GP supervisors –
What is their role?
PhD: The role of the remote GP supervisor

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Outline

• To compare different definitions of the GP supervisor and their origins
• To consider the relevance of the definitions currently used in Australian general practice training
• To consider an alternative definition of the GP supervisor derived from GP literature
The role of the GP Supervisor
GP supervision: The provision of guidance and feedback on matters of personal, professional and educational development in the context of a trainee's experience of providing safe and appropriate patient care.

A suitably qualified person who monitors registrars in the performance of assigned or delegated tasks. Supervision is an intervention that is provided by a senior member of a profession to a junior member or members of that same profession. This relationship is evaluative, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the junior member(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients she, he, or they see(s), and serving as a gatekeeper of those who are to enter the particular profession.

General practitioners who take on the responsibility for the training of the registrar within a training post (supervisors)
Susan Wearne, Tim Dornan, Pim W Teunissen & Timothy Skinner (2012)

General practitioners as supervisors in postgraduate clinical education: an integrative review

Medical Education 46(12): 1161-1173
Inverse law of GP supervision research

- Consensus statements, guidelines & training standards
- GPS/GPR description
- Direct observation
- Evidence
- Theory
Figure 2: GP supervisor’s web of educational activities

- Summarises learning
- Organises the learning environment
- Assesses resident’s learning needs
- Facilitates learning
  - Provides resources
  - Promotes reflection
  - Provides feedback
  - Models GP role

- Attends to resident’s well-being
- Monitors the learning process
- Monitors resident learning

Expert clinician
Ensures patient safety

Supervisor & resident educational alliance: the foundation of learning
The role of the GP supervisor
Balance of challenge and support facilitates learning

Figure 3 Model of learning in general practice
Suggested definition of GP Supervisor

‘A GP supervisor is a general practitioner who establishes and maintains an educational alliance that supports the clinical, educational and personal development of a registrar.’
Key components of the GP supervisor’s role are to oversee patient care and broker the relationship between the registrar and the community of practice in which the registrar is learning through work.

Effective GP supervisors balance the level of support they give against the challenges confronted by the registrar. They promote reflection and give feedback based on direct observation to facilitate clinical deliberate practice. GP supervisors attend to the registrar’s wellbeing and make it safe for the registrar to reveal and address weaknesses in his or her knowledge, skills and emotional responses to practice.
Complex role
Most aspects of role cannot be delegated to non-GPs

Effective supervision is not an automatic consequence of physical proximity but of active, supportive relationships leading to social, psychological and educational engagement.