
WORK CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACED BY MEDICAL INTERN DOCTORS IN VANUATU: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Why this research is important

- The medical internship gives firsthand opportunity to learn and experience real-life experience of a qualified registered medical doctor. Little knowledge is known about the internship experience faced by the intern doctors in Vanuatu

What we know and what we don't know

- The Vanuatu medical internship program has little history of how its internship program has eventuated and guided. 2016 Vanuatu medical workforce team have reviewed the internship program for the first time to accommodate 38 new interns from different medical schools

Asking Questions

- View perception of the intern medical doctors?
- What are suggestions or solutions by the intern doctors?
- Are there external factors that contributed to the interns & the internship?
- Is the internship program/curriculum effective

Aim

- To explore the experiences in terms of challenges and opportunities faced by the medical intern doctors in Vanuatu.



METHODS

Study Design:

- A qualitative study approach using the in-depth interview

Study Setting:

- Two main referral hospitals in Vanuatu (VCH & NPH)

Study Population, Sampling & Sample Size:

- 27 Intern doctors were interviewed using convenience sampling method.

Data collection tools:

- Semi structured questionnaire- demographic questions & 10 opened ended.

Data management & data analysis plan:

- 2 RA conducted the interview. The interview were audio recorded.
- Thematic analysis process



RESULTS - Participants demographic characteristics (n=27)

Personal information	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	19	<u>70</u>
Female	8	30
Age (Years)		
27 - 31	11	40
32 - 36	16	<u>60</u>
Ethnicity		
Melanesia	27	100
Marital Status		
Single	11	41
Married	4	15
De facto relationship	12	<u>44</u>



RESULTS

Themes	Subthemes
Transitional experience of medical student to medical intern doctor	Achievement gain in the transition period
	Learning experiences gain by intern. Responsibility adheres as an intern.
	The need for internship improvement
Opportunities experienced by medical interns during the internship program	Confidence gain in the work place
	Clinical Competency Having a career pathway by the influence from the consultants.
	Clinical learning environment.
	Developing interaction relationship Strengthen of the internship program through supporting learning tools.

RESULTS

Theme	Subthemes
Challenges encounter during the medical internship	Intern's welfare not met.
	Different medical training institution
	Transitional shock
	Bullying
	Working Condition
	Non ideal learning & working environment
	Unethical practice

DISCUSSION

- **The Transitional experience seen as achieving, learning and being responsible**. (Martínez-González et al. 2016; Sturman, Tan, and Turner 2017; Brennan et al. 2010).
- **The internship program needs improvement** (Sein and Tumbo, 2012).
- **Gaining confidence and being clinically competent** (Barnsley et al. 2004; Premadasa et al. 2008; O'Dowd et al. 2020).
- **Being Supported with learning tools, positive influences from the supervisors influences career** (Essa 2010; Al-Shafae et al., 2013; Shakurnia and Mozaffari 2016; Spooner et al. 2017).
- **Good support from the consultants, nurses and interns creates clinical learning environment and developing relationship** (Daugherty, Baldwin, and Rowley 2008; Lack and Cartmill, 2005).



DISCUSSION

- Interns voiced a need for improvement in their welfare (Mataya et al., 2015).
- Medical students in China & Cuba do experienced challenges
- Inconsistency, lack of resources, Unfairness, Poor orientation and tasked as registrar, **bullying** (Bairy et al. 2007; Sánchez et al., 2016)
- Lack support & disorganization in the internship program (Sein and Tumbo, 2012; Alves et al., 2017).
- Practicing without proper practice license (Heidarnia and Yasin, 2013)



CONCLUSION

- key insights into the opportunities and the challenges faced by the medical intern doctors.
- Valuable information to the MoH under the PRTC, VHPB and the relevant health authorities for smooth transition.
- Different issues experienced by different medical students in different medical schools.



RECOMMENDATIONS / IMPLICATIONS

- MoH- Directorship of planning and cooperative service revisit the HRDP ensured that retuning doctors are gathered for in time.
- MoH review the training program that the graduate medical students from China and Cuba have been through to see it suits the country's medical practice, expectation, and situation. PRTC & coordinators to focus more their attention to them during their internship.
- **PRTC, VHPB & Directors**
 - Engaged private practitioners into the internship program.
 - Review the medical internship program and the specific challenges
- **Consultants/Supervisors**
 - Supportive working environment, Intern mentoring, CMEs, orientation
 - Must have some form of consensus with the MoH
 - The coordinators and consultants must pursue some form of teaching and leadership training skills.
- **Hospital manager/superintendent**
 - Develop and implement policies and guidelines to eradicate bullying and provide social supporting mechanism to help deal with bullying and stress.
 - Established accommodations
 - Implement realistic strategies to ease the working conditions.



CONT-

- **Ministry of Education/Scholarship partners**
 - Assess the different issues faced by the different medical interns attending different medical schools and make rightful decisions.
- **Public Service Commission (PSC)**
 - Review the medical internship employment contract and specifically outline the terms and conditions.
 - Renewal of the intern employment contract should be addresses in advanced by both MoH and PSC in advance.
- Future further study on this topic it needs to involved the MoH administration, the consultants, registrars, nurses, and the patient's perspective to further explore and provide more key information into the future.



STRENGTHS & WEAKNESS

Strength

- A comprehensive background research of the study is provided explaining the significance of the study.
- The methodology used were derived and formulated out from previous studies and standard questionnaires from other academic sources
- The strategies of maintaining rigor is maintained in this study
- A sample size of 27 participants
- Research assistants were trained to carry out this study
- The interview questions were pretested and was well understood by the interviewer and the participants.



CONT-

Weakness

- Principal researcher was not able to conduct the research interview due to covid19 traveling restrictions from Fiji to Vanuatu
- Time constraints and the geographic archipelago settings of the country. Difficult to captured other medical interns.



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END

Thank you very much for your attention

