



Australian  
National  
University



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

# KEY MESSAGES

## General Practice from the perspective of a Learning Organisation

---

October 2014

---

Sinclair, A., Johnson, J., Travaglia, J., Fuller, J.

---

### Policy context

The focus of the study is situated in future directions for the health care of NSW residents. Across the world and in Australia it has been recognised that more emphasis needs to be placed on primary care with the goal of improving health outcomes and reducing health costs and health inequities. With the need to reposition the Australian healthcare workforce in response to federal health reforms and in order to meet the primary healthcare needs of future populations a key strategy of NSW 2021 is preventive health and effective management of chronic disease. At the forefront of primary health care, general practice microsystems have the opportunity to enhance and improve healthcare services provided and positively impact patient outcomes by adopting the principles of learning organisations.

### Key messages

General practice microsystems in the Australian healthcare system provide universal and comprehensive primary health care services. Unequivocally, the practices that participated in this study provided exemplary care. With any service that is provided to the public there is an onus to continue to offer a high quality and improved product. In looking at general practice microsystems from the perspective of a learning organisation it has been established that NSW practices are learning organisations however there are some gaps in practice that could be addressed as follows:

- Establish a system for active involvement and feedback from patients
- Provide an ongoing funding source to formally recognise the role of the quality improvement cycle as a means of ensuring lessons learned are uniformly shared and implemented
- Foster interdisciplinary education sessions. Offering these in initial medical, nursing and allied health education programs would assist in breaking down the professional silos and foster collaborative learning
- Establish mandatory entry level qualifications for administrative support staff who make critical decisions at the front line of general practice

The research reported in this paper is a project of the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute, which is supported by a grant from the Australian Government Department of Health under the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development Strategy. The information and opinions contained in it do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Australian Government Department of Health.