

10 Other treatments

The survey form allowed GPs to record up to two other treatments for each problem managed at the encounter. Other treatments included all clinical and procedural treatments provided. These groups are defined in Appendix 4, <www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/subject/19>. Patient observations that were regarded as routine clinical measurements or observations, such as measurements of blood pressure and physical examinations, were not included if undertaken by the GP, but were included if undertaken by the practice nurse.

The GPs were also asked to indicate whether the treatment was done by a practice nurse (tick box). In this chapter all 'other treatments' are reported, irrespective of whether they were done by the GP or by the practice nurse. That is, the non-pharmacological management provided in general practice patient encounters is described, rather than management provided specifically by the GP. Treatments provided by the practice nurse are reported separately in Chapter 13.

Data on other treatments are reported for each year from 1998–99 to 2007–08 in the 10 year report *General practice activity in Australia 1998–99 to 2007–08: 10 year data tables* available from <www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/subject/19> (AIHW catalogue number GEP 23).

10.1 Number of other treatments

Other treatments were commonly provided in the management of patient morbidity. In 2007–08, a total of 49,130 other treatments were recorded, at a rate of 51.2 per 100 encounters. Two-thirds of these were clinical treatments (Table 10.1).

Table 10.1: Summary of other treatments

	Number	Rate per 100 encs (n = 95,898)	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rate per 100 problems (n = 145,078)	95% LCL	95% UCL
Other treatments	49,130	51.2	48.9	53.6	33.9	32.4	35.3
Clinical treatments	33,121	34.5	32.5	36.5	22.8	21.6	24.1
Procedural treatments	16,009	16.7	15.9	17.5	11.0	10.5	11.6
At least one other treatment	38,222	39.9	38.3	41.4	—	—	—

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

Table 10.2 shows the proportion of problems for which at least one other treatment was given.

- In nearly two-thirds of the problems that were managed with another treatment, no concurrent pharmacological treatment was provided.
- Nearly one in five problems were managed with a clinical treatment. Of these, nearly two-thirds were not provided with medication for that problem.
- A procedure was undertaken in the management of 10.3% of problems, with no pharmacological management given for two-thirds of these problems.

Table 10.2: Relationship between other treatments and pharmacological treatments

Co-management of problems with other treatments	Number of problems	Per cent within class	Per cent of problems (n = 145,078)	95% LCL	95% UCL
At least one other treatment	43,877	100.0	30.2	29.1	31.4
Without pharmacological treatment	27,798	64.6	19.2	18.4	19.9
At least one clinical treatment	29,937	100.0	20.6	19.6	21.7
Without pharmacological treatment	18,563	63.3	12.8	12.1	13.5
At least one procedural treatment	14,974	100.0	10.3	9.8	10.8
Without pharmacological treatment	9,812	66.5	6.8	6.4	7.1

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

10.2 Clinical treatments

Clinical treatments include general and specific advice, counselling or education, family planning, and administrative processes. During 2007–08, there were 33,121 clinical treatments recorded, at a rate of 34.5 per 100 encounters, or 22.8 per 100 problems managed (Table 10.1).

Most frequent clinical treatments

Table 10.3 lists the most common clinical treatments provided. Each treatment is expressed as a percentage of all other treatments, and as a rate per 100 encounters with 95% confidence limits.

General advice and education was the most frequently recorded clinical treatment, at a rate of 7.2 per 100 encounters. The most common preventive activity was counselling about nutrition and weight (4.2 per 100 encounters). There were a number of other groups that also could be considered preventive in nature, including counselling/advice for exercise, smoking, prevention, lifestyle and alcohol. Together, the abovementioned preventive treatments accounted for 14.4% of all clinical treatments, provided at a rate of 7.4 per 100 encounters. Psychological counselling was provided at a rate of 3.2 per 100 encounter, and advice and education about medication was given at a rate of 2.0 per 100 encounters (Table 10.3).

Table 10.3: Most frequent clinical treatments

Clinical treatment	Number	Per cent of other treatments (n = 49,130)	Rate per 100 encounters (n = 95,898)	95% LCL	95% UCL
Advice/education*	6,872	14.0	7.2	6.3	8.1
Counselling—problem*	4,149	8.5	4.3	3.8	4.9
Counselling/advice—nutrition/weight*	4,041	8.2	4.2	3.8	4.6
Advice/education—treatment*	3,310	6.7	3.5	3.1	3.8
Counselling—psychological*	3,065	6.2	3.2	2.9	3.4
Advice/education—medication*	1,944	4.0	2.0	1.8	2.2
Sickness certificate*	1,622	3.3	1.7	1.4	2.0
Other admin/document*	1,463	3.0	1.5	1.4	1.7
Reassurance, support	1,322	2.7	1.4	1.2	1.6
Counselling/advice—exercise*	1,245	2.5	1.3	1.1	1.5
Counselling/advice—smoking*	581	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.7
Counselling/advice—prevention*	501	1.0	0.5	0.4	0.6
Counselling/advice—lifestyle*	413	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.5
Counselling/advice—alcohol*	359	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.4
Family planning*	334	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.4
Observe/wait*	329	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4
Counselling/advice—health/body*	288	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>31,840</i>	<i>64.8</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>
Total clinical treatments	33,121	67.4	34.5	32.5	36.5

* Includes multiple ICPC-2 or ICPC-2 PLUS codes (see Appendix 4, <www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/subject/19>).

Note: Includes the most common clinical treatments, those accounting for > 0.5% of all other treatments. LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit.

Problems managed with clinical treatments

Table 10.4 lists the top 10 problems managed with a clinical treatment. It also shows the extent to which a clinical treatment was used for that problem and the relationship between the use of a clinical treatment and a medication for individual problems.

- Clinical treatments were provided in the management of 29,937 problems (20.6% of all problems).
- The 10 most common problems managed with a clinical treatment accounted for almost one-third of all problems for which a clinical treatment was provided.
- Depression and upper respiratory tract infections were the most frequently managed problems with a clinical treatment, each at a rate of 1.8 per 100 encounters.
- Half the contacts with depression involving management with a clinical treatment did not result in a medication being prescribed/advised/supplied.
- Twenty-nine per cent of upper respiratory tract infection contacts involved a clinical treatment, with nearly 60% of these being managed without medication.
- One in ten hypertension contacts resulted in a clinical treatment, with 45% of these being managed without medication.

- A clinical treatment was used at one-quarter of diabetes contacts, and approximately two-thirds of these did not involve medication.

Table 10.4: The 10 most common problems managed with a clinical treatment

Problem managed	Number	Per cent of problems with clinical treatment	Rate per 100 encounters ^(a) (n = 95,898)	95% LCL	95% UCL	Per cent of this problem ^(b)	Per cent of treated problems no meds ^(c)
Upper respiratory tract infection	1,729	5.8	1.8	1.6	2.0	29.1	58.9
Depression*	1,720	5.8	1.8	1.6	1.9	45.0	50.9
Hypertension*	1,168	3.9	1.2	1.1	1.4	12.3	45.1
Lipid disorders*	915	3.1	1.0	0.9	1.1	25.8	59.9
Diabetes*	885	3.0	0.9	0.8	1.0	23.8	64.1
Anxiety*	753	2.5	0.8	0.7	0.9	44.5	60.5
Gastroenteritis*	761	2.5	0.8	0.7	0.9	48.1	61.4
Test results*	598	2.0	0.6	0.5	0.7	35.6	93.4
Back complaint*	521	1.7	0.5	0.5	0.6	19.9	52.4
Viral disease, other/NOS	464	1.6	0.5	0.4	0.6	39.7	69.5
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>9,515</i>	<i>31.8</i>	—	—	—	—	—
Total problems with clinical treatments	29,937	100.0	31.2	29.5	33.0	—	—

(a) Rate of provision of clinical treatment for selected problem per 100 total encounters.

(b) Percentage of contacts with this problem that generated at least one clinical treatment.

(c) The numerator is the number of cases of this problem that generated at least one clinical treatment but generated no medications. The denominator is the total number of contacts for this problem that generated at least one clinical treatment (with or without medications).

* Includes multiple ICPC-2 or ICPC-2 PLUS codes (see Appendix 4, <www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/subject/19>).

Note: LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit; meds—medications; NOS—not otherwise specified.

10.3 Procedural treatments

Procedural treatments included therapeutic actions and diagnostic procedures undertaken at the encounter. Injections for immunisations/vaccinations are not counted here as procedures, as these have already been reported as medications (see Chapter 9). There were 16,009 procedural treatments provided in these general practice encounters during 2007–08 (Table 10.1).

Most frequent procedures

Table 10.5 lists the most common procedural treatments provided by GPs. Each treatment is expressed as a percentage of all other treatments, and as a rate per 100 encounters with 95% confidence limits. These results only report investigations actually undertaken at the encounter. They do not include investigations that were ordered by the GP from an external provider. A summary of all investigations (both undertaken and ordered) is provided in Table 12.6.

There were 16,009 procedures recorded at a rate of 16.7 per 100 encounters. The most frequently recorded group of procedures in 2007–08 were excisions, at a rate of 3.4 per 100 encounters, and accounting for 6.7% of all other treatments. Other procedural treatments

that were frequently recorded included local injections (2.3 per 100 encounters), dressings (2.2 per 100 encounters) and physical medicine/rehabilitation (1.3 per 100 encounters) (Table 10.5).

Table 10.5: Most frequent procedural treatments

Procedural treatment	Number	Per cent of other treatments (n = 49,130)	Rate per 100 encounters (n = 95,898)	95% LCL	95% UCL
Excision/removal tissue/biopsy/destruction/debridement/cauterisation*	3,304	6.7	3.4	3.1	3.8
Local injection/infiltration ^(a)	2,166	4.4	2.3	2.1	2.5
Dressing/pressure/compression/tamponade*	2,146	4.4	2.2	2.1	2.4
Physical medicine/rehabilitation*	1,232	2.5	1.3	1.1	1.5
Incision/drainage/flushing/aspiration/removal body fluid*	1,139	2.3	1.2	1.1	1.3
Pap smear*	1,039	2.1	1.1	0.9	1.2
Repair/fixation—suture/cast/prosthetic device (apply/remove)*	881	1.8	0.9	0.8	1.0
Other therapeutic procedures/surgery NEC*	740	1.5	0.8	0.6	0.9
Electrical tracings*	542	1.1	0.6	0.5	0.6
Physical function test*	491	1.0	0.5	0.4	0.6
Urine test*	420	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.5
INR test	352	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.5
Check-up—practice nurse	348	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.4
Other preventive procedures/high-risk medication*	322	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.4
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>15,121</i>	<i>30.8</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>
Total procedural treatments	16,009	32.6	16.7	15.9	17.5

(a) Excludes all local injection/infiltrations performed for immunisations.

* Includes multiple ICPC-2 or ICPC-2 PLUS codes (see Appendix 4, <www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/subject/19>).

Note: Includes the most common procedural treatments, those accounting for > 0.5% of all other treatments. LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit; NEC—not elsewhere classified.

Problems managed with a procedural treatment

Table 10.6 lists the top 10 problems managed with a procedural treatment. It also demonstrates the proportion of contacts with each problem that was managed with a procedure, and the proportion of problems managed with a procedure that had no concomitant medication.

- A total of 14,974 problems involved a procedural treatment in their management (10.3% of all problems).
- The top 10 problems accounted 36.0% of all problems for which a procedure was used.
- Solar keratosis/sunburn was the most common problem managed with a procedure, with a procedure undertaken for nearly 70% of all contacts.
- Almost half the malignant skin neoplasm contacts were managed with a procedural treatment, and the vast majority of these did not have a medication prescribed, supplied or advised.

Table 10.6: The 10 most common problems managed with a procedural treatment

Problem managed	Number	Per cent of problems with procedure	Rate per 100 encs ^(a) (<i>n</i> = 95,898)	95% LCL	95% UCL	Per cent of this problem ^(b)	Per cent of treated problems no meds ^(c)
Solar keratosis/sunburn	885	5.9	0.9	0.8	1.1	68.2	96.4
Female genital check-up*	877	5.9	0.9	0.8	1.0	51.0	96.7
Laceration/cut	666	4.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	78.6	77.3
Excessive ear wax	546	3.7	0.6	0.5	0.6	76.0	93.4
Malignant neoplasm skin	521	3.5	0.5	0.4	0.6	45.5	96.6
Warts	485	3.2	0.5	0.4	0.6	77.7	95.1
Chronic ulcer skin (including varicose ulcer)	378	2.5	0.4	0.3	0.5	74.8	76.2
General check-up*	362	2.4	0.4	0.3	0.5	15.0	86.5
Sprain/strain*	363	2.4	0.4	0.3	0.5	24.0	59.3
Skin symptom/complaint	309	2.1	0.3	0.2	0.4	48.0	95.0
<i>Subtotal</i>	5,392	36.0	—	—	—	—	—
Total problems with procedural treatments	14,974	100.0	15.6	14.9	16.4	—	—

(a) Rate of provision of procedural treatment for selected problem per 100 total encounters.

(b) Percentage of contacts with this problem that generated at least one procedural treatment.

(c) The numerator is the number of cases of this problem that generated at least one procedural treatment but generated no medications. The denominator is the total number of contacts (for this problem) that generated at least one procedural treatment (with or without medications).

* Includes multiple ICPC-2 or ICPC-2 PLUS codes (see Appendix 4, <www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/subject/19>).

Note: Encs—encounters; LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit; meds—medications.