To own or not to own – that is the question. 
How can we empower GP registrars to plan a career as a practice owner?

Dr. Elizabeth Sturgiss, Dr. Katrina Anderson, Dr. Martin Liedvogel, Ms. Emily Haesler
Australian National University
Coast City Country General Practice Training
Fisher Family Practice, Canberra
Background

• The changing landscape of general practice
• Practice closures
• ACT/SENSW – approx 100 registrars = 4 practice owners
• The interest level of registrars
• 2011 – survey of 63 current CCCGPT registrars
  – Only 1/3 had no interest in learning more about practice ownership
Aim

• To explore and develop details of education delivery and mentoring regarding practice ownership during general practice training
Methods

- Action research
- Online registrar survey 2011
- Focus groups – two
- In depth individual interviews
- Target groups
  - Current GP Registrars who have some interest in practice ownership
  - Recent GP fellows
- Thematic analysis
Currently available education

• Lack of awareness
  – RACGP Practice Management toolkit
  – GPRA webinars
  – RACGP sessions
  – Sessions offered by professional indemnity insurers
  – Private companies
When should education be offered?

• ... at the moment I’m struggling to do modules; ... my focus is to try and pass my exam. If you ran extra workshops on [practice ownership], I wouldn’t come at the moment. I guess, maybe as I got on to a GPT3, ... it might become more relevant. So, I guess, the relevance might change as I’m, sort of, progressing up the ladder, but at the moment, the first thing I look at when the release is out is, what meat is in that that’s going to help me when I go back to a practice that isn’t particularly good at education? So, I guess, my... the small bit of education I’m getting, I desperately need to be clinical, but then, I’m a GPT1, so I’m sure the focus changes.

(GPT1 registrar)
What education delivery methods do registrars prefer?

What we asked about:

• Online resources
• Online lectures/webinars
• Online forums
• Lectures
• Tutorials
• Teleconferences
• Group and one-on-one learning
• Mentorship
What education delivery methods do registrars prefer?

- Low preference for:
  - Teleconferences
  - Online group forums
  - Didactic lectures
What education delivery methods do registrars prefer?

Preference for

• Online resources and support

along with

• Small group tutorials with doctor role models
What education delivery methods do registrars prefer?

- **Reg1** - *If there was web-style learning for the Practice Management thing, I think it’s such a complex area that I’d at least need some interaction to start with, because it’s just... you feel like it could... it could be so far above my level of understanding, so it would be too overwhelming to start as web-based thing. I feel like it would be hard to, sort of...*

- **Reg2** - *Or it could be, perhaps, initially reading web-based and then, at some stage, an interaction where questions can be answered.*

- **Reg3** - *That’s right. It seems like something you should learn from mentors, doesn’t it, like, a discussion type thing.*
Mentorship

• Hot topic
• Strong preference
Mentorship

• The conundrum that I see is the people that I look up to, as clinicians, are terrible business people and the people who...are phenomenal businessmen I...certainly wouldn’t admire them clinically. So, there’s kind of these, you know, polar opposites... (GPT2 registrar)

• My supervisor. I think he does a good job, but the hours he puts in, I don’t think I, or anyone else, would be able to do it. ... and even talking to the receptionist who has been with him for years now, says, he has been ignoring his children. He couldn’t spend any time with them and he’s paid a heavy price for it. (GPT1 registrar)
Mentorship

- GPT3 registrar: ...I’m impressed by their organisational skills and impressed by their ability to balance both seeing patients and doing clinical stuff as well as keeping the actual business side of stuff running because that in and of itself can be a full time job.

- GPT3 registrar: [The practice owner] has got a lot of systems in place so that people with the chronic diseases are managed very well.

Interviewer: And is that what inspires you about him?

GPT3 registrar: Yeah and his approach to general practice in general but particularly… just having… really well thought out systems in place for your practice that benefits your patients.
How can we facilitate mentorship?

- Mentorship – informal versus formal
- Weekend release – “low” commitment
- Practice Leadership Post – “higher” commitment
Weekend release

• *If there was ever to be some kind of weekend, to be able to say the pros and the cons of everything, because you usually just here the pros. If somebody has a Practice they say usually really great things about it, and then the people who don’t own a Practice, these are the really bad things. But to hear both sides is really important.*  (GPT2 Registrar)

• *That’s what those getting together releases are about, networking as well, aren’t they? Not just the content, but meeting people?*  (GPT3 Registrar)
Formal/Informal mentoring relationships

• “Speed dating”
• Ad hoc
• How do we keep it going??
• Formalised – ?monthly meetings; ?funding for mentors
I think it would be really, really useful, but terrifying. ... like your first surgical term, when you’ve only ever done medical terms. It’d be terrifying because it’s not a skill set we have. So I think it would be invaluable. The hardest terms are usually the ones we learn the most out of. But it would terrifying because we’ve just got no idea.

(GPT3 registrar)
Practice Leadership Post

• Proposal:
  – 1 day quarantined for leadership skills
  – Pay for the registrar
  – 3 hours/week paid to supervisor
  – Professional development funding

Issues:
- funding
Where to from here?

- Weekend release – November 2012
- Funding for Practice Leadership Post
- Mentoring program
- Ongoing evaluation
The heart of the matter...

- Practice closures
- Registrars are interested in practice ownership
- Registrars want to provide quality care
- Need empowerment to be leaders of the future