

Glossary

Full-time equivalent (FTE) supply of practitioners

The number of full-time equivalent practitioners equals the number of practitioners multiplied by the average weekly hours worked, divided by the number of hours in a 'standard' full-time working week. Two alternatives are provided for a 'standard' working week: 35 hours (the workforce 'standard') and 45 hours (close to the 'standard' worked in 2000 by practitioners). While a 35-hour or 38-hour week is the standard in many industries, the 'typical' working week varies between occupations. Two 'standard' weeks are shown to more easily enable FTE comparisons across occupations.

The FTE number is converted to a rate per 100,000 population for comparison with the practitioner rate (number of practitioners per 100,000).

Geographic classification

There are several classifications used to differentiate between various regions in Australia. The two main ones used in health labour force planning are the Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) classification and the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC). The Remoteness Area Structure of the ASGC, produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, has been used in this publication to present regional data for medical practitioners. Prior to 2001, the RRMA classification was used. A brief explanation of the classifications is provided below (AIHW in press).

The RRMA classification allocates each Statistical Local Area (SLA) in capital cities and metropolitan centres with a population equal to or greater than 100,000 to the Metropolitan zone and to the RRMA classes of Capital city and Other metropolitan centre respectively. All other SLAs are allocated to either the Rural or Remote zone based on the SLA's score on an index of remoteness.

The Remoteness Area Structure of the ASGC is based on the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+) where the remoteness index value of a point is based on the physical road distance to the nearest town or service in each of five population size classes based on the 2001 Census of Population and Housing. These classes are:

- Major cities of Australia
- Inner regional Australia
- Outer regional Australia
- Remote Australia
- Very remote Australia.

Hospital non-specialist

Medical practitioners mainly employed in a salaried position in a hospital who do not have a recognised specialist qualification and who are not undertaking a training program to gain a recognised specialist qualification. They include resident medical officers (RMO) and interns, as well as career and other salaried hospital practitioners.

Intern

A resident medical practitioner working in a hospital, usually in the first year of service after graduation from medical school.

Occupation

A description of the job function within the field of medicine:

- clinician: a medical practitioner mainly involved in the diagnosis, care and treatment of individuals including recommending preventative action. In this publication, a medical practitioner who spends most hours engaged in clinical practice is classified as a clinician;
- administrator: a person mainly employed in medical administration;
- teacher/educator: a person teaching or training persons in medicine;
- researcher: a person primarily engaged in medical research;
- public health physician: a medical practitioner primarily engaged in identifying disease and illness, along with their treatments and any preventive measures that affect the health of the general public;
- occupational health physician: a medical practitioner primarily engaged in identifying disease and illness, along with their treatments and any preventive measures arising from particular occupations or industries; and
- other: a job function in medicine which is not one of the above – for example, industrial relations.

Primary care practitioner

A practitioner in general practice or in the primary care of patients. This category includes practitioners recognised by Medicare as VRGPs, RACGP Fellows, RACGP trainees (see definitions below) and other practitioners whose main practice is unreferral patient attendances.

RACGP

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

RACGP trainee

A medical practitioner under the supervision of an RACGP Fellow in a job recognised as leading to the RACGP Fellowship.

Resident medical officer (RMO)

A medical practitioner undergoing further training in a hospital after completing an internship, but who has not commenced a recognised general practice or specialist practice training program.

Specialist

A medical practitioner with a qualification awarded by, or which equates to that awarded by, the relevant specialist professional college in Australia to treat certain conditions.

Specialist-in-training

A medical practitioner who has been accepted by a specialist medical college into a training position supervised by a member of the college.

Vocationally registered general practitioner (VRGP)

A primary care practitioner who has been registered by the Health Insurance Commission as a recognised general practitioner.

References

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AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) (in press). Rural, regional and remote health: a guide to remoteness classifications and their application to 2001 Statistical Local Area boundaries. Canberra: AIHW.