

Prevocational General Practice Placements Program

Brendan chose to do a PGPPP rotation for a range of reasons. "I chose a PGPPP rotation to help me confirm that a career in General Practice was for me and also for a bit of a change from the specialty medical resident term I had been doing up to that time," Brendan says. "I also had good feedback from some colleagues at Austin Hospital regarding the PGPPP rotation and wanted to decide if these were accurate for me. The better working hours were also attractive."

"The Sunbury Family Medical Centre is in a semi-rural area just outside Melbourne. It is a big private clinic with about five GPs, nurses, a few junior trainees and a physio. As a Practice, it was very well supported."

"On a PGPPP rotation, you essentially work as a junior trainee. It was a really character-building experience – I feel the responsibility for making important, independent decisions helped me mature as a young doctor. I really enjoyed the autonomy, though well supported, being able to independently manage patients from a primary care perspective was a definite highlight," Brendan says.

Other highlights of which Brendan is particularly proud are the development of meaningful ongoing therapeutic relationships with many patients, a first time mother with an infant failing to thrive, and a first diagnosis of haemophilia.

Working with experienced GPs was a real positive for Brendan.

"I received excellent supervision from the many GPs in the practice. They sat in on my early procedural skills and dermatology evaluations allowing me to learn in a well supported, non threatening fashion," he says.

The rotation provided lots of learning opportunities. "Each week there was an hour of one-on-one teaching with a senior GP in the Practice, which was very interactive and a real privilege. There was also ongoing education with lunchtime seminars and talks. Corridor consultations were actively encouraged – these were where you could ask another GP for advice on a patient at any time. I felt very well supported throughout my placement and I learnt so much."

"I also learnt to know my limitations, to not try to solve patients' problems in a single consultation and where and how to access appropriate resources," Brendan says.

For Brendan, his experience in general practice was everything and more that he had envisaged. "The rotation gave me the experience of General Practice and it really helped me to make up my mind that I was definitely making the right decision," Brendan says.

While the rotation has cemented Brendan's career decision, he sees value in PGPPP rotations for all doctors whether they plan a career in general practice or not. "I would encourage any junior doctor to do a PGPPP

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Dr Brendan Fitzgerald

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rotation whether or not they want to do General Practice. All doctors could do with a good understanding of primary care medicine and the role of the General Practitioner within the larger framework of patient care in the health system."

Brendan has some tips for doctors undertaking PGPPP rotations. "Choose a practice with good support, good working hours and a good spread of varied patients. It is also good to talk to residents who have already undertaken a PGPPP and learn first-hand from their experiences."