

9 Referrals to specialists and allied health professionals

Referrals to medical specialists accounted for more than 60% of all referrals and admissions at encounters with both male and female patients. The most frequent referrals to specialists are outlined in Table 9.1. Except in the sex-specific area of referrals to obstetricians and gynaecologists, there were no significant differences found in the rate of referral to medical specialists between male and female patients.

Referrals for physiotherapy accounted for approximately 30% of all referrals to allied health professionals, and no significant difference was found between male and female encounters (results not presented).

Table 9.1: Most frequent referrals to specialists by patient sex

Professional to whom referred	Male (n = 44,308)				Female (n = 59,366)			
	Rank	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rank	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL
Medical specialist								
Orthopaedic surgeon	1	0.9	0.6	1.2	5	0.5	0.2	0.8
Surgeon	2	0.9	0.5	1.2	2	0.7	0.4	0.9
Ophthalmologist	3	0.7	0.3	1.1	3	0.6	0.4	0.9
ENT specialist	4	0.6	0.2	1.0	6	0.4	0.1	0.7
Dermatologist	5	0.6	0.2	1.0	4	0.6	0.3	0.8
**Gynaecologist	—	—	—	—	1	0.9	0.7	1.2
<i>Subtotal: specialist referrals (n, %)</i>	<i>1,621</i>	<i>48.9</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>2,196</i>	<i>51.9</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>
Total specialist referrals (n)	3,314	7.5	7.1	7.9	4,229	7.1	6.8	7.5
Total specialist and allied health referrals	5,171	11.7	11.1	12.2	6,436	10.8	10.4	11.3

** Indicates referrals that accounted for a rate of > 5% of total referrals for female patients, not accounted for in > 5% of total referrals for male patients.

Note: Encs—encounter; LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit.