



# New Zealand student participation in the Australia and New Zealand Association for Health Professional Education (ANZHPE) Conference 2018

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We attend school to obtain an education. But how often do we get a chance to consider how that education is provided to us? Have you ever wondered why we are taught in certain ways and how effective some of those ways are? Or perhaps what the future direction of medical education should be? Several New Zealand medical students had the opportunity to participate in discussions about these very topics when they were invited to present at the Australia and New Zealand Association for Health Professional Education (ANZAHPE) Conference in Hobart, Australia, earlier this year. In this article we describe our contributions to the conference, as well as highlights of the event.

ANZAHPE is an organisation of health-professional educators from all medical and allied health professions, working towards curriculum development and progress. The ANZAHPE Conference is held annually, and brings faculty staff and students from across Australia, New Zealand, and beyond to present their research. The curricular challenges in many cases are common across schools and by having open discussions and debate, the potential for collaborative efforts is enhanced.

ANZHPE 2018 was hosted by the University of Tasmania, Hobart on 1-4 July 2018, and the authors are thankful for the wonderful show of Tasmanian food and culture throughout the conference. The conference opened with an indigenous welcome, paying respect to the history of the indigenous populations, acknowledging the elders of the past, present, and emerging. New Zealand was well-represented this year, with staff and students from a diverse range of professions presenting research.

- Rachel Matthews is a fourth-year medical student. The summer-studentship research she presented at ANZAHPE investigated the professional identity development of older medical students - students who had worked prior to attending medical school. Her supervisor for this research was Dr Kelby Smith-Han. Before entering medical school, Rachel had worked for more than seven years as a Speech Language Therapist.
- Steven Ling is a fourth-year medical student based in Tauranga. He was supervised by Professor Phillipa Poole to explore the impact of student debt on the future choices of health professional graduates, which was presented at the ANZAHPE Conference, and plans to continue pursuing research in this area. When not engaged in medicine or research, he enjoys surfing, hiking and making music on the guitar and piano.
- Roshit Bothara is a fourth-year medical student, and the current Education Officer for the NZMSA. Last year, Roshit's BMedSc(Hons) project developed the Global Health Classroom, a global health learning model connecting medical students in Nepal, Samoa and New Zealand via videoconferencing to learn about their health systems, challenges and culture. The project won the Undergraduate Student Award at the Australia and New Zealand Association for Health Professional Education (ANZAHPE) Conference. He has a strong interest in global health, medical education and social accountability.

The overarching theme of the conference was sustainability, a theme well elaborated on in the opening plenary session, and a particular highlight for the authors. Associate Professor Katherine Barraclough, a nephrologist at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, challenged all delegates with regard to sustainability in health care, discussing the links between health and the environment, as well as how environmental change was impacting health. She discussed the *primum non nocere* (do no harm) concept of medicine regarding the medical contribution to the national carbon footprint (in Australia, this has been calculated at 7%). Practical ideas were suggested, primarily around workplace preparedness, advocacy, and use of telehealth.<sup>1</sup> One audience member bravely asked about the sustainability of a conference that gathers people from all over the globe; her response to this was that nothing can quite replace the networking and seeding of ideas that come from such a conference.

The authors each had the opportunity to present their research, with presentations divided into different streams under the umbrella theme of sustainability, and multiple streams occurring at the same time. Roshit Bothara presented his BMedSc (Hons) project 'developing the Global Health Classroom', where medical students in different countries learned about each other's health care systems and challenges, culture, and determinants of health, via videoconferencing.<sup>2</sup> This collaboration currently involves the Otago Medical School in partnership with medical schools in Nepal, Samoa, and Fiji.

Rachel Matthews presented her summer research project exploring the challenges of professional identity development experienced by older medical students. Also known as the 'supergrads', these are students who have developed a professional identity before enrolling in medical school. As a supergrad with a clinical background herself, she was interested to find that participants had unique experiences with regard to their own professional identity development, and few students sought out support for this. Students with previous experiences in the health care sector learned to think more broadly about diagnoses when approaching patients, while students with non-health backgrounds tended to highlight the passions they had developed in their previous careers as strengths to guide themselves and their future careers. Her presentation was presented in a stream entitled 'Learning Culture – Professionalism and Ethics', with both of these facets being significantly important in medical education. This stream included presentations on the ethical challenges faced by medical students and with social media usage, as well as professional identity development.

Steven Ling was first introduced to health education through his summer studentship, looking at whether student debt had a significant impact on the future career preferences of new graduates entering the health-care sector. Students with higher debt levels tended to prefer a rural location of practice, whilst debt levels made little difference with regards to preferred health specialty. He found the opportunity to network and discuss with leaders of health-professional education an invaluable learning experience. Although being involved in health-professional education can be frustrating at times for those who want to see immediate results, he has found the impact of ideas and innovations many years down the line in this area to be astounding.

There is an overarching consensus among the authors that having the opportunity to present at ANZAHPE, particularly as students, has been a valuable learning experience. As relatively inexperienced conference presenters, nerves were a big feature in the run-up to each presentation. However, overall they received very positive feedback. The presentations resulted in thoughtful discussions with other delegates and it was encouraging to see how much interest each topic garnered during the conference. One thing the authors have had impressed on them is the importance of medical-education research in training the next generation of health-care professionals. Knowing there are others working tirelessly to further develop and improve health-care education for future students has been a great inspiration.

While the scope of learning during the conference was massive, there were many opportunities to network and socialise. A particular social highlight was the 'Meet the Maker Networking Dinner', an informal stand-up function with food stalls featuring some of the best Tasmania has to offer. There were delicious cheeseboards and juicy oysters, a live band, and an opportunity to converse with other delegates or dance the night away. The authors found some of the more experienced delegates surprisingly difficult to keep up with, and learned a thing or two about Australian line dancing!

The diversity of presentations and interests present at the conference was truly remarkable. Each author came back to New Zealand with a greater understanding of the meaning of sustainability as it pertains to medical education. All three authors felt privileged to be able to engage in medical-education discussions and learn about the future direction of medical education. As students and members of the future health-care system, it will be up to us to continue pushing for improvements and innovations that will not only be beneficial for the present, but also sustainable for future generations to come. The authors would highly encourage any student interested in this field to not only consider being involved in medical-education research, but also consider attending ANZAHPE in the future.

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## References

1. DEA – Doctors for the Environment Australia [Internet]. DEA; 2018 [cited 2018 Aug 23]. Available from: <https://www.dea.org.au/>
2. Bothara R. The global health classroom: collaborative global health learning between New Zealand and Samoan medical students in a virtual classroom [Thesis, Bachelor of Medical Science with Honours]. University of Otago; 2018.

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