

Clinical courage: Is it “GREATNESS”? An innovative study of various allied health professionals from a regional and/or rural workforce across Australia.

Pascale Dettwiller (1), Elizabeth Tiernan (1), Elizabeth McCourt (2)

(1) Department of Rural Health, University of South Australia, (2) Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital, Queensland



Department of Rural Health

Background and Aim

It is evidenced that Health Professionals in rural, remote, and regional healthcare settings often have to work at the limits of their scope of practice to meet the needs of their clients; ‘This takes courage!’ This project builds on previous work to understand the lived experience of ‘clinical courage’ among rural medical professionals¹ and studies conducted with the rural workforce in disaster situations.² This study aims to explore the Allied Health Professionals group.

Methods

A survey was adapted from the Clinical Courage Questionnaire³ to add relevance to Allied Health Professionals. This questionnaire is made up of 26 statements related to clinical courage, 7 demographic questions, and one open-response question for participants to provide comments on clinical courage. The clinical courage component of the survey consisted of two parts: ‘functioning in the health service’ and ‘responsiveness to community’. Participants were asked to rank their responses to statements on a scale of 1 (*definitely not me*) to 10 (*definitely me*). The survey had a national distribution.

Results

Demographics



129

participants from all states and territories



77%

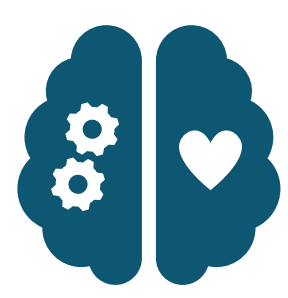
female



69%

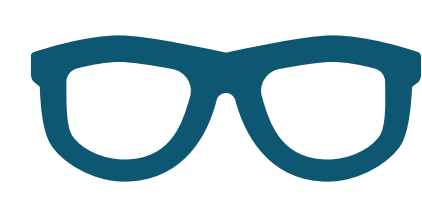
of respondents lived and worked in their community

Professions



30%

Psychologists or counsellors



23%

Optometrists



16%

Pharmacists



14%

Physiotherapists



17%

Others including social workers, OTs

Clinical Courage

Functioning in the health service context

Highest statements

I expand my knowledge and skills by reflecting carefully on patient outcomes.
8.4 (sd 1.5)

I reflect on my performance after I have done something outside of my comfort zone
8.3 (sd 1.7)

Lowest statements

I am supported to return to do something again when I lose confidence in my ability
6.4 (sd 2.1)

I have supportive colleagues who keep me working at the edge of my comfort zone
6.5 (sd 2.6)

Responsiveness to community

Highest statements

I increase my scope of practice to meet the needs of my community
8.2 (sd 1.7)

I act when my patient needs help urgently, and I am the only one available
8.2 (sd 1.7)

Lowest statements

I trust the community to support me
6.5 (sd 2.4)

I make a decision in an emergency that may potentially be wrong, rather than make no decision
6.3 (sd 2.7)

Open-response questions

A word cloud of open-response questions highlighted participants’ opinions concerning the need for clinical courage to help their community.



Conclusion

The respondents were reflective practitioners with a strong focus on the needs of their Community needs, demonstrating their deep sense of social responsibility and their trustworthiness within their communities.

The research team believes clinical courage is, in fact, equal to greatness, but it is, of course, up to the reader of this project to validate our findings!

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