact on the learner in the clinical medical environment. Knowledge translation from fields of psychology and education show that self-
Abstract

Efficacy is a key factor in influencing the teacher’s professional behaviour, motivation and persistence. It also influences performance and student learning outcomes.

A systematic review on the effectiveness of interventions on the self-efficacy of clinical teachers identified a paucity of research. In the few published studies the interventions that positively impacted on self-efficacy in the clinical teacher included: focussed clinical teaching courses, interactivity using clinical scenarios, communication skills and teaching prompts, with peer learning, review and mentoring.

There is an international absence of a measurement tool to evaluate self-efficacy in clinical teaching. Consequently a second objective of this thesis was to develop and validate a new Self-Efficacy in Clinical Teaching (SECT) tool. A two-stage evaluation showed SECT to be an authentic and reliable measurement with good content, construct and dimensional validity.

The innovation of a low technological intervention using mental imagery and visualisation provided an interactive clinical teacher professional development, and demonstrated the development of self-efficacy in the clinical teacher. Although secondary outcomes showed no impact on indirect performance indicators (supervisor qualities or quality of clinical teaching), further research is indicated.

Self-efficacy development can form an effective and integral part of the professional development of clinical teachers and medical educators. The duality of competency and self-efficacy can provide the arms for excellence in Australian general practice and clinical teaching.

An increased recognition and support for the clinical teaching roles of the GP will provide community benefits by fostering high quality training, excellent patient care, patient safety, and cost-effectiveness.
Statement of Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university of other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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Dr Lawrence Andrew McArthur

7th November 2016
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