

4 Hospital non-specialists

The hospital non-specialist workforce makes a major contribution to the provision of medical services in hospitals. This workforce includes doctors in training as interns and resident medical officers (RMOs), and career medical officers (CMOs), hospital medical officers (HMOs) and other salaried hospital doctors who are not specialists or in recognised training programs to become specialists.

Data monitoring is particularly important for three current workforce issues concerning hospital non-specialists:

- shortages of hospital non-specialists;
- the management of workforce change away from a culture of excessive working hours;
- the change in workforce numbers arising from restrictions introduced by the Commonwealth Government in 1996 to access to rendering of Medicare services for both new hospital non-specialists and overseas medical graduates entering Australia for temporary or permanent employment. Under these restrictions, only Australian doctors accepted into a recognised general practice or specialist training program, and overseas graduates with a recognised postgraduate medical qualification, are eligible to apply to the Health Insurance Commission for recognition to bill for Medicare services. The effect of these restrictions was expected to make continued hospital employment more attractive as a career path for some Australian graduates, and the principal avenue of employment for most temporary resident overseas graduates.

The Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council has acknowledged the need for a detailed workforce planning analysis of the hospital non-specialist workforce, and the AIHW will be assisting the Australian Medical Workforce Advisory Committee to conduct this analysis in 1998-99.

In this report, the 1996 data highlight characteristics of the hospital non-specialist workforce immediately before the changes in Medicare provider access and the safe working hours campaign for junior hospital doctors which was initiated by the Australian Medical Association. Given a significantly lower response to the AIHW labour force survey by doctors younger than 35 years, the workforce estimates for hospital non-specialists and specialists-in-training are subject to significantly greater estimation error than for other sectors of the medical workforce and should be interpreted with care.

Composition of the hospital non-specialist workforce

- There were 4,630 hospital non-specialists in 1996 – 10.2% of the total clinician workforce.
- 2,008 (43.4%) were females.
- 3,537 (76.4%) were interns or RMOs, and the remaining 1,093 (23.6%) were CMOs, HMOs and other salaried non-specialists.
- 94.8% of interns and RMOs and 85.2% of other hospital non-specialists were employed in the public sector.

Geographic distribution

- The numbers of hospital non-specialists per 100,000 population varied among the States and Territories, from 31.9 per 100,000 population in the Northern Territory to 18.1 in Western Australia.

- The number of interns and RMOs varied from a high of 24.2 per 100,000 population in New South Wales to a low of 12.6 in Western Australia. The other States and Territories all had 16–20 per 100,000 population.
- CMOs, HMOs and other salaried non-specialists ranged from 14.6 per 100,000 population in the Australian Capital Territory and 13.2 in the Northern Territory to 2.4 in Victoria.
- The numbers of hospital non-specialists per 100,000 population varied among regions from 34.4 per 100,000 population in other metropolitan centres and 33.3 in large rural centres down to 3.2 in other rural areas and 12.2 in remote areas. This regional variation mainly arises from the location of medical training hospitals with large numbers of interns and RMOs in the large centres.

Age distribution

- 15.2% of male and 20.0% of female interns and RMOs were younger than 25 years.
- Only 7.4% of male and 9.4% of female interns and RMOs were aged 35 years or more.
- 41.8% of CMOs, HMOs and other salaried non-specialists were younger than 35 years, 29.5% were 35–44 years, 15.6% were 45–54 years, and 13.1% were older than 55 years.

Hours worked

- Only 3.3% of male and 5.5% of female interns and RMOs worked fewer than 35 hours per week.
- 15.8% of male and 14.8% of female interns and RMOs worked 65 hours or more per week.
- 5.3% of male and 4.9% of female interns and RMOs worked 80 hours or more per week.
- 11.4% of male and 37.3% of female CMOs and HMOs worked less than 35 hours per week.
- 12.1% of male and 9.6% of female CMOs and HMOs worked 65 hours or more per week.
- 4.0% of male and 4.4% of female CMOs and HMOs worked 80 hours or more per week.

Table 17: Hospital non-specialists: classification, age and sex, States and Territories, 1996

| Classification/age | NSW | Vic | Qlc | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Total |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Males | | | | | | | | | |
| Intern/RMO | | | | | | | | | |
| <25 | 119 | 43 | 71 | 11 | 24 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 288 |
| 25-34 | 611 | 348 | 264 | 80 | 103 | 23 | 24 | 12 | 1,466 |
| 35-44 | 51 | 19 | 27 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 117 |
| 45+ | 10 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 |
| Total | 792 | 416 | 370 | 97 | 135 | 44 | 27 | 15 | 1,896 |
| Other ^(a) | | | | | | | | | |
| <35 | 126 | 19 | 86 | 28 | 36 | 7 | 13 | 6 | 320 |
| 35-44 | 83 | 32 | 45 | 11 | 23 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 214 |
| 45-54 | 31 | 11 | 32 | 13 | 9 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 103 |
| 55+ | 27 | 5 | 26 | 16 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 89 |
| Total | 267 | 68 | 189 | 67 | 75 | 14 | 28 | 19 | 726 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | |
| <25 | 123 | 43 | 71 | 11 | 24 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 292 |
| 25-34 | 734 | 368 | 350 | 108 | 138 | 30 | 38 | 18 | 1,783 |
| 35-44 | 134 | 51 | 72 | 15 | 31 | 6 | 11 | 10 | 331 |
| 45-54 | 41 | 16 | 38 | 15 | 9 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 127 |
| 55+ | 27 | 5 | 26 | 16 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 89 |
| Total | 1,059 | 484 | 557 | 164 | 210 | 58 | 56 | 34 | 2,622 |
| Females | | | | | | | | | |
| Intern/RMO | | | | | | | | | |
| <25 | 136 | 52 | 55 | 24 | 32 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 328 |
| 25-34 | 505 | 247 | 201 | 88 | 64 | 18 | 19 | 17 | 1,158 |
| 35-54 | 58 | 10 | 24 | 10 | 15 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 129 |
| 45+ | 12 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26 |
| Total | 710 | 314 | 287 | 124 | 111 | 48 | 26 | 20 | 1,642 |
| Other ^(a) | | | | | | | | | |
| <35 | 52 | 7 | 35 | 15 | 15 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 137 |
| 35-44 | 32 | 15 | 30 | 13 | 11 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 108 |
| 45-54 | 17 | 14 | 13 | 2 | 15 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 68 |
| 55+ | 14 | 7 | 14 | 4 | 9 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 54 |
| Total | 115 | 43 | 92 | 34 | 49 | 8 | 16 | 5 | 367 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | |
| <25 | 136 | 52 | 55 | 24 | 32 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 328 |
| 25-34 | 556 | 254 | 240 | 103 | 78 | 25 | 22 | 17 | 1,295 |
| 35-44 | 90 | 25 | 55 | 23 | 27 | 1 | 12 | 5 | 237 |
| 45-54 | 29 | 19 | 20 | 4 | 15 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 94 |
| 55+ | 14 | 7 | 14 | 4 | 9 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 54 |
| Total | 825 | 357 | 382 | 159 | 161 | 56 | 42 | 26 | 2,008 |
| Persons | | | | | | | | | |
| Intern/RMO | | | | | | | | | |
| <25 | 254 | 95 | 126 | 35 | 57 | 49 | 0 | 0 | 616 |
| 25-34 | 1,116 | 595 | 466 | 168 | 166 | 41 | 43 | 29 | 2,624 |
| 35-44 | 109 | 29 | 52 | 14 | 24 | 3 | 10 | 6 | 246 |
| 45+ | 22 | 10 | 14 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 51 |
| Total | 1,502 | 730 | 658 | 222 | 246 | 92 | 53 | 35 | 3,537 |
| Other ^(a) | | | | | | | | | |
| <35 | 178 | 26 | 124 | 43 | 50 | 15 | 16 | 6 | 457 |
| 35-44 | 115 | 47 | 75 | 24 | 34 | 4 | 14 | 9 | 322 |
| 45-54 | 47 | 26 | 44 | 15 | 24 | 0 | 8 | 6 | 170 |
| 55+ | 41 | 12 | 40 | 20 | 16 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 143 |
| Total | 382 | 111 | 283 | 101 | 125 | 21 | 45 | 24 | 1,093 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | |
| <25 | 258 | 95 | 126 | 35 | 57 | 49 | 0 | 0 | 620 |
| 25-34 | 1,290 | 621 | 590 | 210 | 216 | 55 | 59 | 35 | 3,078 |
| 35-44 | 225 | 76 | 127 | 38 | 58 | 7 | 23 | 15 | 568 |
| 45-54 | 70 | 36 | 58 | 19 | 24 | 0 | 8 | 6 | 221 |
| 55+ | 41 | 12 | 40 | 20 | 16 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 143 |
| Total | 1,884 | 841 | 941 | 323 | 371 | 114 | 98 | 59 | 4,630 |

(a) Mainly CMOs, HMOs and other salaried non-specialists.

Table 18: Hospital non-specialists: classification and sector of employment, States and Territories, 1996

| Classification/ sector | NSW | Vic | Qlc | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Total |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Intern/RMO | | | | | | | | | |
| Private sector | 62 | 24 | 38 | 11 | 6 | 38 | 1 | 2 | 183 |
| Public sector | 1,441 | 705 | 615 | 211 | 240 | 54 | 51 | 33 | 3,354 |
| <i>All sectors</i> | <i>1,502</i> | <i>730</i> | <i>657</i> | <i>222</i> | <i>246</i> | <i>92</i> | <i>53</i> | <i>35</i> | <i>3,537</i> |
| Other^(a) | | | | | | | | | |
| Private sector | 57 | 19 | 48 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 3 | 0 | 162 |
| Public sector | 324 | 92 | 235 | 89 | 115 | 9 | 42 | 24 | 931 |
| <i>All sectors</i> | <i>382</i> | <i>111</i> | <i>283</i> | <i>101</i> | <i>125</i> | <i>21</i> | <i>45</i> | <i>24</i> | <i>1,093</i> |
| Total | | | | | | | | | |
| Private sector | 119 | 43 | 87 | 22 | 16 | 51 | 4 | 2 | 345 |
| Public sector | 1,765 | 798 | 854 | 300 | 355 | 63 | 94 | 57 | 4,286 |
| All sectors | 1,884 | 841 | 941 | 323 | 371 | 114 | 98 | 59 | 4,630 |

(a) Mainly CMOs, HMOs and other salaried non-specialists.

Table 19: Interns and RMOs: total hours worked per week and sex, States and Territories, 1996

| Total hours worked per week | NSW | Vic | Qlc | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Total |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Males | | | | | | | | | |
| 0-19 | 14 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| 20-34 | 24 | 17 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 47 |
| 35-49 | 168 | 93 | 75 | 36 | 21 | 15 | 0 | 9 | 421 |
| 50-64 | 446 | 232 | 255 | 45 | 90 | 23 | 15 | 3 | 1,112 |
| 65-79 | 95 | 55 | 22 | 14 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 199 |
| 80+ | 46 | 19 | 6 | 2 | 15 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 101 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>792</i> | <i>416</i> | <i>370</i> | <i>97</i> | <i>135</i> | <i>44</i> | <i>27</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>1,896</i> |
| Females | | | | | | | | | |
| 0-19 | 24 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 35 |
| 20-34 | 26 | 14 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 55 |
| 35-49 | 183 | 96 | 83 | 41 | 18 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 434 |
| 50-64 | 359 | 143 | 186 | 60 | 67 | 26 | 15 | 18 | 874 |
| 65-79 | 68 | 47 | 5 | 17 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 162 |
| 80+ | 50 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 81 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>710</i> | <i>314</i> | <i>287</i> | <i>124</i> | <i>111</i> | <i>48</i> | <i>26</i> | <i>20</i> | <i>1,642</i> |
| Persons | | | | | | | | | |
| 0-19 | 38 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 52 |
| 20-34 | 50 | 31 | 6 | 2 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 102 |
| 35-49 | 351 | 189 | 161 | 77 | 39 | 28 | 0 | 9 | 854 |
| 50-64 | 804 | 374 | 445 | 105 | 157 | 49 | 30 | 21 | 1,986 |
| 65-79 | 163 | 102 | 31 | 31 | 11 | 12 | 5 | 3 | 361 |
| 80+ | 96 | 29 | 5 | 4 | 24 | 3 | 15 | 1 | 182 |
| Total | 1,502 | 730 | 657 | 222 | 246 | 92 | 53 | 35 | 3,537 |

Table 20: Other hospital medical practitioners:^(a) total hours worked per week and sex, States and Territories, 1996

| Total hours worked per week | NSW | Vic | Qlc | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT | Total |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Males | | | | | | | | | |
| 0-19 | 12 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 25 |
| 20-34 | 24 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 58 |
| 35-49 | 76 | 25 | 64 | 37 | 37 | 6 | 12 | 5 | 261 |
| 50-64 | 111 | 29 | 93 | 17 | 20 | 3 | 14 | 8 | 295 |
| 65-79 | 30 | 3 | 12 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 59 |
| 80+ | 15 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 29 |
| Total | 267 | 68 | 187 | 67 | 75 | 14 | 29 | 19 | 726 |
| Females | | | | | | | | | |
| 0-19 | 20 | 6 | 18 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 61 |
| 20-34 | 26 | 13 | 15 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 76 |
| 35-49 | 37 | 13 | 27 | 21 | 27 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 136 |
| 50-64 | 18 | 5 | 24 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 59 |
| 65-79 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| 80+ | 7 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 |
| Total | 115 | 43 | 97 | 34 | 49 | 8 | 16 | 5 | 367 |
| Persons | | | | | | | | | |
| 0-19 | 33 | 9 | 25 | 5 | 10 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 86 |
| 20-34 | 50 | 20 | 24 | 9 | 15 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 134 |
| 35-49 | 112 | 38 | 91 | 57 | 64 | 6 | 20 | 8 | 397 |
| 50-64 | 129 | 34 | 117 | 24 | 22 | 5 | 15 | 8 | 354 |
| 65-79 | 36 | 5 | 18 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 77 |
| 80+ | 22 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| Total | 382 | 111 | 284 | 101 | 125 | 21 | 45 | 24 | 1,093 |

(a) Mainly CMOs, HMOs and other salaried non-specialists.