

General Practice Training in Victoria

Sandeep Bhagat, GP Registrar

Sandeep learned very early on, perhaps ironically during a second year Emergency Department rotation, the importance of general practice.

"I just recall how many times doctors in the ED would say, 'This patient should not be here, a GP could have done that'. I felt that there was a great role of GPs to ease pressure off emergency departments."

That early experience opened Sandeep's eyes to the vital role of the general practitioner, a feeling that has been reinforced in his work as a rurally-based advanced term GP trainee.

Born and bred in the Punjab in India, Sandeep says he likes to be a team member in looking after the health of patients, their families and society as whole.

"As GPs we are best placed in delivering preventative medicine. I enjoy the flexibility of my work and I really liked the idea of ongoing patient care, getting to know your patients, learning about their lives and building a relationship with them."

He also enjoys the opportunities in rural general practice, in a professional sense and also being part of a community.

"Being a rural GP Registrar, I think I am socially more recognised than my metro colleagues. I disagree that being in rural area becomes isolating, as you are more likely to be known and recognised in the local rural community than in metro."

This throws up some interesting situations, such as when being tested at a routine 'booze bus' stop!

"Getting breath tested by the Sergeant of police who happens to be your patient is great fun, as you both know each other well. This reflects the community concept in rural training."

The professional community that is rural practice also appeals to Sandeep.

"I decided to be a part of the single largest speciality in the medical field as it is full of challenges all the time; the next patient could have concerns about being obese, schizophrenia or piles, unhappiness or cardiac arrest. This brings on the intellectual challenge all the time."

"The sky is the limit to specialise in the areas of your interest and still be a family physician," he says.

"I think as a rural GP I can be a rural specialist and a GP at the same time. And all this can be achieved in a shortest possible time of GP training."

Sandeep has a special interest in Palliative Care and hopes in the next few years to develop a full Palliative service, while continuing as a rural GP. "Palliative Medicine, acute pain management, research and minor procedures are my special interests; all thanks to rural placements I am able to practice all these."



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www.bogong.org.au



www.getgp.net.au



www.ggtgpet.com.au



www.vma.com.au



www.vicfelix.com.au

In the meantime, he is enjoying the support provided to Registrars and the responsibility of his work.

"It is great to be able to make all the best possible clinical decisions as a GP and at the same time you have the comfort of being supervised. I enjoy the encouragement to make clinical judgements."

"The release day/educational workshops are excellent for training and a good break away from the practice. I think GP Registrars are really looked after well."

About VicNet

VicNet is a consortium comprising the five Victorian Regional Training Providers – Bogong Regional Training Network, Gippsland Education and Training for general practice (getGP), Greater Green Triangle GP Education & Training, Victorian Felix Medical Education and Victorian Metropolitan Alliance (VMA) – and Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV).

About RWAV

RWAV's a major player in rural general practice. RWAV's recruitment programs and ongoing support services have been fundamental to increasing rural GP numbers in Victoria. Key priorities include the provision of support services for rural doctors and their families, professional development programs, locum support, marketing of rural general practice, recruitment of rural doctors including specialist outreach services, workforce planning and research to inform government policy. For more information contact RWAV on (03) 9349 7800 or visit the RWAV website at www.rwav.com.au



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