



Preparing Students for Rural Careers: Examining the Learning Processes and Outcomes in Rural Medical Education in Canada

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ABSTRACT:

In Canada, socially accountable medical schools have been identified as a key direction for improving the inequitable distribution of physicians in Canada. While there are now medical schools in Canada with specific social accountability mandates and there is early evidence that such schools are positively impacting their rural health systems, published research that examines how such programs are effectively preparing students with the competencies, attitudes, and identities to practice in rural settings is limited.

This multiple qualitative methods study uses a complex systems approach to enhance the understanding of different contexts and experiences that successfully prepare medical students for rural careers. Our research question asks: What are the learning processes and outcomes that support medical students to prepare for a rural career?

In this presentation, we will share emerging trends from Phase One which seeks to understand how rural medical education is being taught within Canada through key informant interviews (KI) with curriculum designers, medical educators, and institutional leaders across Canada.

These findings have implications for medical educators, medical school leadership, community preceptors, and rural clinicians by providing valuable insights into the promising and emerging pedagogical strategies that support rural competencies, attitudes, and identities that effectively prepare students to pursue rural medical careers.