

Building expertise in Allied Health

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Background

The Allied Health Educational Secondment program aims to facilitate networking and increase the knowledge and clinical skills of allied health professionals (AHP) who have children on their caseload. Clinicians are offered the opportunity to visit a tertiary paediatric centre or specialist clinic to benefit from exposure to the range of clinical conditions, work practices and teaching available at these facilities.

The aim of the educational secondment is to enhance AHP knowledge and confidence in dealing with children who may have more complex needs than those usually encountered in daily practice, whilst fostering professional relationships across the Children's Healthcare Networks.

Method

Secondments are coordinated at a state-wide level with combined intake periods occurring three times each year. AHP are invited to submit an expression of interest outlining specific learning objectives relating to areas of their current clinical caseload. Negotiations then occur with the relevant facility regarding the appropriateness of the learning objectives and the capacity of the specialist centre to address these objectives. In order to reduce the burden on clinicians and allied health departments, financial support may be provided to cover accommodation and travel expenses.

Results

Over the last 3 years, 92 expressions of interest to participate in the secondment program were received. Of these, 80 secondments (87%) were completed. Evaluation results indicated that clinician's knowledge and skills increased following participation in the secondment. Follow-up data collected six months after the secondment, indicated that levels of knowledge and confidence were maintained, resulting in a positive impact on participant's clinical practice.

Conclusion

Educational secondments continued to provide a popular and effective means of enabling clinicians to engage not only in a flexible, experiential learning experience to address specific learning objectives in highly specialised areas of paediatric patient care, but also to share this knowledge with colleagues.