

## **Exploring gender in rural medical practice for healthcare delivery**

**QUT Ethics Approval Number 1900000818**

### **Research team**

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Associate researcher: Dr Rhea Liang (MBChB, FRACS, BA(Ed), MSurgEd)

Associate researcher: Professor Walter Dekeseredy

**External collaborators**

### **Introduction**

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following few pages will provide you with further information about the project, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research.

Please take the time to read this information carefully.

You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

### **What is this research about?**

The purpose of this research is to gain a richer understanding of and insight into the way in which institutional and cultural practices related to gender – how people are guided to act by different social and cultural norms as particular gendered people e.g. woman, man, non-binary – in rural medical practice influence approaches to gender-based health issues. Specifically, it is interested in understanding how these practices influence the quality of care delivered to those affected by gender-based violence. It seeks to capture the experiences of medical doctors of all genders who practice rurally, female and/or non-binary-identified medical doctors who were trained in or practiced rurally (no more than five years prior to participation in the study), and adults who have a recent history of seeking care for and/or disclosing gender-based violence to a rurally-based medical practitioner.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

Should you agree to participate in this project, you will be asked to participate in an interview, which is expected to last no more than 60 minutes, with a member of the research team. This interview will take place in a manner agreed upon between yourself and the interviewer. This may include a face-to-face interview, an email interview, or a virtual interview through a video medium such as Skype or Zoom or a text-based medium such as Facebook chat.

The interview will be recorded and, if it is not carried out through a text-based format, transcribed. If your interview is transcribed, you will be offered a copy of the interview transcript to review prior to analysis, should you wish to do so.

Specific questions you will be asked include 'what it is like practicing medicine in a rural context?' and 'in your practice, describe your experiences of working with patients who have experienced gender-based violence'.

### **What are the possible benefits?**

This research will make a valuable contribution to current knowledge about how ideas related to gender within rural medical practice influence doctors' approaches to gender-based health issues.

It has the potential to guide further research and developments which could be used to improve the quality of care delivered to individuals affected by gender-based violence.

To thank you for your participation, you will also receive a \$100 voucher.

### **What are the possible risks?**

Potential risks associated with this project are minimal. It is possible that during the course of the interview conversation, you may experience some minor emotional distress. Further, it is a qualitative study involving relatively small numbers, which could, in some circumstances, increase the likelihood that you could be identified. However, you will be recruited from broad national networks, and every possible effort will be made to ensure that you will not be identifiable.

You will be given a pseudonym, which only members of the research team named on this information sheet will be able to match to your real name.

The only information described will be general in nature (e.g. participant gender, whether currently or formerly based in a rural area). No specific towns or practices will be named. Participants who live in the Northern Territory should also be aware that there is a requirement for all adults to report some forms of family violence under the *Northern Territory Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007 (NT)*. It is unclear whether these reporting requirements also apply to those who have experienced forms of family violence. Thus, participants who live in the Northern Territory are asked to carefully consider any disclosures about reporting or not reporting family violence to authorities. It is possible that similar considerations apply to participants in Tasmania (where it is unclear whether reporting requirements have commenced).

### **Do I have to take part?**

No. Participation is completely voluntary. If you do agree to participate you can withdraw from the research project without comment or penalty. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT.

If you agree to participate, you can skip questions, stop the interview at any time or withdraw your information from the project without explanation or prejudice before analysis has been undertaken.

### **Will I hear about the results of this project?**

Yes. A written summary of the project's key findings will be supplied to you by the researchers either via email or post and you will be invited to provide feedback on the analysis, either via email, telephone or face-to-face discussion. The findings of this project may also be disseminated to academic audiences in the form of peer-reviewed journal articles and conference presentations and may be included in future projects that are closely related to this project, or in the same general area of research as this project.

### **What will happen to information about me?**

In accordance with University policy, the data collected as part of this project will be stored securely by the University's department for five years before being destroyed by a confidential document disposal company contracted by this same University in the case of hardcopy data, and permanently deleted from electronic files in the case of electronically stored data. During the life of the project, electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer, and hardcopy data will be securely stored in a locked, sole-occupied office when not being used for analytical purposes.

All data will only be accessible to the research team, and in the case of individual transcriptions of the interview data, by you.

Only the following members of the research team will have access to identifying information about you:

Dr Christina Malatzky (Lead Researcher)  
Dr Clarissa Carden (Research Assistant)

### **Are there any potential conflicts of interest?**

It is possible that you have a previous professional or personal relationship with a member of the research team. If this is the case, you may wish to request that you be interviewed by a member of the team with whom you are not familiar. The research team wishes to make plain that any data you supply to the project will be kept in the strictest confidence and every effort will be made to protect your privacy.

The research team will, at all times, abide by the Research Code of Conduct and treat each your data, including yours, as strictly confidential and will not discuss what you said during the interview with anyone else in any other context. In relation to the dissemination of the research findings, the researcher will make every possible effort to ensure that participants, including yourself, cannot be identified; this will include omitting, merging or otherwise disguising your data.

### **Who is funding this project?**

This research is being supported by QUT.

### **Where can I get further information?**

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the lead researcher:

Christina Malatzky      07 3138 3405      [christina.malatzky@qut.edu.au](mailto:christina.malatzky@qut.edu.au)

### **Where can I access support from, if I need to?**

In the event that participating in this research leads you to experience some emotional distress, or reflect on some harmful behaviours you are experiencing, you could telephone:

**13 11 14**            – Lifeline  
**1300 22 4636**      – Beyond Blue Support Service  
**1800 737 732**      – 1800 RESPECT

OR for a state or territory-based service:

<b>ACT</b>	– <b>1800 629 354</b>	– Mental Health Triage Service
<b>NSW</b>	– <b>1800 011 511</b>	– Mental Health Line
<b>NT</b>	– <b>08 8999 4988</b>	– Top End Mental Health Service
<b>QLD</b>	– <b>13 43 25 84</b>	– 13 HEALTH
<b>SA</b>	– <b>13 14 65</b>	– Mental Health Assessment and Crisis Intervention Service
<b>TAS</b>	– <b>1800 332 388</b>	– Mental Health Services Helpline
<b>VIC</b>	– <b>1300 651 251</b>	– Suicide Help Line
<b>WA</b>	– <b>1800 676 822</b>	– Mental Health Emergency Response Line.

**How do I give my consent to participate?**

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate.

**Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?**

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. If you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Advisory Team on 07 3138 5123 or email [humanethics@qut.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@qut.edu.au).

**Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.**