



ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE

Teaching the teachers – sustaining the surgical educator workforce

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The viability of surgical education in Australia and New Zealand depends on ensuring surgeons wanting to teach have designated time and are properly recognised and equipped for the task, a study in the latest issue of the *ANZ Journal of Surgery* reveals.

While the majority of surgeons surveyed found teaching rewarding and would recommend it to colleagues, fewer would advocate being a supervisor or course instructor. The highest motivating factors were sharing knowledge, enjoyment of teaching, necessity to remain up to date, and the interaction that teaching provides with colleagues.

Barriers included insufficient time because of other work commitments, lack of support from hospital management and intrusion on work-life balance.

Surgeons saw themselves as successful in answering trainees' questions, appropriately delegating patient care, providing feedback and creating a positive learning environment. They were least confident in helping trainees to identify their learning needs and develop their learning goals. New courses were considered desirable in assessment, providing feedback and the management of underperforming trainees.

“The ongoing education and training of sufficient surgeons to meet the increasing health-care needs of society require the selection of suitable medical graduates and the resources to train them,” the report concludes. “These resources include the required number of accredited hospital training positions, an adequate volume and suitable case-mix of patients, and a sustainable, competent and motivated teaching faculty.”

The study involved a survey of 695 surgeons in Australia and New Zealand who had been identified as having a major involvement in surgical education and training. Four hundred and thirty-eight surgeons, or 63 per cent, completed the questionnaire.

The *ANZ Journal of Surgery*, established more than 70 years and published by Wiley-Blackwell, is the pre-eminent surgical journal published in Australia, New Zealand and the South-East Asian region. The Journal is dedicated to the promotion of outstanding surgical practice, and research of contemporary and international interest.

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