

A clinical educator directed collaborative learning model for dietetic students

Kate Desneves¹, **Tracie McRorie**², Leonie Pearce³, Tobi Erickson⁴, Sofie Modulon⁵, Sonia Brockington⁶

1 Austin Health, PO Box 5555, VIC, 3084, kate.desneves@austin.org.au

2 Austin Health, PO Box 5555, VIC, 3084, tracie.mcorrie@austin.org.au

3 Austin Health, PO Box 5555, VIC, 3084, leonie.pearce@austin.org.au

4 Austin Health, PO Box 5555, VIC, 3084, tobi.erickson@austin.org.au

5 Austin Health, PO Box 5555, VIC, 3084, sofie.modulon@austin.org.au

6 Deakin University, 221 Burwood Hwy, Burwood VIC 3125, Sonia.Brockington@cancervic.org.au

Background: An enhanced learning environment, increased student confidence, improved productivity and increased opportunities for clinical educator skill development have been demonstrated in some allied health professions using collaborative learning models however limited studies exist in dietetics. This pilot study evaluated a clinical educator (CE)-directed collaborative learning model for weeks one to three of a dietetic student clinical placement.

Methods: Number of staff involved, staff hours in supervision and administration and student learning opportunities were recorded and compared to those in the previous paired-supervision model. Students and staff were surveyed about their experience of the collaborative learning model at the end of week three.

Results: Twelve Master of Dietetics students completed the new program. Number of staff and staff hours required for student supervision decreased and student learning opportunities increased with the new model. Students reported enhanced learning from working with other students and participating in tutorials. CEs reported students exhibited more positive attitudes and accelerated learning. CEs enjoyed greater use of their teaching skills and felt more informed about the students, which helped feedback delivery and monitoring of student progress.

Conclusion: Implementation of this innovative CE-directed collaborative learning model demonstrated an increase in efficiency and student learning opportunities whilst increasing CE involvement and role satisfaction.