

Rural Generalism: A Framework for Guiding Learners Through Rural Healthcare Training

Rob Epstein, MD
Program Director Swedish Rural
Program
Port Angeles, Washington

Disclosures

- None



Context: Considered together with the surrounding place and circumstances



Rural Generalism

- Started development in Australia in 2005
- Cairns Consensus Statement 2014 at WONCA Rural Conference
- A Rural Generalist is a medical practitioner who is trained to meet the specific health care needs of rural communities, in a sustainable and cost effective way. By providing training in comprehensive general practice, emergency care and advanced procedural and cognitive skills.

Rural Generalist Framework

- Comprehensive Outpatient Primary care training for all ages
- Hospital Inpatient Care
- Emergency Care
- Population Health/Community Assessment
- Extended cognitive and procedural skill set that is adapted to the community served
- Multi-Professional Team skills
- Community Advocacy
- Leadership skills



The Professional Route

- Traditional approach of choosing a specialty is dependent on the students perception of what they want to do. Then once trained finding the “place” where they can practice doing what they want to do.
- Another perspective is choosing the place where the learner wants to live and then through community assessment discover what the community needs and then learn those skills to satisfy those needs.

Place Based Education

- The community provides the context for the inquiry-based learning; student work focuses on problem solving around community needs and interests.
- By interacting through time with the emergent and ongoing problems posed by place, rural physicians become woven into the fabric of the place.

Curriculum Development

- Rural Focus
- What can be done at smaller hospital
- What to do when patients need a higher level of Care.
- How to facilitate moving the patient to the appropriate care, “packaging”.
- Advanced Skills training.
- Community Assessment & Population Health
- Advocacy and Leadership

Helping Learners Plan an Educational Path

- What skills does the learner like.
- Where does the learner see themselves living, life work balance?
- What does the community where the learner wants to live, need?

Residency Structure

- Australian system incorporates a Advanced Skills Training within residency
- American system uses fellowships to teach advanced skills

Future Rural Generalist Development Projects

- Using the RG Framework with Medical Students and other providers
- Work/Life balance planning, choice of community? How can communities help make their needs known.
- How can RG Framework help guide Residency Curriculums, what is needed within the local community.
- Intraprofessional Training design

Thoughts & Gratitude's

