

Preparing students for the transition to new graduate therapist: how are we doing?

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Background: The transition from student to new graduate is challenging with concerns about new graduate preparedness for practice. Recent research identified that student caseload must double and the time to treat a patient needs to reduce by a third to match a new graduate physiotherapist workload.

Aim: To determine the perceptions of new graduate and experienced physiotherapists on the transition from student to new graduate.

Method: Semi-structured focus group interviews were conducted across five Queensland public hospitals.

Results: Four themes were identified

Preparedness for practice	Sheltered workloads	Autonomy & affirmation	Performance expectations
<p>Increased caseload volume and complexity from student to new graduate was difficult and at times left new graduates feeling unprepared for their new roles.</p>	<p>Students were typically protected from realistic workloads.</p>	<p>New graduates highlighted that coping with change in independence was difficult.</p>	<p>Managing expectations of themselves was challenging.</p>
<p>NG34: I'd say my caseload is so much more complex now... so I'm seeing patients with a lot of stuff going on that I don't think I would've ever touched as a student.</p>	<p>PT132: "Like, we often screen some of the more psychosocially difficult patients from students, but when they're registered... if that's what the workload is there, the caseload is not filtered for them anymore."</p>	<p>NG07: "We didn't have a clinical educator to go to anymore, so you were the person in charge... the patient was your responsibility. So, that in itself was a huge step up."</p>	<p>NG13: "As a student, they [supervisor] would kind of take the reins if it escalated to that, whereas now it's on your shoulders... managing expectations as well has changed a lot this year; both patient expectations and my own on myself as well of what I can and can't do, and when I should seek help."</p>

Discussion: The large increase in workload from student to new graduate with limited exposure to caseload volume and complexity during clinical placements, poses challenges in the transition from student to new graduate.

Clinical placements play an essential role in preparing students for becoming a new graduate. Supporting students to have realistic physiotherapy practice experience including both clinical and non-clinical tasks may assist the transition from student to new graduate.

Stakeholder collaboration is essential to enhance the student transition to new graduate.