

Health Professions - Who funds fieldwork education?

Introduction & Aim

- Cost to WA Health of undergraduate fieldwork
- Range and diversity of allied health and complexity of arrangements
- Survey - adjunct academic positions, undergraduate fieldwork numbers, length of placements and supervision by universities and workplaces
- Responses, issues and limitations

Productivity Commission



Productivity Commission Research Report: Australia's Health Workforce - December 2005

www.pc.gov.au/study/healthworkforce/finalreport/healthworkforce.pdf

National Health Workforce Strategic Framework (NHWSF) Recommendation 5.3:

Council of Australian Governments should establish a taskforce to assemble comprehensive and nationally consolidated data and information on: the demand for clinical training across all health professions; where it is being provided; how much it costs to provide; and how it is being funded.

Survey Questions



- WA Health time on undergraduate education
- Academic, joint, adjunct appointments
- Undergraduate placements and supervision components
- Information for professions that employ science graduates who require postgraduate on-the-job training in particular profession

Results: Reality Bites



Problems:

- **Full survey not completed**
- **Survey results received not reliable – discrepancies in the information received,**
- **What, if any, interpretation can be made**

Presentation



- **Overview of responses**
- **Interpretation of results for discussion**
- **Alternatives for data collection**
- **Further discussion around fieldwork education**

Results: General Responses

- Tendency to provide what they thought we should know
- Question 1 - list of all undergraduate lectures rather than formal university and workplace arrangements
- Question 2 - undergraduate fieldwork comprehensive answers, but difficult to use
- Different time units showed variations in fieldwork systems
- Greatest problem is that information is not complete

Results: Specific responses



- 108 departments responded; including 42 country
- 80 responses were allied health - undergraduate fieldwork in 2006
- 28 responses from sciences - no undergraduate placements

- What % is this of total?
- What does this information tell us?

Discussion - Comments and Observations



- Lack of central Allied Health coordination
- Survey results lack of response
- Communication between departments, respondents busy, or suspicious of use of data

Discussion - Continued



- Professions interpret data field differently
- Several supervisors thus actual FTE difficult to determine
- Variations of supervision
- Intensity of clinical work may vary

Discussion - Alternative Approaches

Combine clinician and academic perspectives

ALLIED HEALTH & HEALTH SCIENCE WORKFORCE				
Undergraduate/Postgraduate				
Physiotherapy				
University	Year	2006	2007	2008
Curtin u/g	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
Grad entry masters	1			
	2			
Notredame	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
TOTAL				
Numbers recruited				

Discussion - Cost of Fieldwork Education



- If staff cost makes up 70% of all health cost, the overhead cost would be = $30/70 \times \text{staff cost}$
- E.g. if gross staff cost per FTE is \$70,000, the cost of 1.0 FTE for education/training will be \$100,000
- Risk - overhead ratios can change with salary increasing faster than inflation or with salary decreasing in proportion with technology/infrastructure/operational efficiencies
- Broad brush approach

Summary



Concluding Comments



- Coordinated approach to fieldwork
- Education / Health interface

Fieldwork Costs - A Work in Progress



Contact:

Karen Lennon

9222 0284

Karen.lennon@health.wa.gov.au

or

Thelma Burnett

9346 1122

Thelma.burnett@health.wa.gov.au