

13 Mental health workforce

13.1 Introduction

Information is presented in this chapter on the size and characteristics of three groups of specialised health professionals: psychiatrists, psychologists and mental health nurses.

Other health care professionals and workers who can provide mental health-related services, such as GPs, counsellors, social workers, general nurses, and unpaid carers are not covered since equivalent workforce data are not available.

Key concepts

Employed: In this report, an employed health professional is defined as one who:

- worked for a total of 1 hour or more, principally in the relevant profession, for pay, commission, payment in kind or profit; mainly or only in a particular state or territory during a specified period (that is, for psychiatrists, at the time of the survey; for psychologists enumerated in the AIHW survey, in the 4 weeks before the survey; for psychologists enumerated in the ABS survey, 1 week before the survey; and for nurses, in the week before the survey); or
- usually worked but was away on leave (with some pay) for less than 3 months, on strike or locked out, or rostered off.

This includes those involved in both clinical and non-clinical roles (such as education, research, and administration). 'Employed' people are also referred to as the 'workforce' in this chapter.

Full-time-equivalent (FTE): The number of 38-hour-week workloads worked by professionals. FTE is calculated by multiplying the number of employed professionals in a particular category by the average total hours worked by employed people in the category, and dividing by 38 (with 38 hours being considered, for this report, a standard working week). The FTE per 100,000 population figures provide a standardised measure of supply of the number of FTE professionals per relevant 100,000 population.

The standard of 38 hours was used in this report to provide comparable figures across the three professions covered. This differs from the approach used in previous reports of *Mental health services in Australia*, and with data on the medical, nursing and psychology labour force published by the AIHW (AIHW 2006f, 2006g, 2006h). FTE numbers presented in this chapter will, therefore, not be comparable with those published elsewhere.

Total hours: Total hours worked per week in the profession, including paid and unpaid work. Average total weekly hours are calculated only for those people who reported their hours (that is, those who did not report them are excluded).

It should be noted that the numbers presented in this chapter are estimates, based on responses to the AIHW and ABS labour force surveys, as outlined in Appendix 1. While the data are weighted to population benchmarks (which are based on professional registration numbers for the AIHW survey data and population estimates for the ABS survey data), not all possible non-response bias can be accounted for or measured. In addition, the survey questionnaires, while generally consistent in content and design, have been modified over time and can vary by jurisdiction. As a result, some care should be taken in interpreting changes in numbers and rates, and variations across states and territories.

13.2 Psychiatrists

Estimates on the number of psychiatrists (including psychiatrists-in-training) practising in Australia are available from the AIHW Medical Labour Force Survey. As described more fully in the description of the AIHW surveys in Appendix 1, the state and territory health departments, in consultation with the AIHW and in cooperation with the medical registration boards in each jurisdiction, conduct this survey of all registered medical practitioners on an annual basis.

Psychiatrists and psychiatrists-in-training 'self-identify' in the AIHW survey. Subsequent weighting of responses, using registration data as benchmarks, provides estimates of the total number of psychiatrists and psychiatrists-in-training at the state and territory and national levels.

For the purposes of this report, estimates of the psychiatrist workforce are based on those psychiatrists and psychiatrists-in-training who stated that they were *employed* as a medical practitioner at the time of the survey. This includes those working predominantly in non-clinical areas, such as research, education and administration, as well as clinicians. However, medical practitioners practising psychiatry as a second or third speciality are excluded, as are those who were on extended leave for more than 3 months or who were not employed (including those looking for work).

To enable meaningful comparisons in the supply of psychiatrists across Australia, over time and with the psychologist and nursing workforce data in this chapter, *full-time-equivalent (FTE)* figures are provided in addition to the number of psychiatrists. The FTE measures the number of 38-hour-week workloads worked by psychiatrists, regardless of how many worked full-time or part-time. Population standardised FTE figures (FTE per 100,000 population) are also reported as these take into account differences in the size of the relevant populations between regions and over time.

Characteristics of the psychiatrist workforce

Psychiatrists (including psychiatrists-in-training) made up 5.4% of all employed medical practitioners in Australia, with an estimated 3,151 working in Australia in 2004 (Table 13.1). Psychiatrists-in-training made up 23.5% (or 742) of these psychiatrists. The average age of psychiatrists in 2004 was 47.8 years, with female psychiatrists being younger, on average, than their male counterparts. In 2004, 64.1% of employed psychiatrists were male and almost one-quarter (23.5%) were psychiatrists-in-training.

Including clinical and non-clinical hours, psychiatrists worked an average of 40.9 *total hours* per week in 2004 (Table 13.2). The hours worked per week were, on average, lower for females than males (36.6 hours compared with 43.3 hours) and higher for psychiatrists-in-training than for those not in training (43.8 hours compared with 40.0 hours).

Table 13.1: Employed psychiatrists and psychiatrists-in-training, demographic characteristics, 2000 to 2004

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Distribution 2004 (%)	Average annual change (%)
Psychiatrists	2,149	2,097	2,367	2,395	2,409	76.5	2.9
Psychiatrists-in-training	575	632	587	631	742	23.5	6.6
Sex							
Males	1,875	1,797	1,946	1,972	2,020	64.1	1.9
Females	849	931	1,008	1,054	1,131	35.9	7.5
Age and sex							
<i>Males</i>							
Less than 35 years	266	233	227	196	274	13.6	0.7
35–44 years	503	469	450	505	469	23.2	–1.7
45–54 years	520	488	537	546	543	26.9	1.1
55–64 years	388	400	471	453	463	22.9	4.5
65 years and over	200	207	262	272	272	13.5	8.0
<i>Females</i>							
Less than 35 years	174	250	197	227	268	23.7	11.5
35–44 years	287	296	291	323	353	31.2	5.3
45–54 years	233	203	308	289	304	26.9	6.9
55–64 years	117	136	171	161	159	14.1	8.0
65 years and over	41	49	40	53	48	4.2	3.6
Average age (years)							
Males	48.9	49.8	50.7	50.5	49.9	..	0.5
Females	44.5	44.1	45.5	45.0	44.0	..	–0.3
Total	47.5	47.9	48.9	48.6	47.8	..	0.2
Total number	2,724	2,729	2,954	3,026	3,152	100.0	3.7
All employed medical practitioners	51,106	53,384	53,991	56,207	58,211	..	3.3

.. Not applicable.

Source: AIHW Medical Labour Force Surveys, 2000 to 2004.

Table 13.2: Employed psychiatrists and psychiatrists-in-training, average total hours worked per week, type and sex, 2000 to 2004

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Average annual change (%)
Psychiatrists	42.6	42.0	41.4	40.8	40.0	–1.6
Psychiatrists-in-training	45.1	45.1	44.0	45.4	43.8	–0.7
Sex						
Males	45.3	44.5	44.2	44.3	43.3	–1.1
Females	38.3	39.2	37.5	36.9	36.6	–1.1
Total	43.1	42.7	41.9	41.8	40.9	–1.3

Source: AIHW Medical Labour Force Surveys, 2000 to 2004.

Size and distribution of the psychiatrist workforce

Psychiatrists are not evenly spread across Australia either by state and territory or by geographic region. This is best illustrated by examining the ratio of FTE psychiatrists working in the state or territory (or region) to the population of that state or territory (or region). In 2004, there were 17 FTE psychiatrists per 100,000 population in Australia (Table 13.3). The rate ranged from 10 FTE per 100,000 in the Northern Territory to 22 per 100,000 in Victoria and South Australia. Queensland and Western Australia had relatively low rates of 12 FTE psychiatrists per 100,000 population (Table 13.3).

Table 13.3: Employed psychiatrists and psychiatrists-in-training, FTE and FTE per 100,000 population, states and territories, 2004

	Number of psychiatrists	Number of psychiatrists-in-training	Total number	Average total hours worked per week	FTE	FTE per 100,000 population ^(a)
NSW	752	274	1,026	41.8	1,129	17
Vic	782	225	1,008	40.6	1,076	22
Qld	361	78	439	41.1	474	12
WA	186	53	240	39.2	247	12
SA	214	95	310	41.1	335	22
Tas	61	5	66	39.0	68	14
ACT	41	6	47	35.1	44	14
NT	11	6	17	44.4	20	10
Total	2,409	742	3,152	40.9	3,392	17

(a) Crude rate based on the Australian estimated resident population as at 30 June 2004.

Source: AIHW Medical Labour Force Survey, 2004.

Table 13.4: Employed psychiatrists and psychiatrists-in-training, FTE and FTE per 100,000 population, by region^(a), 2004

Region ^(a)	Number	Average total hours worked per week	FTE	FTE per 100,000 population ^(b)
Major cities	2,758	41.1	2,983	22
Inner regional	247	39.9	259	6
Outer regional	54	40.4	57	3
Remote and Very remote	12	40.0	13	3
Not reported	81	37.8	80	..
Total	3,152	40.9	3,392	17

(a) Region is derived from the postcode of the respondent's main job and is classified according to the Remoteness Area Structure within the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ABS 2002a). This data should be treated with caution due to the large number of 'Not reported' values for region, relative to the number in 'Outer regional' and 'Remote and Very remote' regions.

(b) Crude rate based on the Australian estimated resident population as at 30 June 2004.

.. Not applicable.

Source: AIHW Medical Labour Force Survey, 2004.

In 2004, 90.1% of FTE psychiatrists (for whom region was reported) worked mainly in the Major cities, while less than half of a per cent worked mainly in Remote and Very remote regions (Table 13.4). In comparison, 66.3% of Australia's population resided in Major cities and 2.5% in Remote and Very remote regions. As a result, the number of FTE psychiatrists

per 100,000 population was higher in Major cities (22 FTE psychiatrists per 100,000 population) than in the other regions. In 2004, the Inner regional areas had 6 FTE psychiatrists per 100,000 population and both the Outer regional and Remote and Very remote regions had 3 FTE psychiatrists per 100,000 population.

Changes in the psychiatrist workforce

The size and characteristics of the psychiatrist workforce, including the hours worked, changed in the period from 2000 to 2004. Over that period, the number of employed psychiatrists (and psychiatrists-in-training) increased by 15.7% (which equates to an average annual increase of 3.7%) (Table 13.1). This is slightly higher than the 13.9% increase in the total number of all employed medical practitioners (AIHW 2006f).

Table 13.5: Employed psychiatrists and psychiatrists-in-training, FTE and FTE per 100,000 population, 2000 to 2004

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Average annual change (%)
FTE						
Psychiatrists	2,408	2,316	2,578	2,571	2,535	1.3
Psychiatrists-in-training	682	749	680	754	856	5.8
Total FTE	3,089	3,066	3,257	3,328	3,392	2.4
FTE per 100,000 population ^(a)	16	16	17	17	17	1.2

(a) Crude rate based on the Australian estimated resident population as at 30 June 2004.
Source: AIHW Medical Labour Force Survey, 2000 to 2004.

The supply of psychiatrists, measured as FTE and FTE per 100,000 population, also increased between 2000 and 2004 but to a lesser extent than the number of employed psychiatrists (Tables 13.5 and 13.6). The smaller increase in supply was due to a fall in the average hours worked by psychiatrists, from 43.1 hours in 2000 to 40.9 hours in 2004 (Table 13.2) combined with a 4.9% growth in the Australian population between 2000 and 2004. The supply of psychiatrists increased in some, but not all, jurisdictions in the period from 2000 to 2004 (Table 13.6).

The proportion of psychiatrists in the workforce who were female increased over the period from 31.2% in 2000 to 35.9% in 2004 (Table 13.1). Given that female psychiatrists are generally younger than their male counterparts (as noted earlier) and that females made up 56.0% of psychiatrists-in-training in 2004, this trend may continue. Over the same period, the average age for males increased from 48.9 to 49.9 years and the proportion of males aged over 54 years increased by 5.0 percentage points. In comparison, the average age for female psychiatrists declined by 1.1% and the proportion aged over 54 also declined slightly.

Female psychiatrists, whilst increasing their share of the psychiatry workforce, worked fewer hours per week on average than their male counterparts over the 5-year period (Table 13.2). In addition, both male and female psychiatrists were working somewhat fewer average hours in 2004 than they were in 2000, with an average annual drop in average total working hours of 1.1% for both sexes (Table 13.2).

Table 13.6: Employed psychiatrists and psychiatrists-in-training, FTE and FTE per 100,000 population, states and territories, 2000 to 2004

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
	FTE								
2000	973	902	457	308	311	49	56	32	3,089
2001	922	991	437	274	318	57	45	20	3,066
2002	1,094	1,047	434	233	302	63	56	29	3,257
2003	1,063	1,049	463	271	319	71	50	36	3,328
2004	1,129	1,076	474	247	335	68	44	20	3,392
Average annual change (%)	3.8	4.5	0.9	-5.3	1.8	8.3	-5.9	-11.1	2.4
	Rate (per 100,000 population)^(a)								
2000	15	19	13	16	21	10	18	17	16
2001	14	21	12	14	21	12	14	10	16
2002	16	22	12	12	20	13	18	15	17
2003	16	21	12	14	21	15	16	18	17
2004	17	22	12	12	22	14	14	10	17
Average annual change (%)	2.9	3.3	-1.2	-6.6	1.4	7.7	-6.6	-11.9	1.2

(a) Crude rate based on the Australian estimated resident population as at 30 June of the reference year.
Source: AIHW Medical Labour Force Survey, 2000 to 2004.

13.3 Psychologists

Two sources of information on the psychology workforce in Australia are presented in this chapter. One source is the quarterly ABS Labour Force Survey. As outlined in Appendix 1, this is a household-based sample survey that is intended to provide broad-level, national estimates of the Australian labour force. As psychologists are relatively small in number compared with all employed people, the estimates of employed psychologists are subject to high sampling variability at a state and territory level, and when age and sex are considered. As a result only national-level data are presented from this source.

The other source of workforce information is the survey of all registered psychologists in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. This survey was conducted in 2003 by the state and territory health departments with the cooperation of the registration boards and in consultation with the AIHW. This survey (referred to as the 'AIHW survey' to distinguish it from the ABS Labour Force Survey) was conducted as a census of registered psychologists within each participating jurisdiction. Responses to the survey were weighted to benchmark psychologist registration figures by the AIHW in order to provide estimates of the psychology workforce at the state and territory level for the five jurisdictions.

Data presented from both surveys include both clinical and non-clinical psychologists. It should be noted that estimates of clinical psychologists from these surveys are based on respondent's self-reported role in psychology. This differs from definitions of a 'clinical psychologist' based on the membership requirements of the Australian Psychological Society's College of Clinical Psychologists (APS 2006).

Data from the ABS survey have been used to describe the size of the psychology workforce in Australia since this data source provides more recent data, includes all states and territories and can provide a time series. Data from the AIHW survey supplements this information by providing a demographic profile of psychologists.

Characteristics of the psychologist workforce

In 2005, the ABS’s national estimate of the number of employed psychologists was 13,900. This figure differs from the AIHW estimates from the five states surveyed in 2003 (Table 13.7). While the AIHW estimates are derived from a census of all registered psychologists within each jurisdiction, the ABS estimates are derived from a sample of households across Australia (see Appendix 1).



Psychologists are predominantly female. The AIHW survey found that for the states surveyed in 2003, 70.8% of all employed psychologists and 71.9% of employed clinical psychologists were females (AIHW 2006h). The average age of psychologists in 2003 was 44.2 years. Female psychologists were younger than their male counterparts (with average ages of 43.2 years and 48.5 years, respectively). A higher proportion of female than male psychologists were aged 34 years and younger (29% and 12%, respectively), while a lower proportion of female than male psychologists were aged 55 years and over (Figure 13.1). In 2003, for the jurisdictions that participated in the AIHW survey, psychologists worked an average of 35.7 total hours per week (Table 13.7). On average, male psychologists worked longer hours than females (39.5 hours compared with 34.5 hours) and non-clinicians worked longer hours than clinicians (38.4 hours compared with 34.5 hours).

Table 13.7: Employed psychologists in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, main field of work and average total hours worked per week, 2003

	Number of employed psychologists			Average total hours worked per week		
	Males	Females	Total ^(b)	Males	Females	Total ^(b)
Clinical psychologist ^(a)	2,529	6,486	9,694	38.3	33.3	34.5
Non-clinical psychologist	1,298	2,801	4,379	41.8	37.4	38.4
Total	3,828	9,288	14,073	39.5	34.5	35.7

(a) Psychologist's self-reported main field of work.

(b) Includes psychologists whose sex was not reported. Queensland did not report on the sex of respondents.

Source: AIHW Psychology Labour Force Survey, 2004.

Further details on the characteristics of employed psychologists for the five jurisdictions that participated in the AIHW survey in 2003 are available from *Psychology labour force 2003* (AIHW 2006h).

Size of the psychologist workforce

Estimates derived from the ABS Labour Force Survey indicate that there was growth in both the absolute number of employed psychologists and the number of employed FTE psychologists between 2000 and 2005 (Table 13.8). The number increased, on average, 8.5% per year over the period, from 9,300 psychologists in 2000 to 13,900 in 2005. The average hours worked by psychologists, however, declined from 35 hours in 2000 to 32 hours in 2005; this led to a slightly lower increase in FTE psychologists (6.9% per year, on average) than in numbers. FTE psychologists per 100,000 population also increased (by 5.7% per year, on average) from 44 in 2000 to 58 in 2005.

Table 13.8: Employed psychologists, average total hours worked per week, FTE and FTE per 100,000 population, 2000 to 2005

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average annual change (%)
Number	9,300	11,100	12,300	13,100	12,700	13,900	8.5
Average total hours worked per week	35	33	31	31	33	32	-1.5
FTE	8,500	9,500	10,200	10,800	11,000	11,900	6.9
FTE per 100,000 ^(a)	44	49	52	55	55	58	5.7

(a) Crude rate based on the Australian estimated resident population as at 30 June of the reference year.

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey, 2000 to 2005.

13.4 Mental health nurses

Mental health nurses are another group of professionals who can provide specialist health-related care to people with mental health problems. In this report, the definition of 'mental health nursing' is based on the principal area of nursing activity, rather than the qualification of the nurse. An employed registered or enrolled nurse whose principal area of activity in their main nursing job is self-identified as 'mental health nursing' is considered to be a 'mental health nurse'. Nurses working principally with alcohol and other substance use are not included.

Information on the mental health nursing workforce is derived from responses to the AIHW Nursing and Midwifery Labour Force Survey, with these responses weighted to available nursing registration data from each state and territory. As described in Appendix 1, this is a survey of all enrolled and registered nurses in Australia conducted by the state and territory departments of health, in conjunction with nursing registration boards and the AIHW. The survey collects information on the demographic characteristics of nurses, the hours they worked, their qualifications, their place of work and their main area of nursing activity in the week before the survey.

In this section of the chapter, some comparisons are made between employed mental health nurses and all employed nurses. Detailed data on the total nursing labour force are available from *Nursing and midwifery labour force 2004* (AIHW 2006g).

Characteristics of the mental health nursing workforce

Out of a total of 249,458 nurses employed in Australia in 2004, an estimated 14,123 (5.7%) worked principally in the area of mental health nursing (Table 13.9). Of these, 29.3% reported that they had completed a post-registration or post-enrolment course of more than 6 months' duration in mental health.

Nurses working in mental health are less likely to be a registered nurse, slightly older on average, and much more likely to be male than nurses in the general workforce (AIHW 2006g).

The minimum educational requirement for a newly registered nurse is a 3-year degree or equivalent. Enrolled nurses, whose minimum educational requirement is a 1-year diploma or equivalent, usually work under the direction of registered nurses to provide basic care (AIHW 2006g). In 2004, 73.7% of nurses working principally in mental health and 80.4% of all employed nurses in Australia were registered nurses, with the remainder being enrolled nurses.

The average age of employed mental health nurses in 2004 was 44.9 years, which is slightly older than the 43.3 years for all employed nurses (Table 13.9). Female nurses working in mental health nursing were younger, on average, than their male counterparts (44.3 years compared with 46.2 years).

In general, nursing is a very female-dominated profession, with 8.7% of all nurses employed in Australia in 2004 being male. In contrast, male nurses made up over a third (33.7%) of employed mental health nurses in 2004 (Table 13.9).

Mental health nurses worked an average of 36.9 total hours per week in 2004 (Table 13.10). The hours worked per week were, on average, lower for females than males (35.8 hours compared with 39.2 hours) and higher for registered nurses than for enrolled nurses (37.3 hours compared with 35.9 hours).

Table 13.9: Employed mental health nurses, demographic characteristics, 1999 to 2004

	1999	2001	2003	2004	Distribution 2004 (%)	Change 2003–2004 (%)	Average annual change 1999–2004 (%)
Registered nurses	10,848	11,353	10,315	10,408	73.7	0.9	–4.1
Enrolled nurses	3,649	2,002	3,463	3,715	26.3	7.3	1.8
Sex							
Males	4,120	4,353	4,469	4,766	33.7	6.6	15.7
Females	10,377	9,002	9,308	9,357	66.3	0.5	–9.8
Age and sex							
<i>Males</i>							
Less than 25 years	68	52	72	53	1.1	–25.9	–21.5
25–34 years	605	611	533	563	11.8	5.7	–6.9
35–44 years	1,544	1,396	1,255	1,189	25.0	–5.2	–23.0
45–54 years	1,463	1,738	1,875	2,072	43.5	10.5	41.6
55–64 years	398	508	668	805	16.9	20.5	102.1
65 years and over	42	48	67	83	1.7	24.9	99.7
<i>Females</i>							
Less than 25 years	284	222	285	355	3.8	24.3	24.8
25–34 years	1,874	1,539	1,483	1,475	15.8	–0.5	–21.3
35–44 years	3,886	2,998	2,767	2,483	26.5	–10.3	–36.1
45–54 years	3,282	3,139	3,402	3,535	37.8	3.9	7.7
55–64 years	941	1,005	1,214	1,341	14.3	10.4	42.5
65 years and over	110	100	157	169	1.8	7.5	53.4
Average age (years)							
Males	43.6	44.9	45.6	46.2	..	1.3	6.0
Females	42.4	43.5	44.2	44.3	..	0.3	4.4
Total	42.8	43.9	44.6	44.9	..	0.7	5.1
Total number	14,497	13,355	13,777	14,123	100.0	2.5	–2.6
All employed nurses	224,822	228,230	236,645	249,458	..	5.4	11.0

.. Not applicable.

Source: AIHW Nursing and Midwifery Labour Force Surveys, 1999 to 2004.

Table 13.10: Employed mental health nurses, average total hours worked per week, by sex, 1999 to 2004

	1999	2001	2003	2004	Change 2003–2004 (%)	Average annual change 1999–2004 (%)
Registered nurses	34.8	34.9	37.0	37.3	0.8	7.2
Enrolled nurses	31.8	34.0	36.0	35.9	–0.3	12.9
Sex						
Males	37.2	37.2	39.1	39.2	0.3	5.4
Females	32.9	33.6	35.6	35.8	0.6	8.8
Total	34.1	34.7	36.7	36.9	0.5	8.2

Source: AIHW Nursing and Midwifery Labour Force Surveys, 1999 to 2004.

Size and distribution of the mental health nursing workforce

As with psychiatrists, nurses working in mental health areas are not evenly distributed across the states and territories or the regions of Australia. Their distribution also does not mirror that of the distribution of all employed nurses in Australia (AIHW 2006g). In 2004, there were 68 FTE mental health nurses per 100,000 population in Australia (Tables 13.11 and 13.12). The supply of mental health nurses ranged from 80 FTE per 100,000 population in Victoria to 38 FTE per 100,000 population in the Northern Territory.

Table 13.11: Employed mental health nurses, average total hours worked per week and FTE, states and territories, 2004

	Mental health nurses				All nurses	
	Number	Average total hours worked per week	FTE	FTE per 100,000 population ^(a)	FTE per 100,000 population ^(a)	
NSW	4,394	37.5	4,336	65	1,099	
Vic	4,095	36.7	3,955	80	1,249	
Qld	2,473	36.4	2,369	61	998	
WA ^(b)	1,494	37.0	1,455	74	1,325	
SA	1,122	36.3	1,072	70	1,374	
Tas	301	37.3	295	61	1,212	
ACT	170	37.0	165	51	1,173	
NT ^(b)	74	39.5	77	38	1,262	
Total	14,123	36.9	13,714	68	1,164	

(a) Crude rate based on the Australian estimated resident population as at 30 June 2004.

(b) Due to low response rates (38% for WA and 35% for the NT) the data for these jurisdictions should be treated with some caution.

Source: AIHW Nursing and Midwifery Labour Force Survey 2004.

Information on the supply of mental health nurses by geographic region (as derived from the location of the respondent's main nursing job as reported in the survey) is provided in Table 13.12. The figures are underestimates for each individual region as nurses who did not provide information on the location of their main job could not be allocated to a region. The figure for total FTE per 100,000 population is calculated based on all employed nurses.

For those nurses who reported information on the location of their main job, the number of FTE mental health nurses per 100,000 population was highest in the Inner regional areas of Australia (74 FTE per 100,000 population in 2004) and in Major cities (69 FTE per 100,000). Remote and Very remote regions had a lower rate of 20 FTE per 100,000 population in 2004.

Table 13.12: Employed mental health nurses, average total hours worked per week and FTE, by region^(a), 2004

Region ^(a)	Mental health nurses				All nurses	
	Number	Average total hours worked per week	FTE	FTE per 100,000 population ^(b)	FTE per 100,000 population ^(b)	
Major cities	9,441	37.2	9,242	69	1,122	
Inner regional	3,245	36.4	3,109	74	1,102	
Outer regional	777	37.9	775	38	1,090	
Remote and Very remote	98	38.3	99	20	1,164	
Not reported	562	34.0	502	
Total	14,123	36.9	13,714	68	1,164	

(a) Region is derived from the postcode of the respondent's main job and is classified according to the Remoteness Area Structure within the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ABS 2002a). This data should be treated with caution due to the large number of 'Not reported' values for region, relative to the number in 'Outer regional' and 'Remote and Very remote' regions.

(b) Crude rate based on the Australian estimated resident population as at 30 June 2004.

.. Not applicable.

Source: AIHW Nursing and Midwifery Labour Force Survey 2004.

Changes in the mental health nursing workforce

An overall 11.0% increase in the total number of employed nurses in Australia between 1999 and 2004 was not reflected in the number working in mental health nursing, which declined by 2.6% over the same period (Table 13.9). While the total number of employed nurses increased by 5.4% between 2003 and 2004, the number of mental health nurses increased by 2.5% (Table 13.9).

The decline in the number of mental health nurses between 1999 and 2004 was offset by an increase of 8.2% in the average total weekly hours worked, from 34.1 to 36.9 hours per week (Table 13.10). As a result, the number of FTE mental health nurses increased from 13,010 in 1999 to 13,714 in 2004 (an increase of 5.4%). The growth in FTE was greater for enrolled nurses (14.9%) than for registered nurses (2.8%) (Table 13.13). The number of FTE mental health nurses per 100,000 population was similar in 2004 (68) to that in 1999 (69).

Table 13.13: Employed mental health nurses, FTE, 1999 to 2004

	1999	2001	2003	2004	Change 2003–2004 (%)	Change 1999–2004 (%)
FTE						
Registered nurses	9,935	10,427	10,043	10,216	1.7	2.8
Enrolled nurses	3,054	1,791	3,281	3,510	7.0	14.9
Total FTE	13,010	12,195	13,306	13,714	3.1	5.4
FTE per 100,000 population ^(a)	69	63	67	68	1.9	-0.7

(a) Crude rate based on the Australian estimated resident population as at 30 June of the reference year.

Source: AIHW Nursing and Midwifery Labour Force Survey 1999 to 2004.

Table 13.14: Employed mental health nurses, FTE, states and territories, 1999 to 2004

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA ^(a)	SA	Tas	ACT	NT ^(a)	Total
FTE									
1999	4,374	3,240	2,382	1,289	1,187	265	161	115	13,010
2001	4,257	3,475	1,831	950	1,115	282	212	93	12,195
2003	4,846	3,659	2,254	916	1,098	320	167	54	13,306
2004	4,336	3,955	2,369	1,455	1,072	295	166	77	13,714
Change 2003–2004 (%)	-10.5	8.1	5.1	58.8	-2.4	-7.7	-0.6	42.8	3.1
Change 1999–2004 (%)	-0.9	22.1	-0.6	12.9	-9.7	11.4	3.3	-32.9	5.4
FTE per 100,000 population^(b)									
1999	68	69	68	70	79	56	52	59	69
2001	65	72	50	50	74	60	66	47	63
2003	73	75	59	47	72	67	52	27	67
2004	65	80	61	74	70	61	51	38	68
Change 2003–2004 (%)	-11.0	6.9	2.7	56.5	-2.8	-8.7	-0.8	41.9	1.9
Change 1999–2004 (%)	-5.4	15.3	-10.4	5.6	-11.8	8.9	-0.5	-35.3	-0.7

(a) Due to low response rates (19% in 2003 and 38% in 2004 for WA and 31% and 35%, respectively, for the NT) the data for these jurisdictions should be treated with some caution.

(b) Crude rate based on the Australian estimated resident population as at 30 June of the reference year.

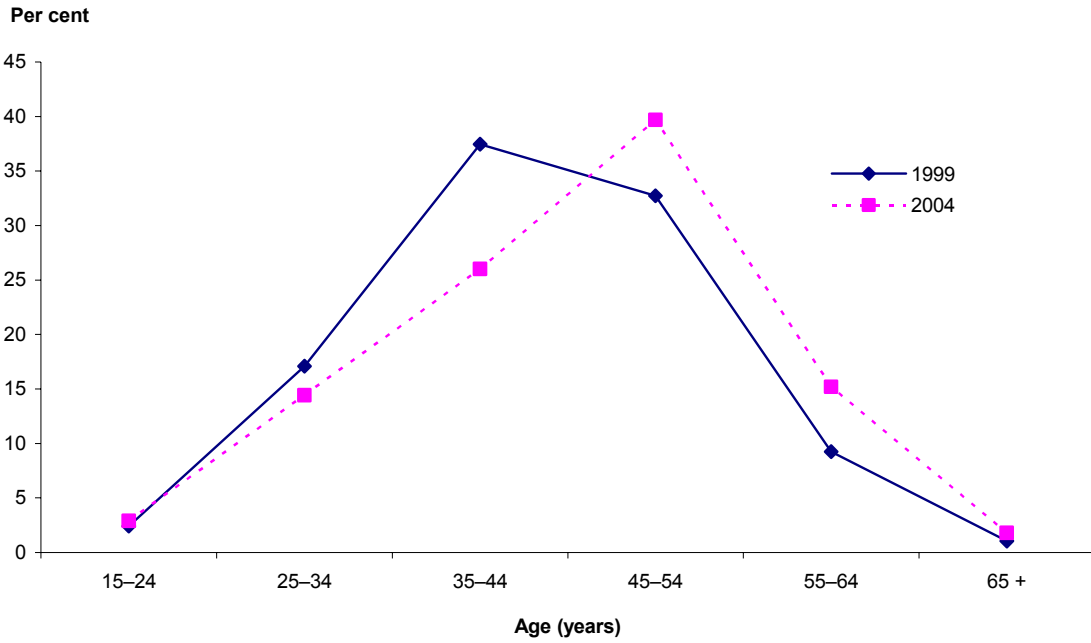
Source: AIHW Nursing and Midwifery Labour Force Surveys, 1999 to 2004.

There is considerable variability in the state and territory estimates of FTE mental health nurses and FTE per 100,000 population in the period from 1999 to 2004 (Table 13.14). As outlined in Appendix 1, at least part of this variation may be due to changes in the survey methodology and variations in response rates, and thus jurisdictional differences should be interpreted with caution.

The demographic characteristics of the mental health nursing workforce are also changing over time. The proportion of males in this workforce increased from 28.4% in 1999 to 33.7% in 2004 (Table 13.9). The proportion of mental health nurses who were registered nurses (rather than enrolled nurses) declined slightly over the period, from 74.8% in 1999 to 73.7% in 2004 (Table 13.9).

As with the general nursing population, the mental health nursing workforce is ageing, with the average age increasing from 42.8 in 1999 to 44.9 years in 2004 (Table 13.9 and Figure 13.2). The proportion of mental health nurses aged 55 years and over also increased, from 10.3% in 1999 to 17.0% in 2004.

As noted above, the average hours worked by nurses in mental health nursing increased in the period from 1999 to 2004 (Table 13.10). While this is the case for both males and females, the increase has been higher for females (8.8%) than for males (5.4%).



Source: AIHW Nursing and Midwifery Labour Force Survey, 1999 and 2004.

Figure 13.2: Employed mental health nurses, by age, 1999 and 2004