

From the Riverland to the Greater Green Triangle: the evolution of the Parallel Rural Community Curriculum

Paul Worley, Lucie Walters, Bruce Mugford, David Rosenthal, Flinders Rural and Remote Community Clinical School

INTRODUCTION

The chronic shortage of doctors in rural Australia is well documented. Enabling medical students to undertake positive rural experiences during their undergraduate course is a well-supported long-term strategy to provide a sustainable solution to this problem.

SUCCESS OF PREVIOUS MODEL

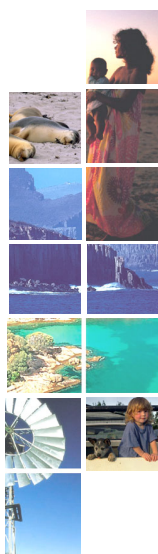
The Parallel Rural Community Curriculum (PRCC) was developed by Flinders University in 1997 to enable senior medical students to undertake an entire clinical year based in rural general practice in the Riverland region of South Australia. The academic success of this program has been widely acknowledged. Many institutions are planning to use this model as a basis for their own curriculum reform. However, questions have been asked as to how much of this success was due to the distinctive character of the Riverland region, and how well this program would translate into other regions of Australia.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Due to the success of the Riverland program, Flinders University decided to commence a second PRCC program in 2002, this time in the Greater Green Triangle region of South Australia and Victoria. This new program was developed collaboratively by the Greater Green Triangle University Department of Rural Health and the Flinders Rural and Remote Community Clinical School.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper will present an account of the issues faced in translating the PRCC into the Greater Green Triangle environment and will include preliminary evaluations of the first cohort of students' experience. The implications for other institutions and health services considering such an innovation will be discussed.



PRESENTER

Lucie Walters is a rural academic, employed by Flinders University to develop and co-ordinate the Greater Green Triangle Parallel Rural Community Curriculum. Lucie is married with two boys, and has worked as a rural GP in Mt Gambier doing procedural obstetrics for 10 years. She is the Medical Director of the Limestone Coast Division of General Practice and a member of the Regional Health Board. She has a special interest in sustainable rural general practice.

