

Health professionals could share GP workload: academic

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A Canberra academic says doctors should consider allowing allied professionals to take some of their workload, in the face of a shortage of GPs.

• [Map: Canberra 2600](#)

The Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute, based at the Australian National University in Canberra, has released a series of reports on the future of general practice.

It warns there is an impending critical shortage of GPs and recommends better incentives to make medicine a career of choice.

Institute director Professor Nicholas Glasgow says recruitment of more doctors is one answer but so too is sharing their workload.

"Longer-term solutions have to do with increasing numbers, but perhaps in the shorter term we need to think about how we could do the work differently," he said.

"Perhaps practice nurses, for example, could undertake roles that traditionally have been roles that doctors have done if they're appropriately trained and skilled to do that, then that's an option."

However Professor Glasgow says there should be more debate over the issue.

"It's not to say that we should just rush in and do that for everything - we need to think through the pluses and minuses, we need to be sure we don't sacrifice quality," he said.

"But we've got to think through who does what to whom and when, if we're going to use the work force we've got most efficiently."

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