This paper reports on a study investigating the development of sustainable innovative strategies and models of clinical education. The project was instigated to cultivate clinical placements to meet increased student numbers and workforce constraints on supervision. The project involved a university located in the Sydney metropolis trialling the Capacity Development Facilitator (CDF) model in four Sydney hospitals to expand student clinical placement opportunities. A facilitator was employed to work with staff identifying enablers and barriers to placements and collaboratively developing solutions, providing organisational and learning support and fostering opportunities for interprofessional learning. Strategies needed to increase capacity but ensure patient quality of care, sound clinical education experiences and support of students, educators and staff.

A mixed methods study was undertaken collecting data from pre-entry students enrolled in Physiotherapy courses and their clinical educators. At completion of placement students and clinical educators completed a survey. This was analysed for themes about placement structure, productivity, barriers, enablers and support. Clinical educators were also interviewed. A preliminary finding suggests that the CDF model increases capacity, provides robust learning experiences and is a satisfying model of delivery for placements from the hospital, university staff and students’ perspectives.

Keywords: Capacity, innovative models of clinical education, sustainable, placements, facilitator, enablers, barriers, learning