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Risky business: do private practice and clinical placement make a happy partnership?

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Abstract

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Risky Business: Do private practice and clinical placement make a happy partnership?

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Private practice is big business for the Exercise Physiology profession. Since Medicare eligibility, and subsequent recognition with private insurers, DVA, Hicaps and state Work Cover authorities, this area has continued to undergo substantial growth. Statistics from ESSA Membership Surveys, the 2011 ESSA Employer and Employee Survey, and the very success of this biennial business conference, all further highlight that private practice is currently one of, if not the dominant area of clinical practice for Accredited Exercise Physiologists in Australia. Paralleling this, the availability of university programs producing graduates who meet AEP competencies, along with entry numbers of students into such programs, is also growing.

Across the board, we work in a national health system where most sectors of health professional training are significantly overloaded, and experience huge challenges in securing sufficient numbers and quality of clinical placements. We find ourselves now facing the challenges that other allied health professions have battled over recent years. That is, providing adequate clinical training capacity to meet the demand. Evidence suggests that private practice is an under-utilised resource for allied health clinical training. As such, there is an imminent need to unravel the perceptions and experiences that currently exist when pairing private practice, or business, with student clinical education.

In addition to reviewing existing allied health literature, this presentation will draw on qualitative data collated from current clinical supervisors, private practitioners, business owners and clinical placement coordinators. Throughout, we will explore the potential benefits, barriers and practical strategies for taking on student clinical placement supervision in your practice or business. Ultimately, with the aim to start the conversation of ‘where to from here?’ with regards to growing and supporting exercise physiology clinical placement capacity in the private practice setting.

References