

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Supporting primary healthcare in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas

Professor Jennifer Reath and Dr Ronald Brooker of the School of Medicine have received funding from the Australian National University's Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute to develop and implement a support model to assist General Practices deliver quality care with socially disadvantaged populations.

'The shortage of GPs in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas is impacting the health of those seeking medical treatment,' says Professor Reath. 'GPs working with socially disadvantaged populations face many challenges in trying to manage complex physical and mental health issues often complicated by the socio-economic disadvantage that is so prevalent in Western Sydney. The aim of our research is to develop approaches that will support General Practice teams to work in this environment. We are working closely with WentWest the new Primary Health Network in Western Sydney, who are engaged in related work around re-design of the primary care health system in order to improve access and equity and to provide an agile and self-improving health system – issues highlighted by the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission.'

A qualitative research approach will be used across the two year time framework of the project. There will be a thorough investigation of the literature to determine what is known about other similar support models. Interviews will be conducted with GPs, practice staff and other health care professionals to identify the challenges they face. Students also as the health professionals of the future, will be consulted to inform the development of a support program to assist primary health care providers.



This research aims to build a sustainable primary care workforce in order to improve health outcomes in some of the most disadvantaged areas and inform the Australian health reform agenda regarding the workforce shortage in outer urban disadvantaged areas.

Project Title: Supporting Primary Health Care Providers in Western Sydney areas of socioeconomic disadvantage

Funding has been set at: \$83,000

Project start date: April 2014

Project end date: March 2016

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