

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Medical Educators: The Missing Pipeline

**Professor Wendy Hu from the School of Medicine, Dr Gisselle Gallego from the Centre for Health Research, Professor Jill Thistlethwaite (University of Queensland), Associate Professor Jennifer Weller (University of Auckland) and Professor Geoff McColl (University of Melbourne) are investigating gaps in the medical educator workforce for educating tomorrow's doctors. The project is supported by Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand Inc.**

'Globally, there is a growing demand for medical education expertise, driven by the need to maintain a health workforce of appropriate quantity and quality,' says Professor Hu. 'Despite this, medical education is yet to be recognised as a discipline in its own right. And a supply of new educators has not been evident, prompting the question: where is the next generation of medical teachers?'

A surge in medical student numbers coupled with rising expectations for quality in curriculum development, learning and assessment have increased pressure on the medical education system. Previous research has identified a mismatch between demand and supply of medical educators and the absence of a career pathway. A pilot study in 2012, conducted by Professor Hu and others, found that of 21 medical school websites across Australia and New Zealand, only 15 had identifiable medical education units or staff. Only a third mentioned research and less than 20% referred to teacher development. Anecdotally, senior positions in medical education appear to be filled by those who move from similar positions elsewhere, with their departure triggering more unmet demand.

This project will collect case study data from educators and education units in Australian and



New Zealand medical schools to gain a clearer understanding of medical education career pathways and the factors that may lead to a sustainable medical education workforce. This evidence will assist in the development of sound policy for building the medical educator workforce of the future.

**Project Title:** Medical Education Workforce: The Missing Pipeline

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