

Part V Health and community services

Chapter 23 Health services

Chapter 24 Community services

23 Health services

The State and Territory Governments are responsible for providing most public sector health services in Australia. A portion of the funding for these services, however, comes from the Commonwealth Government. Local governments also provide some public health services. These public services include hospital services, community services and school-based services. The Commonwealth also provides partial funding for private health services, including primary care, through the Medicare national health insurance scheme (AIHW 1998).

This chapter provides an overview of health services using currently available national data. The first section deals with costs, and the second section provides information on health service use including hospital use and visits to private medical practitioners. Information on reasons for hospitalisation and reasons for visiting general practitioners is included in Chapter 6. Due to a lack of data (AIHW 1998), no information on quality of care is able to be included here.

As many health services are administered or overseen by the State and Territory Governments, information provided is on a States and Territories basis where possible.

Costs

This section provides information on the amount of direct expenditure on health care services provided for young people aged 15–24 years. These results are sourced from work undertaken at AIHW to estimate the proportion of total health system costs that is spent on particular diseases/injuries, as well as how these costs are distributed to different age groups (Mathers et al. 1998).

Table 23.1: Health system costs, 15–24 year olds, 1993–94 (\$ million)

	Males	Females	Total
<i>Hospital</i>			
Inpatient	359.4	552.3	911.7
Non-Inpatient	220.8	186.3	407.1
Nursing home	1.4	4.0	5.4
Medical services	202.1	369.8	571.9
Pharmaceuticals	133.2	229.8	363
Dental and allied	211.7	302.9	514.6
Other	70.0	103.4	173.4
Total	1,198.6	1,748.4	2,947.0
Per capita	864.0	1,309.0	1,083.0

Source: Mathers et al. 1988.

- In 1993–94, the total direct health system costs for young people aged 15–24 years was \$2,947 million. Of this, 59% was for young females. The per capita direct costs for this age group were \$1,083 in 1993–94.
- The largest component of these costs were for inpatient hospital services (31%), followed by medical services (19%) and dental/allied services (17%).
- These costs are low compared with other age groups. For males, 15–24 year olds had the second lowest per capita costs among the age groups examined, and young females had the third lowest (Mathers et al. 1998). Overall, 9.4% of total health expenditure in 1993–94 was for 15–24 year olds who accounted for 15.3% of the population (AIHW Population Database).

Use

This section includes information on the total number of health services provided to young people in two areas: admitted patients in hospitals and the number of services provided under Medicare.

Hospital use

In 1997–98, 8.4% of hospitalisations in Australia were for 15–24 year olds (AIHW 1999), whereas this age group was estimated at 14.3% of the total Australian population (AIHW Population Database).

Table 23.2: Hospitalisations for 15-24 year olds^(a), 1997–98

Sector and sex	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total ^(b)
<i>Public hospitals</i>									
Males	41,599	27,943	29,459	11,190	10,458	2,569	2,436	1,652	127,306
Females	69,650	51,273	46,758	21,280	21,431	4,892	3,147	4,146	222,577
<i>Total public</i>	<i>111,249</i>	<i>79,216</i>	<i>76,217</i>	<i>32,470</i>	<i>31,889</i>	<i>7,461</i>	<i>5,583</i>	<i>5,799</i>	349,884
<i>Private hospitals</i>									
Males	14,500	13,340	9,048	5,155	4,403	1,197	671	n.a.	48,314
Females	24,133	17,774	12,912	8,546	5,096	2,403	744	n.a.	71,608
<i>Total private</i>	<i>38,643</i>	<i>31,114</i>	<i>21,960</i>	<i>13,701</i>	<i>9,499</i>	<i>3,600</i>	<i>1,415</i>	<i>n.a.</i>	119,932
Total	149,892	110,330	98,177	46,171	41,388	11,061	6,998	5,799	469,816

(a) Excludes a small number of hospitalisations where sex was not reported.

(b) Doesn't include the private hospital in the Northern Territory.

n.a. not available

Source: AIHW 1999.

- In 1997–98, there were nearly 470,000 hospitalisations for young people aged 15–24 years in Australia. The majority (74%) of these were in the public sector.
- There were more hospitalisations for females than for males: 168 female hospitalisations for every 100 male hospitalisations.

Private medical services

These services are those provided to 15–24 year olds by general practitioners and specialist practitioners including those provided for private patients in hospitals for which reimbursement has been sought under the Medicare health insurance arrangements.

Table 23.3: Number of medicare services^(a), 1997–98

State/Territory	Males		Females		Total 15–24 years
	15–19 years	20–24 years	15–19 years	20–24 years	
New South Wales	1,136,999	1,279,017	1,802,086	2,672,821	6,890,923
Victoria	754,254	901,920	1,200,705	1,841,475	4,698,354
Queensland	631,875	658,026	1,089,670	1,498,141	3,877,712
Western Australia	231,488	255,444	363,282	500,704	1,350,918
South Australia	289,058	295,469	517,611	712,985	1,815,123
Tasmania	70,862	71,076	137,511	172,702	452,151
Australian Capital Territory	55,181	60,377	89,362	129,819	334,739
Northern Territory	17,201	20,995	34,863	59,289	132,348
Australia	3,186,918	3,542,324	5,235,090	7,587,936	19,552,268

(a) Processed in 1997–98.

Source: HIC 1999, Table 10.

- Medicare items include services provided both outside hospitals by medical practitioners, and services provided for private patients in hospitals (both public and private hospitals).
- In total, there were 19.6 million Medicare services for 15–24 year olds in 1997–98. Of these, 66% were for females.
- There were 45% more services provided for 20–24 year old females than 15–19 year old females. This is likely to reflect in part a higher fertility rate in the older age group.

Other health services

There are a number of other services provided to young people, although data on these services is limited. Family Planning of Australia clinics are one service frequently used by young women. In 1996–97, there were 72,303 visits made to these clinics by young women aged 25 years or less (FPA 1998). This accounted for 39% of visits to these clinics.

References

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