

Proposed Title:
“Student Learning in Isolated Communities”

Presenters Details

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Abstract

Australia has a long history of the ‘School of the Air’ designed to meet the teaching and learning needs of its young in rural and remote communities. Medicine has a short history of schools of medicine in the rural and remote areas of Australia. Student learning in isolated communities over prolonged periods is therefore new to medicine. Existing approaches to educating undergraduates in the assessment and management of members of isolated groups range from “learning from them by seeing them as patients”, to “home visit” programmes, to “using representatives as teachers”. In contrast, embedding students in an isolated community results in intense experiential learning where team skills and the practice of reflection, personal awareness and empathy are enforced.

The purpose of this paper is two fold. Firstly, it discusses the perceptions of medical students in an isolated practice caring for young adults with special physical or intellectual limitations during a “special challenge” voyage at sea. It focuses on how students assimilated perceptions while supporting and caring for those in this unique setting. Secondly, it explores the context of isolated practice in the bush and draws on comparisons between each encounter. The outcome of this discussion is to elicit teaching and learning strategies unique to both settings that can complement the learning outcomes of those working in isolated clinical practice settings.