

"Going Up-North"

Chiropractic undergraduate student clinical immersion placements in regional, rural and remote Western Australia

Lyndon G Amarin-Woods *B.App.Sci (Chiropractic), MPH*

Senior Supervising Clinician

Murdoch University Chiropractic Clinic, Murdoch University

90 South Street, MURDOCH WA 6150

(Tel +61 8 9360 1267 (Internal extension 1267) | * L.Woods@murdoch.edu.au

Barrett E Losco *M(Chiropractic), MPA*

Head of Chiropractic Discipline, School of Health Professions, Murdoch University

Matthew J Leach *RN DipAppSc(Nat), BN(Hons), PhD*

Senior Research Fellow, Department of Rural Health, University of South Australia



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Aims

- 1) To describe the extent to which students believed country service-learning clinical immersion placements met learning objectives including communication and interaction skills, social responsibility and a philosophy of caring
- 2) Investigate practice location after graduation and correlate with placement participation.

Design: Multi-methods

Setting: Up to two weeks spent in a regional, rural or remote community outreach placement in Western Australia

Participants: Ten cohorts of students in their final year of a five year chiropractic undergraduate program

Inclusion criteria: Participation in a clinical immersion placement

Methods

PART A

- Service Experience Questionnaire -SEQ
(fourteen closed-ended items)
- Open ended qualitative reflections
- University unit feedback survey (UFS)

PART B

- Search of publicly available records to determine location of practice after graduation





Results

- ✓ Educational & should be retained (100%)
- ✓ Enhanced respect & awareness of others in need (94.1%)
- ✓ Importance of respect for all people (94%)
- ✓ Empathy for the disadvantaged (88.1%)
- ✓ Improve their communication skills (98.5%)
- ✓ More likely to practice in a country setting (56.7%)

- ✓ Significantly more likely to practice in a regional, rural or remote location in WA OR:1.65 (95%CI:1.07 - 2.52 p<0.02)
- ✓ In Feb 2015, 33.7% of country practitioners had completed a MU placement



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Conclusions

- Chiropractic programs are adopting service-learning outreach immersion placements to foster among other attributes; communication and interaction skills, social responsibility and a philosophy of caring
- This is the first study in Australia that describes the extent to which chiropractic undergraduate students believed a 'country' service-learning clinical immersion placement met these objectives and further; analysed graduate behaviours after finishing studies
- *Results support the utility of rural and remote outreach clinical placements to help meet the educational objectives of the chiropractic undergraduate programme*

Limitations

- No data on original domicile
- Generalisability limited to chiropractic students from one programme

