

Addressing the education gaps for health professionals working in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS)

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THE PROBLEM

In the Northern Territory, many GP Registrars (GPs in training) undertake at least one placement in an ACCHS. Yet **GP Registrars are often inadequately prepared for these placements**, which can lead to misunderstandings, conflict and feelings of frustration.

THE STUDY

13 audio interviews were conducted to identify any gaps in GP Registrar training that could be contributing to this problem. Interviewees included CEOs, a board member, established GPs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners (ATSIHP) as well as GP Registrars themselves.

THE OUTCOME

The interviewees identified **four common issues and education gaps** (see below). A series of freely available online induction resources (called the **Working Well Resources**) was developed to address these education gaps. The project involved close collaboration between Registrars, GPs, clinic staff and ATSIHP.

RESULTS - The following education gaps were identified:

1

Differences

There is a lack of understanding of how **the operation of an ACCHS differs from mainstream general practice**. An ACCHS is non-hierarchical and doctors are required to share their authority with others.

2

Role of the ATSHIP

There is a lack of awareness around the **complex role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner (ATSIHP)**. Their clinical skills and understanding of culture is often misjudged.

3

Challenges

GP Registrars are not adequately prepared to deal with culture shock and **the challenges of working in a cross-cultural environment**. They often have unrealistic expectations of 'fixing' everything themselves.

4

Misunderstandings

GP Registrars are not adequately prepared to deal with potential misunderstandings with ACCHS staff. **Misunderstandings are often caused by a lack of respect** from the GP Registrar towards the ATSIHP.

Freely available online learning resources: www.ntgpe.org/workingwell