“Going Up-North”
Chiropractic undergraduate student clinical immersion placements in regional, rural and remote Western Australia

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Aims

1) To describe the extent to which students believed country service-learning clinical immersion placements met learning objectives including communication and interaction skills, social responsibility and a philosophy of caring.

2) Investigate practice location after graduation and correlate with placement participation.

**Design:** Multi-methods

**Setting:** Up to two weeks spent in a regional, rural or remote community outreach placement in Western Australia

**Participants:** Ten cohorts of students in their final year of a five year chiropractic undergraduate program

**Inclusion criteria:** Participation in a clinical immersion placement
Methods

PART A

• Service Experience Questionnaire - SEQ
  (fourteen closed-ended items)
• Open ended qualitative reflections
• University unit feedback survey (UFS)

PART B

• Search of publicly available records to determine location of practice after graduation
Results

- Educational & should be retained (100%)
- Enhanced respect & awareness of others in need (94.1%)
- Importance of respect for all people (94%)
- Empathy for the disadvantaged (88.1%)
- Improve their communication skills (98.5%)
- More likely to practice in a country setting (56.7%)

- Significantly more likely to practice in a regional, rural or remote location in WA OR: 1.65 (95%CI: 1.07 - 2.52 p<0.02)
- In Feb 2015, 33.7% of country practitioners had completed a MU placement
Conclusions

• Chiropractic programs are adopting service-learning outreach immersion placements to foster among other attributes; communication and interaction skills, social responsibility and a philosophy of caring.

• This is the first study in Australia that describes the extent to which chiropractic undergraduate students believed a ‘country’ service-learning clinical immersion placement met these objectives and further; analysed graduate behaviours after finishing studies.

• *Results support the utility of rural and remote outreach clinical placements to help meet the educational objectives of the chiropractic undergraduate programme.*

Limitations

• No data on original domicile.
• Generalisability limited to chiropractic students from one programme.