

Abstract

Do regional universities produce rural dentists? A snapshot study examining dental graduates of 2015.

[Oral](#)

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Rural and remote areas experience ongoing challenges with recruiting and retaining dentists, which results in workforce shortages where the need for oral health services is greatest. The maldistribution of the dental workforce is evident nationwide, with metropolitan cities demonstrating a proportion of 56.2 dentists per 100 000 in metropolitan areas as compared to 22.9 dentists per 100 000 in remote/very remote areas.

Underlying this maldistribution of dental practitioners is the difficulty rural communities face in attracting and retaining dental graduates. The motivational factors that persuade and dissuade dentists from practising in rural and remote locations have been well identified in previous studies. However, literature that reports on whether or not the Australian university attended has an effect on practice location is scarce.

The aim of this study is to explore the intentions and destinations of dental graduates who completed their degrees in 2015, inclusive of all Australian universities that offer five year dental programs. This focus will enrich the understanding of dental graduate movements upon entry to the workforce. The findings will reveal whether there is a relationship between attendance at a metropolitan or regional university and the likelihood of graduates working in a rural or remote area. These findings will inform discussion about the current trends of graduate movement and provide insights into whether exposure to rural curricula at university successfully increases rural motivation. Modern technology will play a vital role in data collection particularly due to the younger demographic (anecdotally) of our target population; specifically, our reliance on social media avenues for the distribution of the online survey. The outcomes of this pilot study have the potential to be of interest and use in providing further insight into why dental graduates 'go where they go'.

Biography

Mr. Kaejenn Tchia is a fourth year dentistry student from James Cook University. As part of his studies, Kaejenn has successfully completed units in health and health care in Australia, health professional research, health promotion, lifespan development, statistics, as well as rural and remote primary and public health care. Aside from his academic studies, Kaejenn is the current president of the James Cook University Dental Student Association Inc. and was also the Rural Officer in 2016 for the Australian Dental Student Association. Kaejenn has strong interests in rural health and hopes to work in a rural setting in the future.

About the Association

CRANApplus is the peak professional body for the remote and isolated health workforce of Australia.

- <https://crana.org.au/>

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