

George Hospital, Western Cape, South Africa

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CONTRIBUTING TO HEALTH SYSTEM RESILIENCE

Medical Internship training should meet the educational, physical and psychosocial needs of the training doctor. A competent, motivated and well-supported health workforce is a key building block for a desirable health system.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought disruption to work schedules, teaching and learning opportunities, mechanisms of feedback and had an impact on the wellbeing of the interns. As Improving Global Health Fellows based in the UK, we worked virtually alongside local partners to design and deliver a sustainable feedback package to evaluate whether a redesigned internship programme introduced in January 2020 was meeting the needs of interns at four Garden Route Hospitals, Western Cape, South Africa.

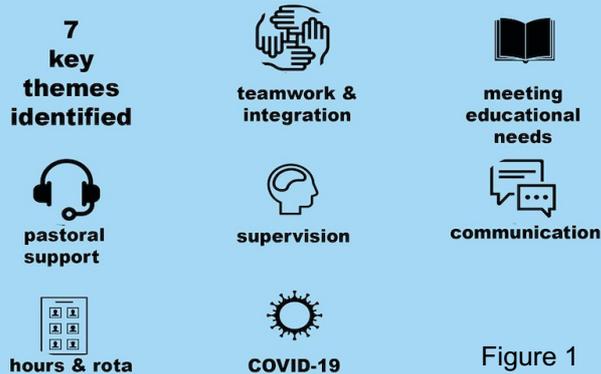
High quality evaluation can identify and address issues in a timely manner and empower interns and supervisors. Ultimately evaluation can contribute to health system strengthening by delivering training that will lead to quality patient care and a healthy population.

METHODS

Surveys were designed, piloted and distributed to interns and their supervisors, with questions mapped to The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) requirements to ensure validity. Four focus group interviews and two key-informant interviews were undertaken to triangulate results and expand on key themes. Thematic analysis identified seven key themes (figure 1). These themes formed the basis of a 'SWOT' analysis. The results were reviewed in a semi-structured interview with the Intern Curator, and potential recommendations were presented to and discussed with the programme's stakeholders via a webinar.



RESULTS



Eighty-three percent of interns (40/48) took part. A snowball sampling method was used to survey supervisors, and nineteen took part. Responses have been used to expand on the strengths of the programme and address areas of improvement. Together, we have implemented a new, sustainable system to obtain annual feedback from interns and supervisors at the Garden Route Hospitals. This project is acting as a pilot for a larger research study that will evaluate the internship programme across the Western Cape Province.

CONCLUSION

The HPCSA aims for ongoing improvement in the content and quality of the internship curriculum. We created sustainable channels to evaluate intern and supervisor experiences of the curriculum to ensure that interns needs are met, and to achieve the ultimate objective of strengthening South Africa's healthcare system.

