

# 6 Ageing clients of disability and aged care services and their service usage pattern

## 6.1 Disability services

While there are studies on trends in population ageing in Australia, few studies have analysed ageing trends in populations with disability. Chapters 13 to 15 of this report will examine the changes in age structure of the population with a disability and the potential impact of these changes on disability service planning. This chapter looks at patterns of service usage among clients in different age groups.

Many disability support services are provided or funded by Australian governments under the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement (CSDA). Under the Agreement, the Commonwealth takes administrative responsibility for employment services, with the States and Territories taking responsibility for accommodation and other support services. Both levels of government retain some responsibility for advocacy, information, print disability and research. The services are generally directed at people aged less than 65 years, although the CSDA places no age-based restrictions on access to them.

Tables 6.1 to 6.3 present data on services received from the 1999 CSDA Minimum Data Set (MDS) collection. These data are counts of the number of times people have received services on the snapshot day, rather than counts of individual consumers. A person may have received services from more than one provider on the snapshot day, and would therefore be counted more than once. The data show that about 15.8% (or 11,563 people) of CSDA service recipients on the snapshot day in 1999 were aged 50 years or over, 9.8% (or 7,173 people) were aged 55 years or over and 6.1% (or 4,491 people) were aged 60 years or over (Table 6.1).

Of service recipients aged 45–64 years, 62.6% reported their primary disability type as intellectual and 14.5% as physical. Among those recipients aged 65 years and over, 31.5% reported intellectual and 28.4% reported vision as their primary disability type (Table 6.2).

Information about the living arrangements of service recipients showed that the proportion of recipients living alone increased with age: 8.3% of those aged under 45, 14.6% of those aged 45–64, and 24.8% of those aged 65 and over. The proportion of recipients living with their families declined from 50.9% for those aged under 45 years to less than 25% for those aged 45–64 years and 65 years or more (Table 6.3).

Preliminary analysis of the Victorian component of the 1998 CSDA MDS found that, of all service attendances on the snapshot day, 13% were for people aged 60 years or over. The proportion of older service recipients was greatest for community access services, with 60% of recipients of Independent Living Training Services being aged 60 years and over; 69% of all recipients of this service category attended specialist agencies catering for people with disabilities associated with ageing, such as arthritis, visual and hearing impairments (Stevenson 1999).

**Table 6.1: CSDA services received on the snapshot day: primary disability type of recipients, by age, 1999**

Disability type	<45 years	45–64 years	65+ years	Total	Total 50+	Total 55+	Total 60+	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	Number <sup>(a)</sup>
Developmental	96.9	2.7	0.5	100.0	2.4	1.5	0.7	1,721
Intellectual	78.3	19.7	2.1	100.0	13.1	7.1	3.8	46,217
Learning	96.8	2.7	0.5	100.0	1.6	0.9	0.8	742
Autism	97.7	2.1	0.1	100.0	0.9	0.3	0.1	2,297
Physical	70.2	23.1	6.7	100.0	21.6	14.9	9.9	9,105
Acquired brain injury	68.4	28.2	3.4	100.0	21.5	13.1	6.6	2,365
Deafblind	69.3	9.4	21.3	100.0	25.4	24.2	21.3	244
Vision	32.7	15.0	52.2	100.0	62.8	58.5	55.4	1,650
Hearing	72.0	15.1	12.9	100.0	23.6	20.6	17.0	839
Speech	97.5	1.8	0.6	100.0	1.5	1.2	1.2	326
Psychiatric	68.6	28.4	3.0	100.0	19.9	11.3	5.6	5,377
Neurological	61.0	29.4	9.6	100.0	29.0	19.3	13.2	1,914
Not stated	83.0	15.5	1.5	100.0	12.9	8.1	4.4	271
<b>Total</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>73,068</b>

(a) The total excludes recipients whose age was not stated.

Source: AIHW analysis of the 1999 CSDA MDS collection. For detailed background information see AIHW 2000b.

**Table 6.2: CSDA services received on the snapshot day: distribution of primary disability type of recipients, by age, 1999**

Disability type	<45 years		45–64 years		65+ years		Total <sup>(a)</sup>
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Developmental	1,667	3.0	46	0.3	8	0.3	1,721
Intellectual	36,174	65.2	9,089	62.6	954	31.5	46,217
Learning	718	1.3	20	0.1	4	0.1	742
Autism	2,245	4.0	49	0.3	3	0.1	2,297
Physical	6,392	11.5	2,104	14.5	609	20.1	9,105
Acquired brain injury	1,617	2.9	667	4.6	81	2.7	2,365
Deafblind	169	0.3	23	0.2	52	1.7	244
Vision	540	1.0	248	1.7	862	28.4	1,650
Hearing	604	1.1	127	0.9	108	3.6	839
Speech	318	0.6	6	0.0	2	0.1	326
Psychiatric	3,686	6.6	1,529	10.5	162	5.3	5,377
Neurological	1,167	2.1	563	3.9	184	6.1	1,914
Not stated	225	0.4	42	0.3	4	0.1	271
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,522</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14,513</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,033</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>73,068</b>

(a) The total excludes recipients whose age was not stated.

Source: AIHW analysis of the 1999 CSDA MDS collection. For detailed background information see AIHW 2000b.

**Table 6.3: CSDA services received on the snapshot day: living arrangements of recipients, by age, 1999**

Living arrangement	<45 years		45–64 years		65+ years	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Lives alone	4,614	8.3	2,126	14.6	753	24.8
With family	28,261	50.9	3,452	23.8	750	24.7
Disability community accom	14,234	25.6	4,855	33.5	626	20.6
Other community accom	2,167	3.9	794	5.5	82	2.7
Nursing home	211	0.4	269	1.9	222	7.3
Hospital	215	0.4	143	1.0	58	1.9
Other institution	4,711	8.5	2,471	17.0	469	15.5
No usual residence	63	0.1	10	0.1	2	0.1
Not known	934	1.7	366	2.5	65	2.1
Not stated	112	0.2	27	0.2	6	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,522</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14,513</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,033</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: AIHW analysis of the 1999 CSDA MDS collection. For detailed background information see AIHW 2000b.

Table 6.4 presents data on the number of consumers in each age group who accessed different service types on the snapshot day. Counts of consumers are different from counts of service recipients—a statistical record linkage key is used to identify instances in which the same person accesses more than one service on the snapshot day, thus enabling an estimate of the number of individual consumers.

Accommodation support was the service category accessed by the greatest number of consumers on the snapshot day. Two-thirds of consumers of accommodation support services were aged under 45, 27.6% were aged between 45 and 64 and 4.4% were aged 65 or over. The proportion of consumers aged under 45 was highest for respite services (85.9%), and lowest for accommodation support services (67.9%), while the proportion of consumers in the age group 45–64 was highest for accommodation support services (27.6%), and lowest for respite services (10.1%). The proportion of consumers aged 65 or over was highest for community access services (7.5%).

There are people with early onset disability who are not known to disability service providers and administrators or, although known, may not have been in receipt of services for a long period. These people may need and request services as they begin to age. For instance, a preliminary analysis of new case referrals and re-referrals to Irrabena (Western Australia) of persons aged 45 or older indicated a 40% increase in numbers in this age group between 1985–87 and 1988–1990. The percentage of new cases and re-referrals accepted (active clients) also increased from 60% to 71% (Re 1991: 29).

**Table 6.4: Consumers of CSDA services, by service type by age, 1999<sup>(a)</sup>**

Service type	<45 years		45–64 years		65+ years		Total <sup>(b)</sup>
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Accommodation support	14,050	67.9	5,714	27.6	915	4.4	20,679
Community support	12,377	82.2	1,929	12.8	753	5.0	15,059
Community access	10,549	72.6	2,894	19.9	1,092	7.5	14,535
Respite	2,557	85.9	300	10.1	121	4.1	2,978
Employment	14,130	80.0	3,422	19.4	102	0.6	17,654
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,661</b>	<b>75.7</b>	<b>12,178</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>2,798</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>61,637</b>

(a) Numbers of consumers are estimates, made as closely as allowed by using a statistical linkage key (AIHW *Disability Data Briefing* Number 17, March 2000).

(b) The total excludes consumers whose age was not stated.

Source: AIHW analysis of the 1997 CSDA MDS collection. For detailed background information see AIHW 2000b.

## 6.2 Aged care services

The Home and Community Care Program (HACC) is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments. Under the program, services are provided to older people and to younger people with disabilities. Services include home nursing, delivered meals, home help, home maintenance, transport and shopping assistance, paramedical services and home- and centre-based respite care (AIHW 1999a: 185).

HACC services can supplement informal care for people living at home, and may help to maintain the caring relationship for as long as possible. In a report on the service needs of people with a disability who are ageing, Gatter (1996) stated that significant increases in demand for HACC services should be anticipated, to meet the needs of both people with disabilities who are ageing, and their ageing carers.

The average age of HACC clients increased slightly from 71.2 years in 1990 to 72.4 years in 1997 and the median age increased from 76.0 years to 77.0 years. During the same period, the proportion of HACC clients aged 80 years and over increased from 36.9% to 42.1%, while the proportion of clients aged 65–79 years decreased from 42.3% to 38.2% (Department of Health and Aged Care 1998: 62).<sup>5</sup>

In the 1997–98 HACC user characteristics survey data collection, 8% of clients surveyed were aged under 45 years, and 11% were aged between 45 and 64 years. Table 6.5 shows the percentage of clients who needed assistance in particular areas. In all areas except housekeeping, the proportion of clients needing assistance was highest for the under-45 age group, followed by the 45–64 age group. This indicates that, on average, younger clients needed support in a greater number of areas of activity. This, in turn, may suggest that people aged under 65 who access HACC services tend to have relatively severe disabilities. The rank order of areas in which assistance was most commonly needed was very similar for the three age groups, with housekeeping and personal care being the areas in which assistance was most commonly needed.

<sup>5</sup> As these statistics were derived from the HACC Service User Characteristics Survey data, the estimated proportions are subject to sampling errors.

**Table 6.5: HACC clients: areas in which assistance needed, by age (per cent), Australia, 1997–98**

Area in which assistance needed	Age		
	<45	45–64	65+
Mobility	48.9	39.6	33.5
Personal care	61.5	41.2	37.9
Housekeeping	81.0	75.8	81.9
Communication	43.9	20.8	11.1
Behaviour	43.4	23.5	18.1
Continence	37.1	19.9	16.4
<b>Total number</b>	<b>6,391</b>	<b>8,575</b>	<b>60,407</b>

*Source:* 1997–98 HACC user characteristics survey data collection.

Table 6.6 shows the percentage of clients in each age group who received particular types of services from HACC agencies. For people aged under 45 years, home-based respite, home help and transport services were the most commonly used services. For people aged between 45 and 64, home help, transport and home nursing services were most commonly used. People aged 65 and over had a similar pattern of service use to people aged between 45 and 64, but with higher usage of home help and home delivered meals services. In comparison with the two older age groups, people aged under 45 had a lower usage of home help, home nursing, home-delivered meals, and home maintenance/modification services, and higher usage of personal care and home-based respite.

It is interesting that the generally higher levels of need for assistance among clients aged under 45 are not reflected in higher levels of service usage in that age group. Some of these people may receive disability support services from non-HACC providers.

It is difficult to draw direct comparisons between the patterns of service use for CSDA service recipients and HACC service recipients because of the different service type classifications used. However, the HACC and CSDA data indicate a high rate of utilisation of respite services among people aged under 45, in comparison with older age groups.

**Table 6.6: HACC clients: services received from HACC agency, by age (per cent), Australia, 1997–98<sup>(a)</sup>**

Service type	Age		
	<45	45–64	65+
Home help	24.2	33.4	38.6
Personal care	12.8	9.8	9.1
Home nursing	13.4	20.0	19.2
Paramedical services	8.1	11.1	8.9
Home-based respite	27.0	6.0	4.5
Centre day care	10.3	13.3	12.9
Home-delivered meals	2.6	7.6	12.9
Meals delivered to centres	2.9	3.7	3.9
Home maintenance/modification	4.8	9.4	10.7
Transport services	18.1	20.7	19.6
Other services	24.9	19.0	14.5
<b>Total number</b>	<b>6,203</b>	<b>8,309</b>	<b>59,773</b>

(a) The Northern Territory did not provide data on service type.

Source: 1997–98 HACC user characteristics survey data collection.