

Community Affairs, Committee (SEN)

Senate Inquiry (two-tiered better access program)

To the Committee Secretary,

I am a student enrolled in the Doctorate of Clinical Psychology (DPsych) course at Monash University, and wish to make a submission to the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee inquiry into Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services:

(i) the two-tiered Medicare rebate system for psychologists

I'm sure you already understand how General and Clinical Psychologists differ on paper. But the reality of these differences is far more pronounced than it may appear on paper. Clinical Psychologists require a unique level of dedication to their profession. What might not often be mentioned on paper is that students who are willing to enter the highly competitive DPsych (doctor of psychology) program usually have to have at least a year of work experience after their undergraduate degree and after their honours year, before they can have enough of an edge to make it into the program (at Monash university only 15 people get in each year. Compare that figure with the thousands of students who enrol in an undergraduate psychology course at Monash). Once enrolled in the DPsych, students complete a major research project equivalent to a PhD, enrol in several work placements, and complete intensive coursework. While, on paper, this is suggested to take approximately three years, most students take at least four years before they finish writing up their thesis--summing to a total of eight years at university, not including any time spent between courses gaining experience.

General Psychologists rarely have published research. Clinical Psychologists (especially DPsych students) spend several years writing a thesis and working on a large-scale research project. The results are usually published in a scientific journal, which improves the standing of Australian universities, and gives the students a level of understanding about scientific research that they can translate to their clinical work. As part of their training, Clinical Psychologists receive lectures from experts in various psychological fields, while General Psychologists receive supervision from a single psychologist of their own choosing.

I hope that you will take these points into consideration at the senate inquiry.

Kind regards,  
Simon Vincenzi  
Doctor of Psychology candidate  
Provisional Psychologist