

# Medical training survey

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James Edwards chats to Associate Professor Stephen Adelstein and Dr Brian Fernandes about the medical training survey. All junior doctors have been asked to complete the National Training Survey. This is in order to ascertain the quality of postgraduate medical education in Australia and how it can be improved.

**Script Writer:** James Edwards

**Interviewees:** Associate Professor Stephen Adelstein and Dr Brian Fernandes

**Summary Writer:** Divya Iver

**Reviewer:** James Edwards

## About Stephen Adelstein

Associate Professor Stephen Adelstein is the Chair of the NSW Board of the [Medical Board of Australia](#) and a practitioner member of the National Medical Board of Australia. He has been involved in medical regulation since 2008, initially as a member of the former New South Wales Medical Board, and a past member of the [Medical Council of New South Wales](#).

Associate Professor Adelstein is Head of the Department of Clinical [Immunology](#) and Allergy and Director of the Central Sydney Immunology Laboratory at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, New South Wales, Australia. He is Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Sydney where he teaches medical and science students. In addition to his clinical and academic practice, he oversees undergraduate and postgraduate [research](#).

He is the Chair of the Steering and the Advisory Committees of the Medical Board of Australia that are tasked with the delivery of the National Training Survey that all junior medical officers have been asked to complete in order to ascertain the quality of postgraduate medical education in Australia and how it can be improved.

## About Dr Brian Fernandes

Dr Brian Fernandes is a medical registrar at [Royal Prince Alfred Hospital](#), NSW, Australia. He has a Masters of Health Policy from the University of Sydney and completed his capstone project on the proposed Medical Training Survey. In his spare time, Brian enjoys watching, playing, and talking about the cricket.

## Medical Training Survey

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*With Associate Professor Stephen Adelstein and Dr Brian Fernandes at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, NSW, Australia*

## Introduction

The Medical Training Survey has been designed to capture the attitudes of our doctors in training towards their current training climate. In this podcast, Associate Professor Stephen Adelstein and Dr Brian Fernandes explain the process that has led to its development, and what insights we may expect to gain to help optimise the medical training pathways for current and future trainees.

## 1. What interests you about the medical training survey?

- Dr Brian Fernandes is a medical registrar at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.
  - He has completed a Masters of Health Policy focusing on evaluation of medical training.
  - He believes that the provision of a well-educated and well-equipped workforce is a key first step in providing the Australian public with the care they need.
  - This is why such a survey is crucial.
- Associate Professor Stephen Adelstein is an immunologist at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
  - He holds a current position on the Medical Board of Australia and is the Chair of the Medical Training Survey Advisory Group.
  - Junior doctors have been requesting a survey of this kind to evaluate the quality of postgraduate training in Australia.
  - This survey will help identify the positives of current training pathways and any deficiencies that need to be addressed.

## 2. How did the medical training survey come about?

- Training surveys have been conducted around the world and have yielded positive responses with steps being taken to address problems that were raised.
- In Australia, a review of medical intern training was undertaken some years ago.
- Following this a conference, bringing together various stakeholders including colleges and junior doctors, was held to formally organise a similar survey in Australia.
- AHPRA and the Medical Board of Australia are sponsors of the survey.
- The medical training survey has been in development for the past two years and the platform is now live.

## 3. Why do we need such a survey?

- Medical trainees in Australia occupy a variety of locations and roles.
- This survey will enable us to determine:
  - Where Doctors in Training are working
  - The stage they are up to in their training
  - Where the best places to train are, and which areas can be improved
- This survey will be the first of its kind to determine this information on a national scale.

#### 4. Survey fatigue is an issue, how will this survey be different?

- The Medical Board of Australia is acutely aware that the medical profession is heavily surveyed.
- All Doctors in Training want to be well supervised and trained and are keen to complete a survey that evaluates the quantity and quality of the training they receive.
- This survey will begin to address the structural issues that exist in the medical workforce.
- The survey has been rolled out nationally and all Doctors in Training across a variety of disciplines have been invited to take part.
- This will allow each training centre to be compared nationally.

#### 5. What is the utility of another survey? Isn't it simply time to act on known issues?

- A number of issues exist in medical training.
- We need a national data set to action interventions at a national level.
- This will be different from a workforce survey as this will measure the quality of outputs in terms of training.

#### 6. Who is the survey targeting?

- All Doctors in Training who complete the renewal of registration process with AHPRA will have received access to the survey.
- Interns and international medical graduates will have received a separate email inviting them to participate in this survey.

## 7. Who is a Doctor-in-Training?

- This is a self-defined term – anyone who considers themselves a Doctor in Training has been invited to participate.

## 8. Are the survey questions the same for all Doctors-in-Training?

- Around 80% of the questions will be common to all groups.
- The remainder will be targeted towards the relevant training experiences of the groups.

## 9. What kind of questions are asked?

- Questions pertain to:
  - Demographics and stage of training
  - Rotations available
  - Hours worked – rostered and un-rostered overtime
  - The level of supervision received
  - Whether one feels their training is equipping them for their future profession
  - The individual's relationship with their employer and college
  - Wellbeing
  - Future career intentions
  - Workplace culture

## 10. Were there any questions excluded from the survey and why?

- Some stakeholders wanted to ask questions specific to their college and were not directly related to the training pathway – these questions were excluded.
- The survey is intended to be an annual survey and questions will evolve over time.

## 11. Survey logistics

- The survey is open until the end of September and can be accessed through the AHPRA registration renewal application site.
- If unable to access through this platform - We recommend checking your email where a unique survey link will have been sent to you in your AHPRA Confirmation of Registration email.
- The survey is accessible on multiple devices and should take roughly 12-15 minutes to complete.
- Each Doctor In Training should answer the questions based on their current rotation or, for those that have been in a new rotation for less than two weeks, based on their previous rotation.
- There isn't a section for comments as data in this format would be difficult to collate and analyse.
- The survey will save your progress and you can complete the survey at a later time if required.

## 12. How will the data be protected and managed?

- The Medical Board of Australia will only receive de-identified aggregate data.
- The results will only be published if there have been more than ten individual responses from an identified group to any particular question.
- Survey answers will be collected by the external contractor, EY Sweeney; the software contractor; AHPRA and the Medical Board of Australia will not have access.

## 13. When will the results be available?

- Results will be released online in February 2020.
- Results will be published in the form of 30 reports that cover training at different health services and colleges.
- Results will also be released as an online data dashboard to allow the user to examine the data as they wish.

## 14. Can we expect change to come from the results of this survey?

- Similar surveys completed in the United Kingdom have shown that Doctors in Training are willing to participate to elicit a positive change to their training.
- It is hoped that a similar outcome can be achieved through the Australian survey.

## 15. Final comments

- This is a positive step in optimising our medical training pathways and we strongly urge all listeners to complete the survey.
- Completing this survey will aid your own training journey and the training journey of those that follow you.

## Links

[MedicalTrainingSurvey.gov.au](https://www.MedicalTrainingSurvey.gov.au)

**Tags:** #Doctors in Training,#junior doctors,#junior medical officers,#medical administration,#medical training,#medical training survey,#Medical Workforce,#national training survey,#postgraduate medical education,#registrars,#training