

GP OBSTETRICS THINK TANK 2018 – Findings and Recommendations

The key findings and recommendations from the 2018 GP Obstetrics Think Tank are highlighted below. These will be used by the GP Obstetrics Western Australian Advisory Group to influence the future of General Practice obstetrics in Western Australia.

DRANZCOG TRAINING LOCATIONS

Finding 1

Additional Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) Advanced and Basic Diploma training locations would enable more doctors to train as GP obstetricians.

Suggested training locations include Albany, Broome, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie.

Recommendation

- Develop a list of potential DRANZCOG training sites.
- Identify site specific requirements and potential barriers.
- Engage with RANZCOG and the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) to explore and facilitate additional training locations.

GP REGISTRARS

Finding 2

Suitable general practice training places for GP registrars who have already attained their DRANZCOG are not always available.

In these circumstances GP registrars are unable to maintain and expand their obstetric skills while undergoing general practice training.

Recommendation

- Explore the viability of a split GP training program with four days' general practice and one day hospital obstetrics. This will enable GP registrars to maintain and expand their obstetric skills while undertaking general practice training.
- Work with the Western Australian General Practice Education and Training Limited (WAGPET) to identify enhanced methods of matching GPO registrars with suitable GP placements.

TEAMWORK

Finding 3

The importance of working as a team cannot be underestimated. Teamwork leads to improved staff physical and mental health, staff retention and career satisfaction.

Recommendation

- Identify strategies to build and strengthen workplace teams. Encourage GPOs in each WACHS region to instigate regular contact/meetings with staff from other regional towns.
- Promote the strategies identified on the WA GP Obstetric Network (WAGPON) website and in other relevant publications.

LOCUMS

Finding 4

It can be challenging for a locum GPO to feel professionally and personally supported in a rural location. A locum doctor will deliver better patient outcomes if they have a positive introduction to the practice and community.

Recommendation

- Encourage GPO practices to establish a system whereby a locum is orientated to, and welcomed by the community. Local Shires would be an ideal conduit.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS

Finding 5

It is important to retain GP obstetricians in hospitals and to increase the opportunities for GPOs to work in the hospital system.

Recommendation

- Identify suitable rural private hospitals and explore the validity of GPOs working in these hospitals.

LEADERSHIP

Finding 6

Positive leadership is the key to a healthy and effective workplace.

Individuals who believe they have leadership qualities to step forward.

Recommendation

- Promote the importance of leadership by assisting to identify suitable leadership training. Advise of available leadership training via the WAGPON website in conjunction with promoting the Health Workforce Scholarship Program.
- Develop article on leadership for the WAGPON website.

NETWORKING

Finding 7

Collegiate support is important for GP obstetricians.

Recommendation

- Establish GPO videoconferencing sessions and/or skills and networking forums.
- Promote the WAGPON website as a vehicle for communication.

PROMOTION

Finding 8

There continues to be a perception that GP obstetrics is becoming obsolete rather than being viewed as a critical health service for women, particularly in rural and remote locations.

It is crucial to effectively promote GP obstetrics as a rewarding career to high school students, medical students and junior doctors.

Recommendation

- Analyse how each GPOWAAG organisation is currently promoting GP obstetrics.
- Create opportunities to promote the GP obstetric career pathway to high school students, medical students and junior doctors.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that rural GP obstetricians appreciate the value of and gain satisfaction from providing a service to patients and their families in a rural location.

To ensure that GPO services remain viable it is important to support GPOs in addressing the significant professional and personal challenges that rural GPOs face. This is an important step to building a healthy, evolving rural GP obstetric service that benefits the doctors, their patients and the rural community.