

INDOCTRINATION –UPSKILLING DOCTORS IN REAL WORLD SETTINGS 'GETTING DOWN AND DIRTY IN CRANEBOOK'

Julie page¹, Julie Anne downie¹, felicity sheaves¹, Louise maher¹

¹ Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, Penrith Australia

Background/Approach: The Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) in Penrith has a small nurse led clinic for wound care, immunisation and sexual health in-reach; plus hepatitis C education, screening and treatment. A Sexual Health Specialist visits weekly to oversee treatments for clients. The NSP conducts two projects which focus on hep C education, testing and treatment; and since 2016, clients have been able to access the new Hepatitis C medications there.

In order to target these projects, a trial satellite clinic was established at Cranebrook; an outlying suburb of Penrith known for its low socioeconomic status, high rates of drug use, poor transport and high percentage of Aboriginal residents. For the clinic to be effective, it required medical support in the form of a prescribing doctor.

Analysis/Argument: Nepean is a Teaching Hospital with an option for Post Graduate Year 2 (PGY2) Resident Medical Officers (RMO) to rotate through specialty areas during their training. One option is the Public Health rotation which includes spending time in the Sexual Health Clinic and the NSP.

Each week, the PGY2 accompanied the NSP nurse and Aboriginal peer worker, to the Cranebrook site. He was guided through the establishment of clinical protocols, specimen collection, access to medical records and following up results by the RN while actively engaging clients in the community.

Outcome/Results: RMOs rarely have the opportunity to work within a high need community. Having the RMO as part of the outreach team increased the capacity of the team and helped to break down stereotypes. During the trial, 7 participants engaged in education, pathology and follow-up, 2 commenced hep B vaccination, 1 was referred to A&E and 1 to the liver clinic.

Conclusions/Applications: Outreach work highlights the importance of two-way acceptance and trust. It provides future doctors with unique skills leading to a better-informed workforce; reduced stigma and discrimination, and ultimately increasing uptake of treatment.

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