Advanced Rural Skills Training: Registrars Experience of Support

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Background

- Study funded by Rural Generalist Pathway program, Queensland Health
- Project aim: Investigate experiences of support during and directly following ARST/AST training and identify strategies to improve support during this time
- Other data will be presented at the Rural Medicine Conference in Freemantle including where doctors worked after ARST and proportion using ARST
Methods

• Postal survey of doctors who had completed an ARST in Queensland between 1995 and 2009.
• Structured questionnaire
• Included 6 open-ended questions about support and reasons for using or not using skills
• 118 eligible advanced trained doctors identified, 61 completed questionnaires.
Quantitative Results

- 63.9% currently using skill.
- 68.9% in rural/remote location
- The year after advanced training rated as “very critical” or “critical” by 69%

![Type of ARST post](chart.png)
## Themes

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Training and Career Planning

• “...really think about why you are doing it and what long term goals are.”

• “Look at locations you want to work in and ask them directly what skills they need to be added to their team, this is how I got my job.”

• “Unfortunately 6 months between Advanced Skills and operating as proceduralist, so felt rusty”
Supervision and Mentoring

• “Spend a week during the year using skills in the rural setting after 6/12 to gauge how training is going in relation to rural needs.”

• “My mentors were always (and remain) just a phone call away”

• “Go somewhere that is well staffed with experienced colleagues who will come in with you if needed, even if they are not on call.”
Recognition and Understanding

• “Better understanding by the specialists as to the nature of rural anaesthetics”
• “If the hospital supplying the training was more enthusiastic about rural medicine”
• “Rural hospitals allowing and facilitating rural surgery and anaesthetics..problem is political...system does not support procedural practice”
I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I needed to be.

- Douglas Adams
Key Recommendations

• Support before, during and after advanced rural skills training
  – Career advice
  – Rural focus during training
  – Timing of skill
  – GP Mentorship
  – Finishing schools
  – Structural change
Questions?