

# 3 The sample

## 3.1 GP sample size

Data included in this analysis were recorded between April 1998 and March 2004 (inclusive), with a total of 6,019 GPs reporting data about 601,900 encounters.

### RRMA

Table 3.1(a) shows the number of GP participants in each of the 6 years of the sample and the distribution of the sample across RRMA categories.

- There were very few participants from areas in the remote zone in 1998–99.
- In 1999–00 there was a larger proportion of participants from Large Rural Centres than in other years.
- In 2000–01 there was a smaller proportion of participants from both Other Metropolitan Centres and Large Rural Centres.
- There was a smaller proportion of participants from Capital Cities in 2003–04.

### ASGC Remoteness

Table 3.1(b) shows the sample of GPs in each year of the BEACH data set, by ASGC Remoteness classification.

- There were very few participants from Very Remote Australia, and most Very Remote GPs were recruited in the later 2 years of the study.

## 3.2 The BEACH data set

Tables 3.2(a) and 3.2(b) summarise the sample size for each of the data elements within the 6-year BEACH data set by RRMA and ASGC Remoteness classifications.

**Table 3.1(a): GP sample size by BEACH data year by RRMA**

<b>Data year</b>		<b>Capital City</b>	<b>Other Metropolitan</b>	<b>Large Rural Centre</b>	<b>Small Rural Centre</b>	<b>Other Rural Area</b>	<b>Remote Centre</b>	<b>Other Remote Area</b>	<b>Australia</b>
1998–99	Number	671	74	61	60	108	5	5	984
	Row per cent	68.2	7.5	6.2	6.1	11.0	0.5	0.5	100.0
1999–00	Number	683	77	80	65	128	4	10	1,047
	Row per cent	65.2	7.4	7.6	6.2	12.2	0.4	1.0	100.0
2000–01	Number	680	69	55	56	122	10	7	999
	Row per cent	68.1	6.9	5.5	5.6	12.2	1.0	0.7	100.0
2001–02	Number	681	80	58	48	103	5	8	983
	Row per cent	69.3	8.1	5.9	4.9	10.5	0.5	0.8	100.0
2002–03	Number	652	86	51	78	121	6	14	1,008
	Row per cent	64.7	8.5	5.1	7.7	12.0	0.6	1.4	100.0
2003–04	Number	623	64	70	70	142	9	20	998
	Row per cent	62.4	6.4	7.0	7.0	14.2	0.9	2.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>3,990</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>6,019</b>
	<b>Row per cent</b>	<b>66.3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3.1(b): GP sample size by BEACH data year by ASGC Remoteness**

<b>Data year</b>		<b>Major Cities</b>	<b>Inner Regional Australia</b>	<b>Outer Regional Australia</b>	<b>Remote Australia</b>	<b>Very Remote Australia</b>	<b>Australia</b>
1998–99	Number	698	178	94	12	2	984
	Row per cent	70.9	18.1	9.6	1.2	0.2	100.0
1999–00	Number	719	213	101	12	2	1,047
	Row per cent	68.7	20.3	9.7	1.2	0.2	100.0
2000–01	Number	707	188	86	14	4	999
	Row per cent	70.8	18.8	8.6	1.4	0.4	100.0
2001–02	Number	703	169	99	9	3	983
	Row per cent	71.5	17.2	10.1	0.9	0.3	100.0
2002–03	Number	699	191	95	17	6	1,008
	Row per cent	69.4	19.0	9.4	1.7	0.6	100.0
2003–04	Number	654	218	100	16	10	998
	Row per cent	65.5	21.8	10.0	1.6	1.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>4,180</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6,019</b>
	<b>Row per cent</b>	<b>69.4</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3.2(a): The BEACH data set by RRMA**

Variable	Capital City	Other Metropolitan	Large Rural Centre	Small Rural Centre	Other Rural Area	Remote Centre	Other Remote Area	Australia
General practitioners	3,990	450	375	377	724	39	64	6,019
Encounters	399,000	45,000	37,500	37,700	72,400	3,900	6,400	601,900
Reasons for encounter	604,360	67,372	55,874	55,293	107,059	5,641	9,137	904,736
Problems managed	589,295	66,543	57,219	56,159	109,404	5,579	9,124	893,323
Medications	421,902	49,265	39,690	38,870	77,734	3,982	6,783	638,226
Prescribed	349,628	41,735	33,584	33,315	67,321	3,089	5,213	533,885
Advised OTC	40,334	3,703	2,947	2,427	4,506	220	359	54,496
GP-supplied	31,940	3,827	3,159	3,128	5,907	673	1,211	49,845
Other treatments	209,029	22,992	20,137	18,068	34,913	1,852	3,455	310,446
Clinical	154,650	16,126	13,818	12,439	23,377	1,353	2,385	224,148
Procedural	54,379	6,866	6,319	5,629	11,536	499	1,070	86,298
Referrals	47,059	5,607	4,272	4,596	8,856	545	849	71,784
Allied health service	11,107	1,286	1,106	1,281	2,410	158	200	17,548
Specialist	32,339	3,796	2,812	2,890	5,390	291	518	48,036
Emergency department	543	46	42	34	38	7	9	719
Hospital	2,104	358	222	255	800	75	95	3,909
Other referral	966	121	90	136	218	14	27	1,572
Imaging (1999–2004) <sup>+</sup>	26,180	3,504	2,696	2,906	5,624	350	488	41,748
Pathology (2000–2004) <sup>++</sup>	86,289	10,823	9,156	9,626	19,269	1,409	2,014	138,586

<sup>+</sup> Limited to April 1999 to March 2004 inclusive due to older imaging codes in year 1 (1998–99). For numbers of encounters for these years by RRMA refer to Table 5.3(a).

<sup>++</sup> Limited to April 2000 to March 2004 inclusive due to older pathology codes in years 1 and 2 (1998–2000). For numbers of encounters for these years by RRMA refer to Table 5.3(a).

Note: OTC—over-the-counter; GP—general practitioner.

**Table 3.2(b): The BEACH data set by ASGC Remoteness**

Variable	Major Cities	Inner Regional Australia	Outer Regional Australia	Remote Australia	Very Remote Australia	Australia
General practitioners	4,180	1,157	575	80	27	6,019
Encounters	418,000	115,700	57,500	8,000	2,700	601,900
Reasons for encounter	633,320	171,696	84,037	11,852	3,831	904,736
Problems managed	616,852	175,944	84,760	11,924	3,843	893,323
Medications	444,130	121,006	61,699	8,349	3,042	638,226
Prescribed	368,144	104,092	53,025	6,433	2,191	533,885
Advised OTC	41,732	8,153	3,936	483	192	54,496
GP-supplied	34,254	8,761	4,738	14,333	659	49,845
Other treatments	218,307	58,720	27,682	3,986	1,751	310,446
Clinical	160,912	40,280	18,955	2,697	1,304	224,148
Procedural	57,395	18,440	8,727	1,289	447	86,298
Referrals	49,483	13,996	6,824	1,085	396	71,784
Allied health service	11,527	3,822	1,809	306	84	17,548
Specialist	34,082	8,871	4,234	612	237	48,036
Emergency department	555	100	49	8	7	719
Hospital	2,321	837	565	138	48	3,909
Other referral	998	366	167	21	20	1,572
Imaging (1999–2004) <sup>+</sup>	27,918	8,774	4,266	605	185	41,748
Pathology (2000–2004) <sup>++</sup>	91,050	28,749	15,363	2,376	1,048	138,586

<sup>+</sup> Limited to April 1999 to March 2004 inclusive due to older imaging codes in year 1 (1998–99). For numbers of encounters for these years by ASGC refer to Table 5.3(b).

<sup>++</sup> Limited to April 2000 to March 2004 inclusive due to older pathology codes in years 1 and 2 (1998–2000). For numbers of encounters for these years by ASGC refer to Table 5.3(b).

Note: OTC—over-the-counter; GP—general practitioner.

## RRMA versus ASGC Remoteness concordance

Figure 3.1 shows the relationship between the RRMA and ASGC Remoteness classification in terms of the GP sample over the 6 years of the study.

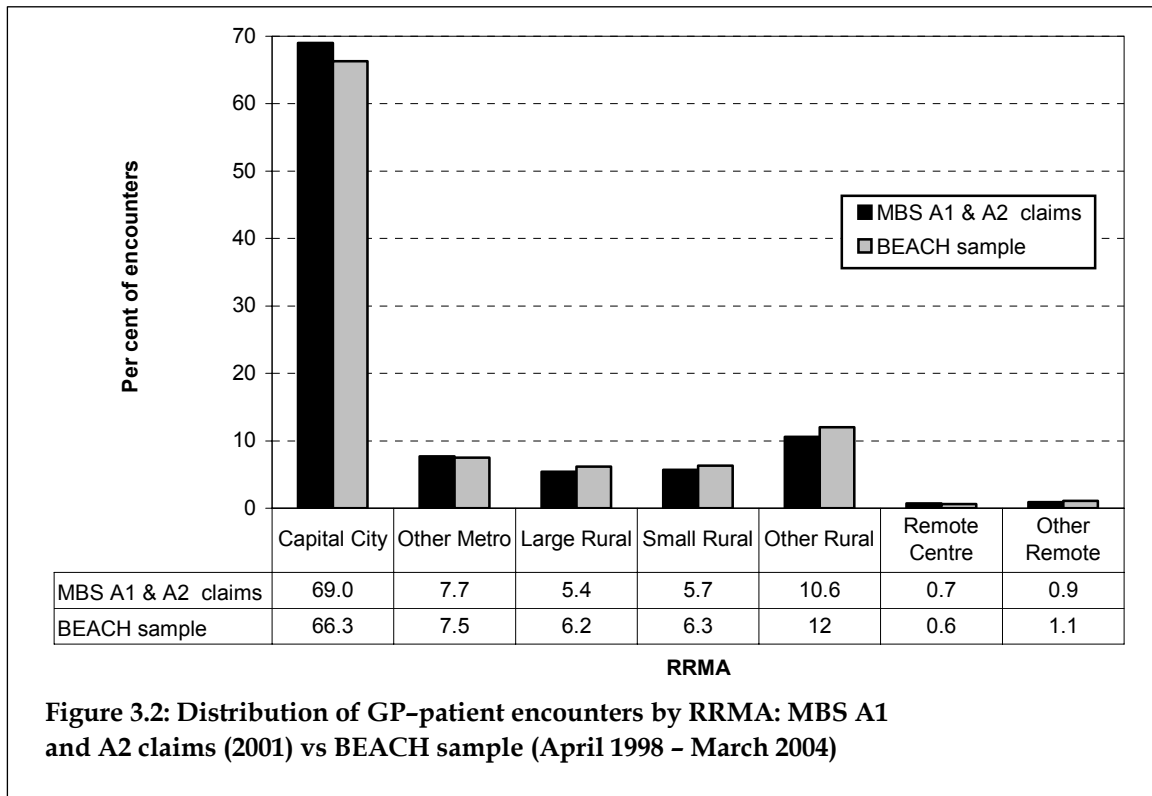
- Ninety-four per cent of the GP sample from the RRMA metropolitan zone (Capital City, Other Metropolitan) was classified into the ASGC category Major Cities, 4% into Inner Regional Australia and 1% into Outer Regional Australia.
- Sixty-six per cent of the GP sample from the RRMA rural zone (Large Rural, Small Rural and Other Rural) was classified into ASGC Inner Regional Australia, 32% into Outer Regional Australia and 2% into Remote Australia.
- Only 78% of the GP sample from the RRMA remote zone (Remote Centre, Other Remote Area) was classified into ASGC Remote or Very Remote Australia, the other 22% was classified into Outer Regional Australia.

RRMA categories	ASGC Remoteness categories					Total
	Major Cities	Inner Regional Australia	Outer Regional Australia	Remote Australia	Very Remote Australia	
Capital City	3,797	146	45	2	0	3,990
Other Metropolitan	380	36	34	0	0	450
Large Rural Centre	0	304	71	0	0	375
Small Rural Centre	0	284	85	8	0	377
Other Rural Area	3	387	317	16	1	724
Remote Centre	0	0	15	24	0	39
Other Remote Area	0	0	8	30	26	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,180</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6,019</b>

**Figure 3.1: Concordance of the GP sample by RRMA and ASGC Remoteness**

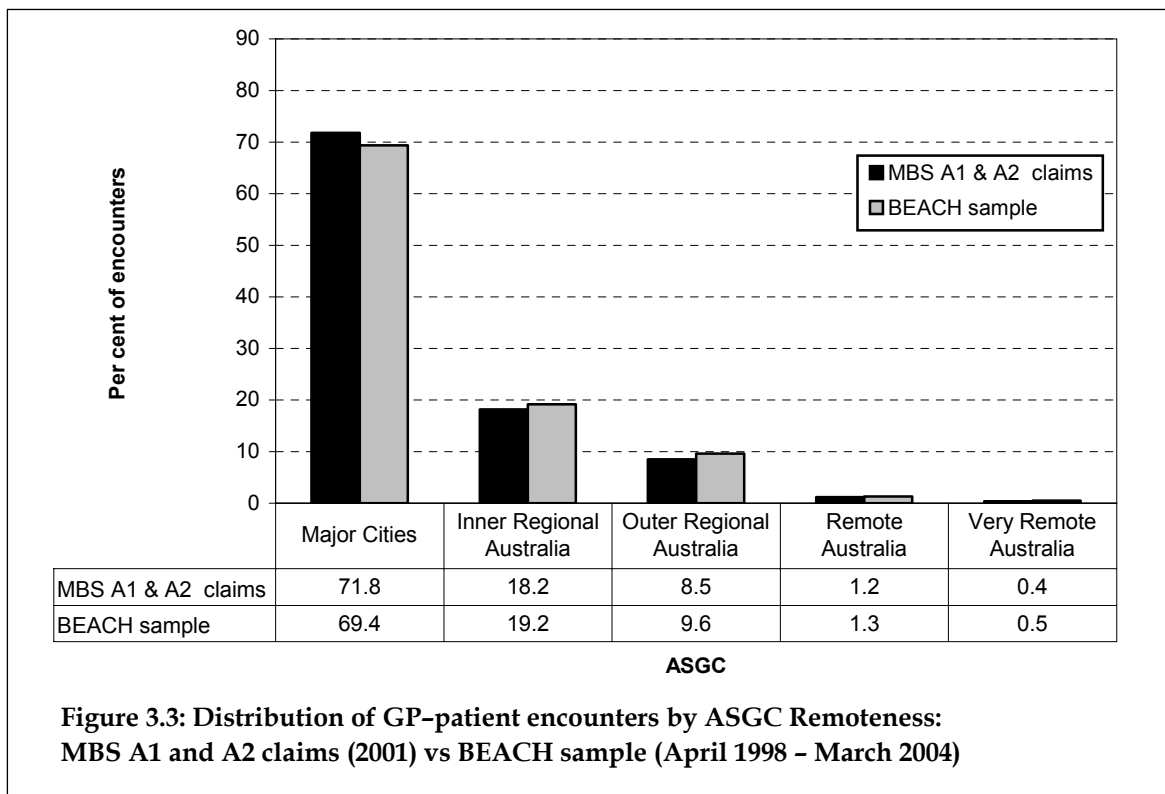
## BEACH versus MBS claims

Figures 3.2 and 3.3 show the distribution of MBS general practice claims (A1 and A2 items) and the BEACH sample of encounters by RRMA and ASGC. As these figures show, the BEACH program has sampled patient encounters well across all geographical regions, in proportion to the number of encounters that occur in each regional category.



Note: Metro—Metropolitan.

Source: Health Insurance Commission Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) A1 and A2 item claims April 2001 – March 2002.



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