

Regarding the registration of psychologists, and the influence on the practitioner, the client and the profession.

1. I am an overseas trained psychologist, who moved to Australia in 2009 after being granted a permanent residency visa based on the South Australian government's understanding that there is a **need for psychologists in the state.**

2. I have been trained overseas as a **Counselling Psychologist, with a 6 year full time study course, (4 years Psych and 2 years Masters).** I chose Counselling because I could work with the general population in assisting functioning and improving health. The field of Clinical psychology only differed in that the completed an internship in a clinic setting, where mine was community based. There is no difference in fees associated between different classes of psychologist, and the training is similar, and complimentary.

3. I had to have my skills assessed by the APS, which was a long, but fairly painless process. I am registered as a psychologist by the PBA and am currently waiting for the APS to provide application forms for **overseas qualified psychologists** to join the APS College of Clinical Psychologists. **This has been a 7 month wait, since September 30, 2010 until 8 April 2011, and still waiting. This process is not transparent, and I have no idea what will be expected of me to become a member, or if I will even be considered, even though:**
 - **I have a 6 year degree study (as per new regulations)**
 - **I have over 5 years experience working with clients in clinical settings**
 - **I receive referrals from GP's and Psychiatrists that trust me to work with them to assist in the care of their clients**

4. I work in a practice environment where my colleagues, all Clinical Psychologists, get the same referrals as I do but earn more. It in my opinion confuses clients and creates the perception that I am less skilled. This is of course a perception created and not scientifically proven.
5. I work on bulk bill arrangement with children in Government Schools, providing support to parents, teachers and children, most of the time I am there I cannot bill for, but due to the context of the environment, I provide some of my time to the school to assist them in the quest to provide the services to children who are vulnerable. The schools I work at are happy with my service to the community who would otherwise not have access to services if Medicare/Government decides to devalue my qualification and professionalism.
6. I am more than willing to attend extra supervision, some university modules etc. to ensure that I am skilled enough that the PBA can have more confidence in my skills to do no harm, however, **this needs to be extremely transparent, and advised by an independent body of various other professionals**, with psychological input, of course.
7. I support working for a set amount as with the current Medicare system, and it is my opinion that if a professional is better skilled en feels he/she is worth more that the rebate amount, market will allow this professional to charge a higher fee. I am of the opinion that the current rate for registered psychologist are not high enough for the level of responsibility, and work required, but for the sake of the future of the country, Mental Health should not be compromised at any cost!
8. It is important to look at the costs to register professionally, as this is very high.
9. Also, it is important to look at other professions, where people with similar length degrees are deemed the same, and thus treated the same.
10. Ensure that the PBA treats professionals in a professional manner, and not as a criminal needing to prove his innocence when a complaint is made against him/her, which is often perceived by the professionals as being the case.

I thank you for the opportunity to add my voice to the process of deciding how the profession should be regulated.