



Co-Editors
Deena Henn, Kellie Bisset

Political News Editor
Sophie Blakemore

Medical News Editor
Chris Brooker

Clinical Review Editor
Dr Wendy Morgan, MCGChR, FRACGP, Dip(Obs, MPH (Hons))

GP Consultant
Dr Libby Harris, MBBS, FRACGP

Staff Reporters
Andrew Bracey
Kirrilly Burton

Devi Corbett
Kathryn Eccles

Art Director
Rada Rouse

Rob Millington
Graphic Designer
Germina Pillars

Pre-Press Coordinator
Geoff Richardson

Chief Sub-Editor/Business Editor
Martin Foster

Sub-Editor/Online Editor
Lynda Willton

Sub-Editor
Robert Santos

Country Manager
Siobhan Murphy

Publisher
Deborah D'Costa

Group Advertising Manager
Frazee Mackenzie-Andrew

Sales Managers
David Cowell
Rose Fulete

PA - Sales & Management
Romina Villanueva

Advertising & Production Manager
Lee Friday

Production/Design Assistant
Sandra Ly

Classified Advertising Manager
Mike Meta

To directly contact staff at Medical Observer email: {first name}@last name@medobs.com.au



CMPMedica

United Business Media

Medical Observer is published weekly by CMPMedica Australia Pty Ltd, and distributed free of charge to general practitioners and selected specialists. It is also available on subscription for \$336, 86 p.a (incl. GST) and overseas rates apply. Medical Observer is published 48 times a year. Views expressed are not necessarily those of CMPMedica Australia Pty Ltd. © 2007 CMPMedica Australia Pty Ltd a division of United Business Media. ABN 68 050 695 157 ACH 050 695 157 ISSN 1445-5560

Sydney office:
Level 2, 1 Chandos Street,
St Leonards NSW 2065
Phone: 02 9902 7777
Fax: 02 9902 7778
Website: www.medicalobserver.com.au
Email: mailbox@medobs.com.au

Printed by Offset Alpine,
42 Booraa St, Lidcombe NSW 2141



More Australian-made docs essential

Andrew Bracey
AUSTRALIA has more overseas-trained doctors per capita than any other country.

The findings, in a study into the potential use of US-style physician's assistants in Australia, sparked calls from GP groups for the new Labor government to put greater focus on home-grown medical training.

It also prompted Professor Gavin Mooney, of Curtin University's Social and Public Health Economics Research Group, to urge the

Commonwealth to compensate lower socio-economic countries from where Australia recruited doctors.

The study stated that 20% of Australia's total medical workforce was made up of overseas-trained doctors - amounting to 11,000 by the end of 2007 (*Aust J Rural Health* 2007;15:346-351).

RDAA president Dr Peter Rischbieth said these doctors were an integral part of the rural workforce but the focus should now be on boosting Australian-trained doctors.

"When student numbers [were cut] in [the mid 1990s], it meant we took [doctors] from overseas rather than committing the resources to the teaching and training structures ourselves."

Professor Mooney said Australia also had a "moral obligation" to ensure poorer countries were not being starved of doctors.

"We have to ensure there is some way of compensating these countries. It may not be in terms of staff but it could be in terms of training or

expertise in relation to building up their health services."

Ron Crause, president of the Australian Association of Medical Recruitment Agents, said its members adhered to the Commonwealth's code of practice to not actively recruit from countries with existing doctor shortages.

However, many doctors sought work in Australia to escape political instability or violence in countries such as Iraq, South Africa and Zimbabwe and should not be turned away, he said.

Rural retreats prevent stressed GPs from quitting

Andrew Bracey

STRRESS management and self-care programs should be funded nationally to support and retain over-worked rural GPs, Australia's general practice colleges say.

The RACGP and ACRRM said state-based rural workforce agencies should be better funded to allow them to run frequent retreats to help doctors cope with the stress of rural practice.

The call followed a study by Adelaide's Flinders University that found 43% of doctors who had attended retreats in South Australia in the past four years had changed their minds about quitting rural practice as a result. Of the 69 GPs surveyed,



Dr Tony Lian-Lloyd: "I now take half a day off each week, most weeks."

94% who attended retreats had remained in rural general practice.

RACGP National Rural Faculty chair Dr Chris Mitchell said many doctors were "in crisis and they really do need some support to just get them through".

ACRRM president Associate Professor Dennis Pashen said these programs were an integral role for rural workforce agencies and more funding was needed so they reached more GPs.

Dr Tony Lian-Lloyd, a solo GP from Quorn in rural South

Australia, said attending a retreat made him accept he was "at the point of burnout and didn't realise it".

"The thing that grinds you down as a rural doctor is the constant on-call. I now take half a day off each week, most weeks, where I know I am not going to get called," he said.

"It is the single saving grace that I have had - that's what has kept me sane."

Psychologist and co-author of the study, Mara Gardner, said the retreats, run by South Australia's Rural Doctor Workforce Agency, focused on individual approaches to stress management.

Roxon rises from obscurity

> from page 1

Capolingua said Ms Roxon's experience in the "real world" as a working mum would ground her.

"She's very intelligent, a fairly determined sort of person... I think she could be as feisty as I am!"

And when ACPN chair Dr Tony Hobbs met Ms Roxon at Parliament House earlier this year, he was impressed. "She sat with us for 45

minutes and really listened to what we had to say, asking intelligent questions.

"She has grasped the essence and importance of a well structured and well resourced primary health-care system."

Whether she has the capacity to deliver such a thing is something GPs will undoubtedly be watching with great interest.

Home errors 'tip of the iceberg'

> from page 1

"Reducing, if possible, the quantity of different medicines and the complexity of the dosages being taken by those who you consider to be at risk is critical," Professor Taylor said.

"Even such simple advice as telling them to keep each member of the household's medication on different

shelves or in different areas can avoid many errors."

Among other findings from the research, which was presented at the recent Australasian College for Emergency Medicine Queensland's Gold Coast, were 10 cases where people had consumed their pet's medication.

Leading the way

Most of your peers are members of Avant and enjoy the benefits that come with being part of Australia's largest medical indemnity provider. For access to leading indemnity products, member benefits, support and representation contact us today.



Avant

Freecall 1800 128268
www.avant.org.au



Gov inta

Kirrilly Burton
GOVERNMENT

needed to red salt intake, an Professor C director of Me Heart Research Australia had importance of as a lifestyle and govern tion was requ the level of sa foods.

His comm ported by a p Standards A Zealand (FSA) mandatory r regular salt w in breakfast and biscuits.

The applic final assessm will be pres Australia and Food Regulati Council early 1 Professor commenting c that examine lence of lifesty

DIY C

Kirrilly Burton
A NEW DIY test offers the promis more cost-effecti compared to exis researchers say.

The Chlamydi is an immunoass test that detects lipopolysaccharic swab, which can a clinician or sel

A UK trial fol showed high one (80.5%) and a p value of 86.7% i aged between 1c