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**Congress Stream:** No 5 Rural health research in practice – connecting for change

**Alternate Stream:** No 6 Connecting through transfer – right care, right place, right time

**Abstract title:** Exploring Patient Safety in Rural New South Wales

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**Background**

This presentation reports on the results of the first two phases of a three-phase study examining patient safety in rural areas. The study is the first Australian study to identify patient safety factors specific to the rural Australian context and make recommendations to improve patient safety based upon those factors.

**Approach**

This project examines the systems, cultural and contextual factors of patient safety. It adopts a quantitatively driven, sequential, mixed method design, consisting of the following three phases: An international literature review; Validation of The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Hospital Survey on Patient Safety culture; and 30 – 50 telephone interviews with clinical and managerial staff from participating sites.

**Outcomes/Results**

The AHRQ survey is a valid instrument to measure patient safety culture in a rural NSW setting. Despite the paucity of Australian literature, the survey responses identified a number of specific dimensions addressing the impact of “rurality” on patient safety in Australia that were in line with the American literature. This presentation will discuss those dimensions. Phase three of the project will explore the survey results in more detail by examining how clinicians and managers mediate, perform and affect patient safety in rural areas.

**Take Home Message**

There is a need to re-conceptualise patient safety to incorporate rurality.

\*The following members of the **UNE Rural Patient Safety and Quality Collaboration** contributed to this project:

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