

ERG026

GP registrars' expectations of a peer-mentoring program

Background

Since 2013, the GP Synergy Peer Mentorship Program has been offered to new GP registrars to reduce potential professional isolation as they transition from hospital to general practice. The Program seeks to provide support by linking new GP registrars (mentees) with GP registrars nearing the end of training (peer mentors). Although popular, there is limited evidence of the value of mentoring for GP trainees.

Aims

To explore GP registrars' expectations and experiences of mentoring and how expectations influence the mentor-mentee relationship

Method

Two focus groups (n=8) and 29 semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of mentors and mentees involved in the Program across NSW/ACT from 2015-2018. Audio recordings were transcribed and analysed inductively for key themes.

Results

Participants' expectations of mentoring varied widely, from vague general support to specific needs identified that were beyond a peer mentor's capability. Engagement in peer mentoring varied along a continuum, with some pairs only exchanging 1-2 emails, while others met regularly, developing an ongoing relationship.

"Everyone asks about the exams and the application processes, but the other stuff, I think everyone's on a different sort of page about what they expect and where they come from." (P05)

Discussion

Although multiple barriers were identified that influenced the degree of engagement, 'mismatched expectations' appears to reduce the value registrars placed on their mentoring experience. Engagement was enhanced where proactive mentors addressed expectations early.

Conclusion

Mentoring in the GP training setting is complex, and registrars describe a variety of experiences. Providing guidance to mentors to address mentees' expectations early and explicitly may help to identify mismatches and to clarify what are possible goals within the mentoring relationship.

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