

Demand for global health training among obstetric and gynaecology trainees in Australia and New Zealand: insights from the TIGHT study

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Background

Over the past decade, Obstetrics and Gynaecology (O&G) speciality trainees have been seeking global health (GH) experiences in increasing numbers¹. In Australia and New Zealand, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) has a process for accrediting trainee terms in resource limited environments (RLEs),² but a more comprehensive Global Women's Health (GWH) training pathway has not yet been developed.

Although there is anecdotal evidence of interest in training among O&G trainees in Australia and New Zealand, this has not been verified through quantitative research. In order to address this knowledge gap, RANZCOG participated in the Trainee Interest in Global Health Training (TIGHT) study.

Objectives

- To quantify the number of trainees interested in undertaking a rotation in a RLE in a LMIC during their specialty training.
- To determine the proportion of trainees interested in undertaking additional work and formalised training in GH.
- To explore the reasons for wanting to undertake GH work and the limitations to undertaking this activity especially during specialty training.

Methods

- TIGHT (O&G) was a cross-sectional study of Australian and New Zealand trainees between August and October 2018.
- Participant data was collected using an anonymous, self-reporting, web-based survey conducted via Survey Monkey.
- Data variables collected included demographics, previous GH experience and future interest in GH work and training, as well as barriers and motivations.
- Ethics approval was obtained through the James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee (H7377).

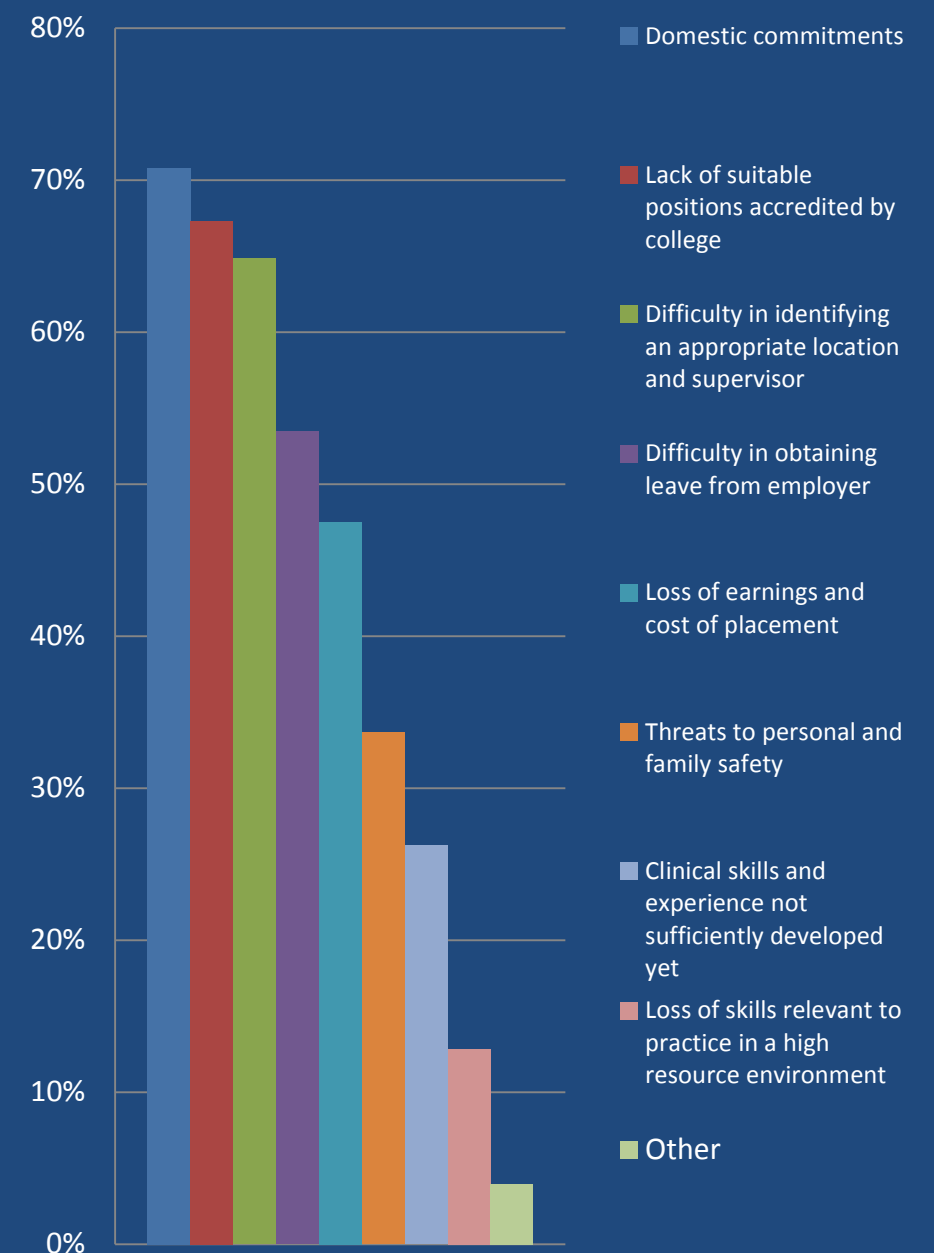
Results

There were 210 respondents, equating to a response rate of **30.1%**. The demographics of the respondents are shown in **Table 1**

Table 1 – RANZCOG trainee respondent demographics

		RANZCOG trainee respondents	
		n	%
Respondents		210	
Training year	1 – 3	98	47
	4 – 6	112	53
Age	25 – 29	34	16
	30 – 34	119	57
	35 – 40	44	21
	≥ 40	13	6
Gender	Female	182	87
	Male	28	13
Relationship	Single	37	18
	Short-term relationship	7	3
	Long-term relationship, de facto or married	166	79
Children	Yes	84	40
Country of primary medical degree	Australia or New Zealand	194	92
	Other high-income country	13	6
	Low- or middle-income country	3	1

- Overall, 157 of 204 respondents (77%) were interested in undertaking a GHE as a specialty trainee with most trainees interested in their experience being **accredited** for specialty training.
- Most were primarily interested in providing **clinical care** (150/156, 96.2%), while a large number were also keen to deliver **teaching or training** (142/156, 91%).
- In terms of the desirable duration of this experience, 41/156 (26.3%) preferred a placement of between **three and six months**, 35/156 (22.4%) between **six and twelve months** and 32/156 (21%) between **one and three months**.
- A substantial majority (167/202, 82.7%) were interested or very interested in pursuing further training in GH with a large proportion of respondents (125/195, 64%) specifically interested in undertaking an **integrated GH training or fellowship program** as an adjunct to specialty training.
- Barriers** associated with undertaking global health work in RLEs is shown in Figure 1.



† responses do not tally 100% because respondents could choose multiple answers

Figure 1 – Barriers to undertaking an accredited GH elective during speciality training

Conclusion

The TIGHT study has identified that O&G trainees are keen to pursue GH experiences and opportunities within and beyond vocational training with a significant number (64%) of respondents interested in pursuing focussed GH training (integrated global health training or fellowship program as an adjunct to specialty training).

Research Significance

*This is the first study to quantify and qualify demand for GH training and careers among RANZCOG trainees in Australia and New Zealand. It addresses a critical **first-step** in the evolution of O&G GH training in Australia and should catalyse efforts to develop training options for specialty trainees.*

References

- Hung KJ, Tsai AC, Johnson TR et al., Scope of global health training in the U.S. obstetrics and gynaecology residency programs. *Obstet. Gynaecology* 122:1101-1109
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists. *RANZCOG Training in Resource Limited Settings*. Melbourne: 2015.