Developing curriculum to meet community rehabilitation needs: a multidisciplinary approach to education

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It is increasingly acknowledged that community-based therapists face unique and challenging situations when working in rural and remote settings. Skills required within community-based therapy roles are specialised, multi-faceted and demanding, particularly within rural practice.

In response to the expressed needs of clinicians, managers and clients of community rehabilitation services, James Cook University undertook a year long project aimed at increasing curriculum that prepared allied health students to work in community-based roles. This project was undertaken using feedback from clinicians and managers to develop curriculum that would prepare graduates for the specific demands and skills required of therapists working in community-based settings. The university was particularly focused on the development of graduate attributes which prepared students for practice in rural and remote community settings.

The paper will outline the specific outcomes which occurred as a result of the project. Feedback from students will be discussed, in particular their expectations and views surrounding working within community settings. Future directions within the university will be outlined in regards to postgraduate study options for clinicians working in rural and remote regions. Finally, the curriculums relevance to community-based service delivery will be discussed with a particular focus on rural and remote practice.

Presenter

Lynne Zeldenryk is a lecturer with the occupational therapy department at James Cook University. Last year, Lynne was responsible for updating community rehabilitation curriculum at undergraduate and post graduate levels within the university. Lynne’s clinical background is community rehabilitation within the disability sector. Her research interests are currently focused on researching the health behaviours and beliefs of Torres Strait Islander communities in North Queensland.