

# 3 Findings

This section sets out the findings from the analysis of Gold Card holders compared with the rest of the community. It presents the key findings followed by graphs, tables and discussion about service use, cost and expenditure for each of the areas – LMOs/GPs, pharmaceuticals and hospitals.

## 3.1 Local medical officer (LMO) and general practitioner (GP) (out-of-hospital) medical services

### Key findings

- In 1999–00, utilisation of LMO services by Gold Card holders aged 40 and over was 13.1 LMO visits per person, 17% higher than utilisation by the rest of the community of similar age (11.1 LMO/GP visits per person).
- However, Gold Card holders without service-related disabilities visited their LMO at a similar rate to that of the rest of the community. Males without service-related disabilities had a rate 9% lower and females had a rate 10% higher.
- As expected, usage of LMO services increases as disability pension levels increase. Gold Card holders in the low disability group used LMO services 15% more than the rest of the community in 1999–00, those with medium level disability used LMO services 42% more and the small group receiving Extreme Disablement Adjustment visited their LMO 111% more than the rest of the community.
- For those aged 40 years and over, the price per attendance in 1999–00 was 12% higher for Gold Card holders (\$30.41) than their community cohort (\$27.13). This difference is the result of the DVA contracts specifying 100% of the Schedule Fee for the LMO whereas most of the rest of community are bulk-billed by their GPs.
- Expenditure on LMO services per Gold Card holder aged 40 years and over was 31% higher than the rest of the community's expenditure in 1999–00 – 17% of this difference was due to higher utilisation, and 12% was due to higher cost per attendance. Expenditure on LMOs per Gold Card holder aged 40 years and over without service-related disabilities was 10% higher than for the rest of the community, which is entirely due to the higher price per attendance.
- The growth in expenditure on LMOs per Gold Card holder between 1997–98 and 1999–00 was 7.7%, compared to an increase of 10.1% for the rest of the community.
- The growth in expenditure per person can be split into utilisation and price components. For Gold Card holders, utilisation per person fell by 0.4% between 1997–98 and 1999–00, as compared to an increase of 2.8% for the rest of the

community. The growth in cost per attendance for Gold Card holders was 8.1% compared to a 7.1% increase for the rest of the community.

### **LMO and GP attendances**

In 1999–00 male Gold Card holders aged 40 years and over visited their LMO 21% more often than the rest of the community visited their GP (13.1 and 10.9 attendances respectively). For males aged 70–84 years, the rate was 16% higher among Gold Card holders (13.2 LMO visits per year) than it was for the rest of community (11.4 GP visits per year). Male LMO attendance rates for Gold Card holders aged 40 to 59 years were twice that for the rest of the community (Table 8).

For females aged 40 years and above, LMO and GP utilisation per person was 11% higher for Gold Card holders (12.6 attendances) than for the rest of the community (11.3 attendances). For females aged 70–84 years, the rate was 11% higher among Gold Card holders (12.9 LMO visits per year) than it was for the rest of the community (11.6 GP visits per year).

Utilisation of LMO services per person by all Gold Card holders aged 40 years and over was 17% higher than utilisation by the rest of the community.

Male Gold Card holders who have no service-related disabilities had 9% lower utilisation of LMOs than the rest of the community in 1999–00, whereas women in the same category had a 10% greater utilisation. In the youngest and oldest age groups (40–59 and 85 and over), these male Gold Card holders exceeded the rest of the community's utilisation by 46% and 1% respectively. In all other age groups they have less utilisation (Table 9).

Female Gold Card holders without service-related disability are also different from the rest of the community in that they are mostly widows, and widows have a somewhat higher usage of health services than the rest of the female population and married women in particular. This increased use of LMO and GPs occurs in all age groups. This increased use of services by widows was demonstrated in data from the late 1980s for Australian women, which indicated that previously married older women had 10% higher visits to doctors and 13% higher hospital episodes than married older women. Widows are also generally sicker than married women and have a lower life expectancy. Age-standardised mortality rates for widows were 41% higher than for married women.

Overall, Gold Card holders without service-related disabilities have 1% less utilisation than the general community. This varies between age groups: in the 70 to 84 years age group, Gold Card holders' utilisation was 4% lower than the rest of the community; however at younger ages (40–59 years), utilisation for Gold Card holders was 40% higher than for the rest of the community.

As disability levels increase usage also increases. Those with low disability used LMO services 15% more than the rest of the community, those with medium disability 42% more and the small group receiving Extreme Disablement Adjustment visited their LMO 111% more than the rest of the community (Figure 3).

At all ages, LMO and GP attendances per person were higher for male Gold Card holders with service-related disabilities than for the rest of the community.

**Table 8: Age-standardised LMO and GP attendances per person for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	7.1 *	5.9 *	6.8 *	11.1 *	..	9.9 *	4.9
60–69	7.1 *	9.2 *	13.0 *	15.2 *	22.8 *	11.5 *	7.6
70–84	10.0 *	12.2 *	16.8 *	18.7 *	27.7 *	13.2 *	11.4
85+	13.4	15.4 *	19.2 *	21.0 *	28.9 *	15.8 *	13.2
40+	9.9 *	11.9 *	16.0 *	18.1 *	25.5 *	13.1 *	10.9
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	7.8 *	3.4 *	4.1 *	9.9 *	..	8.0 *	6.7
60–69	10.5 *	9.9 *	11.8 *	7.3 *	..	10.5 *	9.1
70–84	12.8 *	14.5 *	16.3 *	18.5 *	23.5 *	12.9 *	11.6
85+	15.9 *	18.8 *	15.2 *	17.3 *	19.0 *	15.9 *	14.0
40+	12.5 *	13.8 *	15.5 *	17.1 *	20.0 *	12.6 *	11.3
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	7.2 *	5.5 *	6.4 *	10.9 *	..	9.6 *	5.2
60–69	9.0 *	9.6 *	12.4 *	10.8 *	10.1 *	11.0 *	8.4
70–84	11.0 *	13.1 *	16.6 *	18.6 *	26.2 *	13.1 *	11.5
85+	14.6 *	17.1 *	17.2 *	19.2 *	24.1 *	15.9 *	13.6
40+	11.0	12.8 *	15.8 *	17.8 *	23.5 *	13.1 *	11.1

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.

**Table 9: Ratio of LMO and GP attendances per person for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	1.46 *	1.21 *	1.40 *	2.27 *	..	2.03 *	1.00
60–69	0.93 *	1.20 *	1.71 *	1.99 *	2.98 *	1.50 *	1.00
70–84	0.87 *	1.07 *	1.47 *	1.64 *	2.43 *	1.16 *	1.00
85+	1.01	1.17 *	1.46 *	1.59 *	2.19 *	1.20 *	1.00
40+	0.91 *	1.09 *	1.47 *	1.67 *	2.34 *	1.21 *	1.00
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	1.17 *	0.51 *	0.62 *	1.48 *	..	1.20 *	1.00
60–69	1.16 *	1.09 *	1.31 *	0.81 *	..	1.16 *	1.00
70–84	1.10 *	1.25 *	1.40 *	1.60 *	2.03 *	1.11 *	1.00
85+	1.13 *	1.34 *	1.08 *	1.24 *	1.36 *	1.14 *	1.00
40+	1.10 *	1.22 *	1.37 *	1.52 *	1.77 *	1.11 *	1.00
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	1.40 *	1.06 *	1.23 *	2.10 *	..	1.85 *	1.00
60–69	1.07 *	1.14 *	1.47 *	1.28 *	1.19 *	1.30 *	1.00
70–84	0.96 *	1.14 *	1.45 *	1.62 *	2.28 *	1.14 *	1.00
85+	1.08 *	1.26 *	1.27 *	1.41 *	1.77 *	1.17 *	1.00
40+	0.99	1.15 *	1.42 *	1.59 *	2.11 *	1.17 *	1.00

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

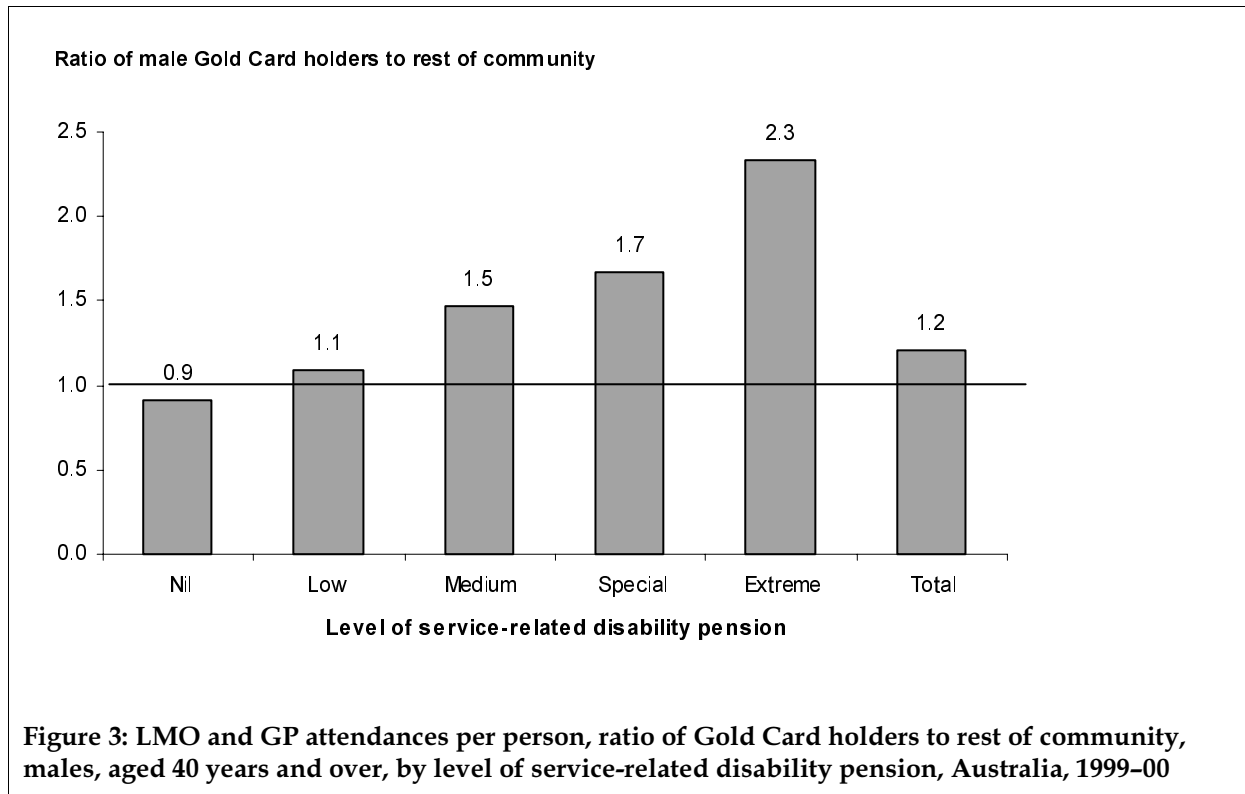
(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.



### LMO and GP expenditure

For persons aged 40 years or more, cost per LMO or GP attendance was 12% higher for Gold Card holders (\$30.41) than for the rest of the community (\$27.13). For those aged 70–84 years, the cost per attendance was 12% higher for Gold Card holders (\$30.10) than their community cohort (\$26.82).

These differences are expected given the prices specified in the contracts between the DVA and the LMOs. For Medicare-funded GP services, most of the rest of community attendances are bulk-billed and the cost for these attendances is 85% of the Schedule Fee. Accumulated with the non-bulk-billed attendances, the average fee charged for the rest of the community aged over 70 is 88% of the Schedule Fee (1999–00)<sup>1</sup>. For Gold Card holders who attend LMOs, the average fee specified by the contracts is 100% of the Medicare Schedule Fee.

Whether this price differential corresponds with a difference in the quality of the services, e.g. average length of consultation, is a matter that requires further investigation.

<sup>1</sup> The average fee for GP attendances covered by Medicare for the community as a whole is 93% of the Schedule Fee. This is higher than the 88% of the Schedule Fee charged for those over 70, as GPs less frequently bulk bill those under age 70.

**Table 10: Age-standardised LMO and GP cost per attendance for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00 (\$)**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	29.04 *	29.91 *	29.31 *	29.42 *	..	29.42 *	26.87
60–69	27.91 *	28.11 *	28.52 *	28.79 *	30.07 *	28.49 *	25.67
70–84	29.42 *	29.39 *	29.87 *	30.89 *	31.62 *	29.88 *	26.59
85+	32.09 *	32.25 *	32.82 *	34.48 *	34.31 *	32.58 *	29.12
40+	29.66 *	29.68 *	30.10 *	31.09 *	31.82 *	30.07 *	26.83
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	28.72 *	27.70 *	28.60 *	33.50 *	..	28.76 *	27.51
60–69	28.89 *	30.34 *	26.99 *	34.74 *	..	28.90 *	25.86
70–84	30.42 *	31.06 *	32.24 *	34.89 *	34.91 *	30.49 *	27.21
85+	34.22 *	33.50 *	35.34 *	34.08 *	37.51 *	34.22 *	30.07
40+	30.36 *	31.01 *	31.85 *	34.82 *	34.80 *	30.42 *	27.19
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	28.98 *	29.68 *	29.23 *	30.04 *	..	29.33 *	27.01
60–69	28.55 *	29.39 *	27.70 *	31.04 *	30.07 *	28.71 *	25.78
70–84	29.85 *	30.07 *	30.72 *	32.34 *	32.70 *	30.10 *	26.82
85+	33.23 *	32.93 *	33.91 *	34.30 *	35.55 *	33.39 *	29.60
40+	30.21 *	30.42 *	30.90 *	32.42 *	32.93 *	30.41 *	27.13

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.

**Table 11: Ratio of LMO and GP cost per attendance for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	1.08 *	1.11 *	1.09 *	1.10 *	..	1.10 *	1.00
60–69	1.09 *	1.10 *	1.11 *	1.12 *	1.17 *	1.11 *	1.00
70–84	1.11 *	1.11 *	1.12 *	1.16 *	1.19 *	1.12 *	1.00
85+	1.10 *	1.11 *	1.13 *	1.18 *	1.18 *	1.12 *	1.00
40+	1.11 *	1.11 *	1.12 *	1.16 *	1.19 *	1.12 *	1.00
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	1.04 *	1.01 *	1.04 *	1.22 *	..	1.05 *	1.00
60–69	1.12 *	1.17 *	1.04 *	1.34 *	..	1.12 *	1.00
70–84	1.12 *	1.14 *	1.19 *	1.28 *	1.28 *	1.12 *	1.00
85+	1.14 *	1.11 *	1.18 *	1.13 *	1.25 *	1.14 *	1.00
40+	1.12 *	1.14 *	1.17 *	1.28 *	1.28 *	1.12 *	1.00
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	1.07 *	1.10 *	1.08 *	1.11 *	..	1.09 *	1.00
60–69	1.11 *	1.14 *	1.07 *	1.20 *	1.17 *	1.11 *	1.00
70–84	1.11 *	1.12 *	1.15 *	1.21 *	1.22 *	1.12 *	1.00
85+	1.12 *	1.11 *	1.15 *	1.16 *	1.20 *	1.13 *	1.00
40+	1.11 *	1.12 *	1.14 *	1.20 *	1.21 *	1.12 *	1.00

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.

Ratio of male Gold Card holders to rest of community

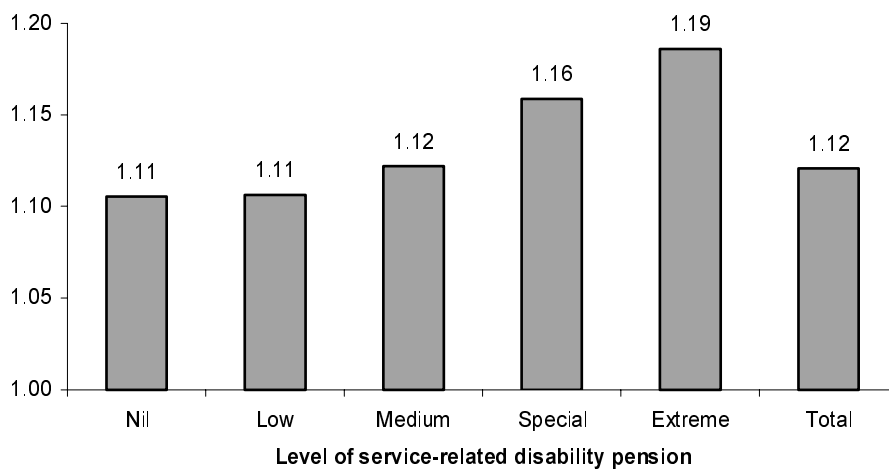


Figure 4: Cost per LMO and GP attendance, ratio of Gold Card holders to rest of community, males, aged 40 years and over, by level of service-related disability pension, Australia, 1999-00

Ratio of male Gold Card holders to rest of community

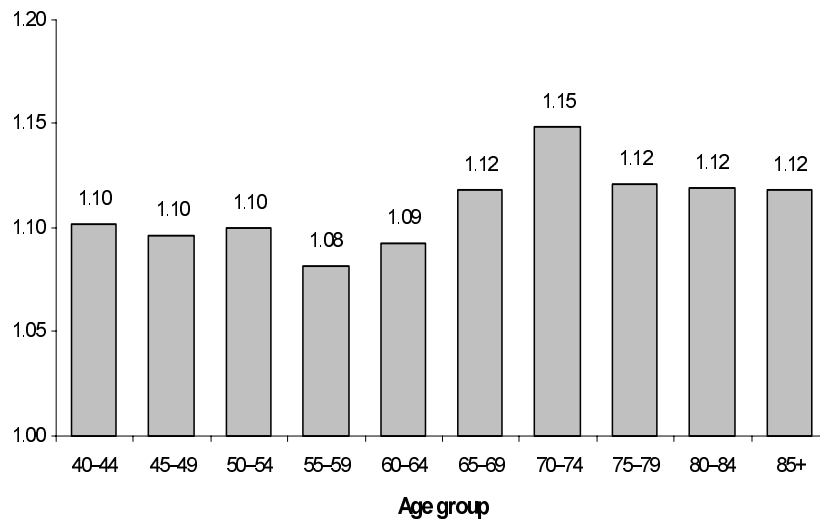


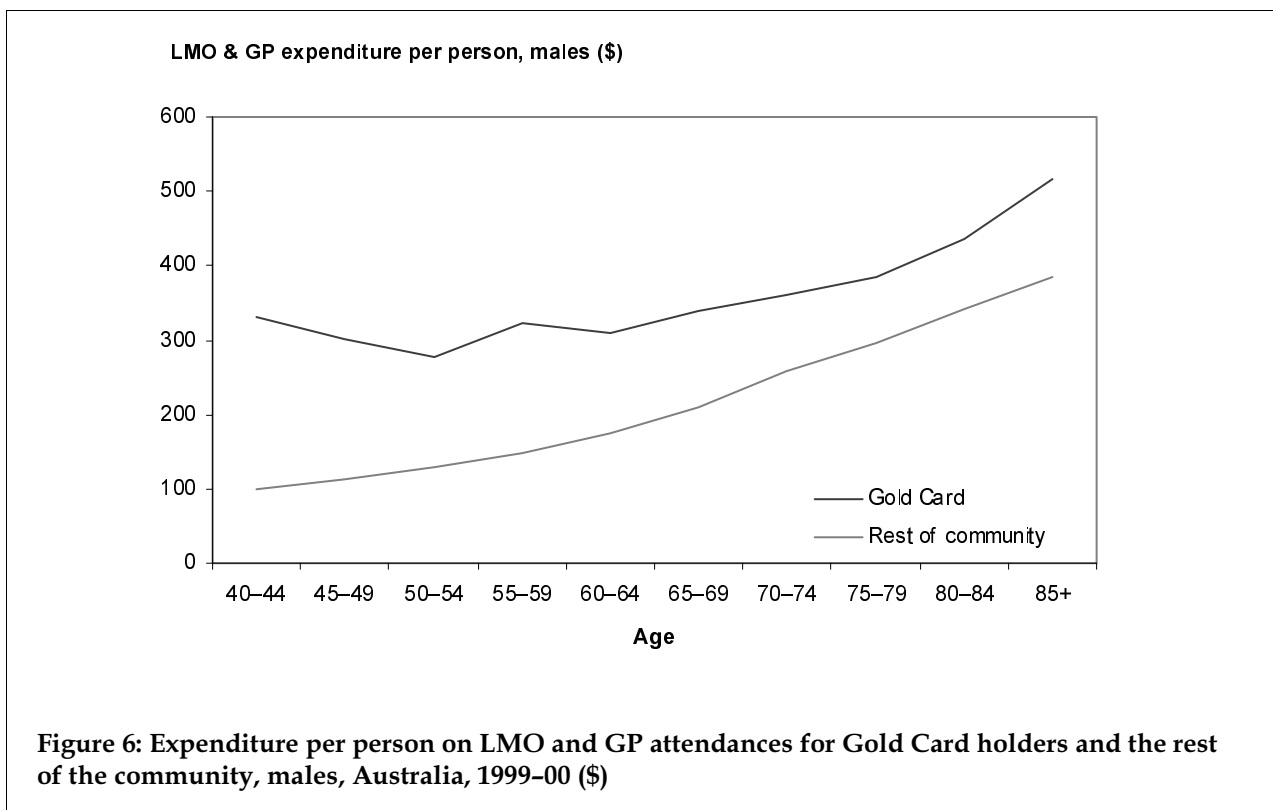
Figure 5: Cost per LMO and GP attendance, ratio of Gold Card holders to rest of community, males, by age group, Australia, 1999-00



## LMO and GP expenditure per person

LMO and GP expenditure per person is the product of attendance rates (attendances per person) multiplied by unit costs (cost per attendance).

For males, at every age, expenditure per person on LMO and GP services in 1999–00 was greater for Gold Card holders than for the rest of the community (Figure 6). For those aged 40 years or more, expenditure per person in the year was 35% higher for Gold Card holders (\$394.36) when compared to the rest of the community (\$291.92) (Table 12). For those aged 70–84 years, Gold Card holders (\$395.27) cost 30% more than their community cohort (\$303.00). This is due to utilisation per person being 16% higher, and cost per attendance being 12% higher ( $1.16 \times 1.12 = 1.30$ ).



For females aged 40 years and over, expenditure on LMO and GP services was 25% higher for Gold Card holders (\$383.04) than for the rest of the community (\$307.27). Female Gold Card holders aged 70–84 years cost \$393.19 per year, 24% more than for women of similar age in the rest of the community which cost on average \$316.00 per year (Table 12).

At every age, female Gold Card holders cost more per person than their community cohort (Figure 7). The overall 25% higher expenditure per person was due to utilisation being 11% higher (as most female Gold Card holders are widows), and cost per attendance being 12% higher.

LMO and GP expenditure per person, females (\$)

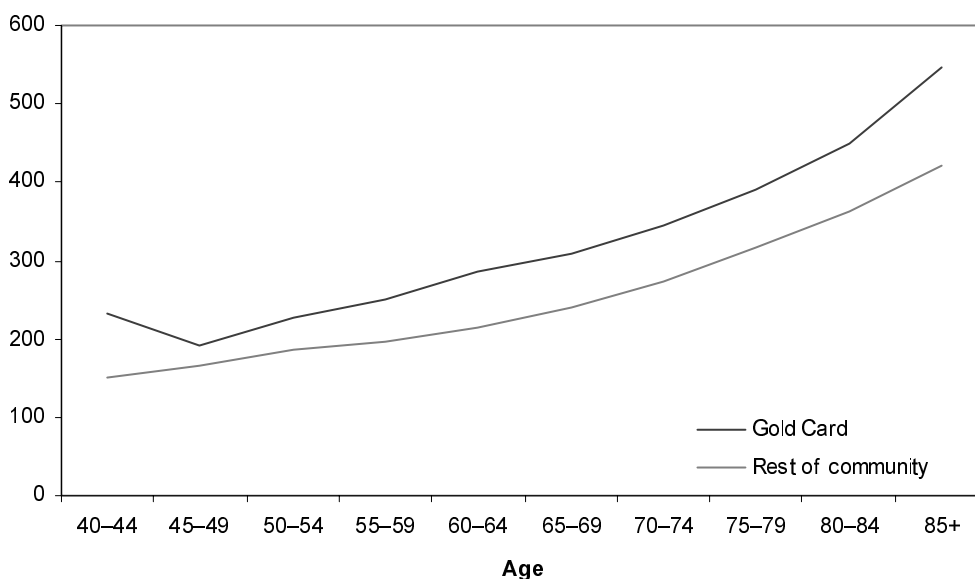


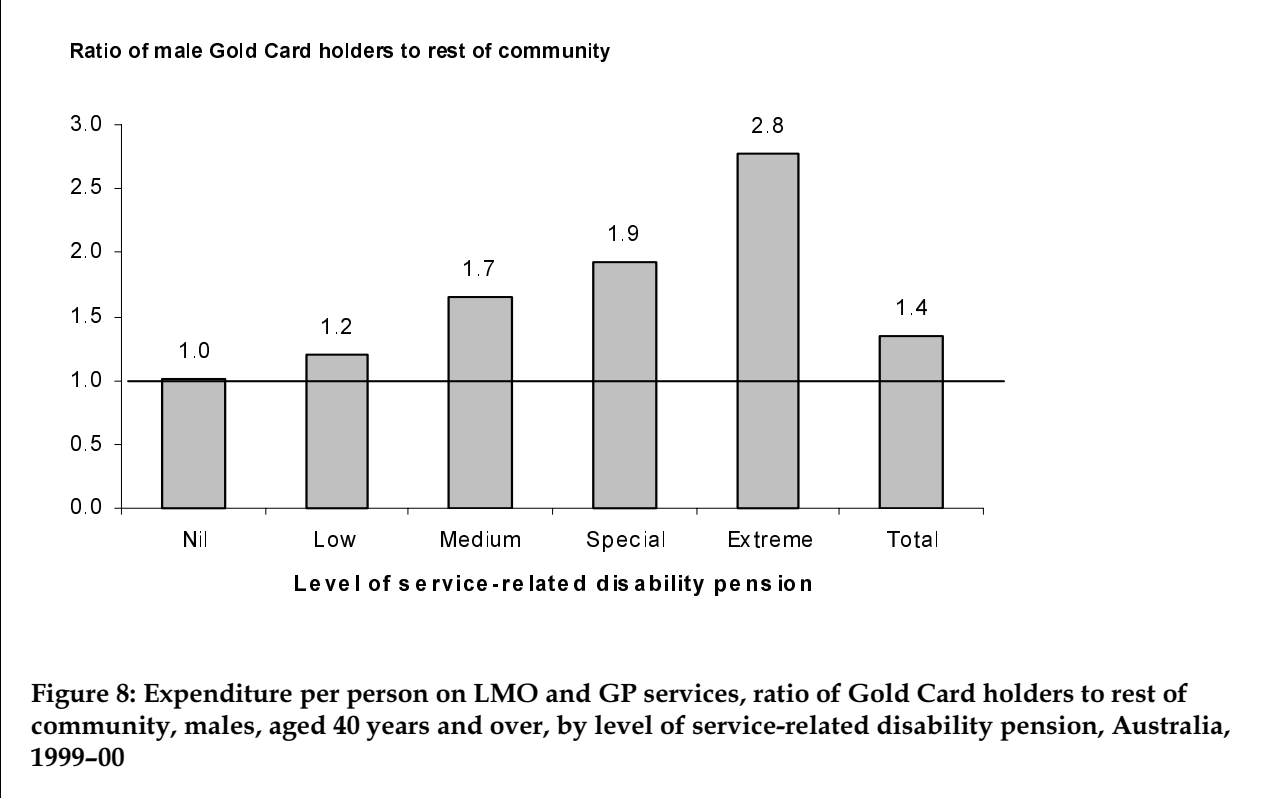
Figure 7: Expenditure per person on LMO and GP attendances for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, females, Australia, 1999-00 (\$)

Overall expenditure in 1999-00 on LMO and GP services for all Gold Card holders was largely for males and especially for those aged 70-84 years. At each age, expenditure per person for Gold Card holders exceeded that for the rest of the community. Gold Card holders aged 70-84 years cost on average \$394.51 per year, 28% higher than the \$307.73 for the rest of the community. LMO expenditure per person for Gold Card holders aged 40 years and over was 31% higher than the rest of the community (\$397.04 versus \$302.29) – 17% of this was due to higher utilisation, and 12% due to higher cost per attendance.

The higher expenditure per person for Gold Card holders reflects higher utilisation per person and higher cost per attendance than the rest of the community of similar age. The higher utilisation is due to the Gold Card holders with service-related disabilities, and the higher cost per attendance is due to the prices specified in the DVA contracts with LMOs.

For males without service-related disability, expenditure on LMO services per person was 1% higher than expenditure by the rest of the community, due to 9% lower utilisation and 11% higher cost per attendance. As disability increases in severity, expenditure per person increases. It is 21% higher than the rest of the male community for the low disability group, 65% higher for the medium disability group, and 93% higher for the special disability group.

For females without service-related disability – mostly war widows – expenditure on LMO services per person was 23% higher than expenditure by women of the same age in the community – 10% due to higher utilisation and 12% due to higher cost per attendance.



**Table 12: Age-standardised LMO and GP expenditure per person for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00 (\$)**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	206.36 *	176.38 *	200.29 *	325.66 *	..	291.23 *	131.07
60–69	198.07	259.02 *	372.11 *	437.35 *	684.73 *	327.57 *	196.32
70–84	293.17	359.62 *	500.77 *	576.58 *	876.45 *	395.27 *	303.00
85+	429.19 *	496.75 *	630.32 *	723.71 *	992.73 *	515.28 *	384.12
40+	293.78	352.60 *	482.81 *	563.50 *	809.92 *	394.36 *	291.92
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	224.67 *	94.47 *	117.85 *	332.50 *	..	230.62 *	183.97
60–69	303.66 *	299.16 *	319.17 *	254.36 *	..	304.14 *	234.28
70–84	388.66 *	449.84 *	525.46 *	646.98 *	821.21 *	393.19 *	316.00
85+	543.48 *	628.88 *	536.08 *	589.63 *	713.63 *	544.92 *	420.84
40+	378.98 *	427.67 *	492.25 *	596.12 *	696.61 *	383.04 *	307.27
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	209.41 *	162.71 *	186.53 *	326.80 *	..	281.11 *	139.89
60–69	257.00 *	281.42 *	342.57 *	335.24 *	302.63 *	314.50 *	217.50
70–84	327.92 *	392.46 *	509.76 *	602.20 *	856.35 *	394.51 *	307.73
85+	485.39 *	561.72 *	583.98 *	657.78 *	855.49 *	529.85 *	402.18
40+	332.96 *	389.85 *	488.63 *	576.02 *	773.55 *	397.04 *	302.29

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.

**Table 13: Ratio of LMO and GP expenditure per person for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	1.57 *	1.35 *	1.53 *	2.48 *	..	2.22 *	1.00
60–69	1.01	1.32 *	1.90 *	2.23 *	3.49 *	1.67 *	1.00
70–84	0.97	1.19 *	1.65 *	1.90 *	2.89 *	1.30 *	1.00
85+	1.12 *	1.29 *	1.64 *	1.88 *	2.58 *	1.34 *	1.00
40+	1.01	1.21 *	1.65 *	1.93 *	2.77 *	1.35 *	1.00
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	1.22 *	0.51 *	0.64 *	1.81 *	..	1.25 *	1.00
60–69	1.30 *	1.28 *	1.36 *	1.09 *	..	1.30 *	1.00
70–84	1.23 *	1.42 *	1.66 *	2.05 *	2.60 *	1.24 *	1.00
85+	1.29 *	1.49 *	1.27 *	1.40 *	1.70 *	1.29 *	1.00
40+	1.23 *	1.39 *	1.60 *	1.94 *	2.27 *	1.25 *	1.00
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	1.50 *	1.16 *	1.33 *	2.34 *	..	2.01 *	1.00
60–69	1.18 *	1.29 *	1.57 *	1.54 *	1.39 *	1.45 *	1.00
70–84	1.07 *	1.28 *	1.66 *	1.96 *	2.78 *	1.28 *	1.00
85+	1.21 *	1.40 *	1.45 *	1.64 *	2.13 *	1.32 *	1.00
40+	1.10 *	1.29 *	1.62 *	1.91 *	2.56 *	1.31 *	1.00

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.

**Trends over the period 1997–98 to 1999–00**

For Gold Card holders aged 40 years or more, utilisation per person of LMO and GP services has fallen 0.4% over the period 1997–98 to 1999–00. This is due to large falls in the rate of service use by those in the medium, special and extreme disability groups which have counterbalanced increases in the rate of service use by those in the nil and low disability groups. For the rest of the community, utilisation per person has increased by 2.8% from 10.8 attendances per person per year to 11.1 attendances per person per year (Table 14).

Utilisation per person growth for male Gold Card holders aged 40 years and over was lower than that for female Gold Card holders. The utilisation rate for males fell from 13.4 attendances per person in 1997–98 to 13.1 attendances per person in

1999–00. This is a drop in attendances per person of 2.2% compared to an increase in the rest of the community of 4.3%. The drop in attendances per person in the extreme disability group of 29% was a major factor in this. Although the extreme disability group is a relatively small group (8,821 males in 1999–00 or 5% of male Gold Card holders), the extent of the decrease was enough to bring the overall attendances per person down. Less dramatic falls in the utilisation rate for the medium and special disability groups also contributed, and the falls for the three highest disability groups were higher than the increases that occurred in the nil and low disability groups. It may have been expected that the influx of relatively healthy WWII Gold Card holders in 1998 would have led to a fall in the rate of use of LMOs by the nil disability group, but in fact there was a substantial increase of 11.6% over the two years.

**Table 14: Attendances per person on LMO and GP services, Gold Card holders, aged 40 years and over, Australia, 1997–98 to 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
1997–98	8.9	11.5	17.2	18.3	35.9	13.4	10.4
1998–99	9.3	11.7	16.6	18.2	30.9	13.2	10.6
1999–00	9.9	11.9	16.0	18.1	25.5	13.1	10.9
% change 1997–98 to 1999–00	11.6%	3.4%	–6.9%	–1.2%	–29.2%	–2.2%	4.3%
<b>Females</b>							
1997–98	12.2	13.2	15.2	18.4	24.6	12.3	11.2
1998–99	12.3	13.1	15.3	18.4	24.1	12.4	11.2
1999–00	12.5	13.8	15.5	17.1	20.0	12.6	11.3
% change 1997–98 to 1999–00	2.5%	4.6%	1.6%	–6.9%	–18.7%	2.4%	1.1%
<b>Persons</b>							
1997–98	10.3	12.2	16.4	18.4	31.4	13.1	10.8
1998–99	10.6	12.4	16.1	18.4	28.4	13.0	10.9
1999–00	11.0	12.8	15.8	17.8	23.5	13.1	11.1
% change 1997–98 to 1999–00	6.7%	5.3%	–3.4%	–3.4%	–25.1%	–0.4%	2.8%

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disability allowance (EDA).

Notes

1. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.

For female Gold Card holders, utilisation per person increased by 2.4% over the period 1997–98 to 1999–00 which was similar to the increase of 1.1% in the rest of the community.

For Gold Card holders aged 40 years and over, expenditure per person on LMO services increased by 7.7% from \$368.61 in 1997–98 to \$397.04 in 1999–00 (Table 15). For the rest of the community aged 40 years and over, expenditure per person on LMO and GP services increased by 10.1% from \$274.63 in 1997–98 to \$302.29 in 1999–00.

Over the same period, expenditure per person for male Gold Card holders increased by 5.8%, compared to 11.7% for the rest of the community. For females, expenditure per person increased by 10.5% for Gold Card holders, compared to 8.5% for the rest of the community.

**Table 15: Expenditure per person on LMO and GP services, Gold Card holders, aged 40 years and over, Australia, 1997–98 to 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
1997–98	\$243.35	\$313.95	\$478.92	\$524.25	\$1,042.89	\$372.60	\$261.28
1998–99	\$261.08	\$328.34	\$473.70	\$535.64	\$924.85	\$377.04	\$270.24
1999–00	\$293.78	\$352.60	\$482.81	\$563.50	\$809.92	\$394.36	\$291.92
% change 1997–98 to 1999–00	20.7%	12.3%	0.8%	7.5%	–22.3%	5.8%	11.7%
<b>Females</b>							
1997–98	\$342.35	\$377.28	\$450.25	\$587.01 *	\$780.32	\$346.50	\$283.09
1998–99	\$355.43	\$385.60	\$464.42	\$594.91 *	\$808.11	\$359.11	\$290.35
1999–00	\$378.98	\$427.67	\$492.25	\$596.12 *	\$696.61	\$383.04	\$307.27
% change 1997–98 to 1999–00	10.7%	13.4%	9.3%	1.6% *	–10.7%	10.5%	8.5%
<b>Persons</b>							
1997–98	\$289.24	\$340.16	\$466.94	\$551.58	\$941.96	\$368.61	\$274.63
1998–99	\$303.90	\$356.93	\$471.59	\$566.24	\$887.38	\$376.42	\$282.45
1999–00	\$332.96	\$389.85	\$488.63	\$576.02	\$773.55	\$397.04	\$302.29
% change 1997–98 to 1999–00	15.1%	14.6%	4.6%	4.4%	–17.9%	7.7%	10.1%

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disability allowance (EDA).

Notes

1. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.

LMO & GP expenditure per person (\$)

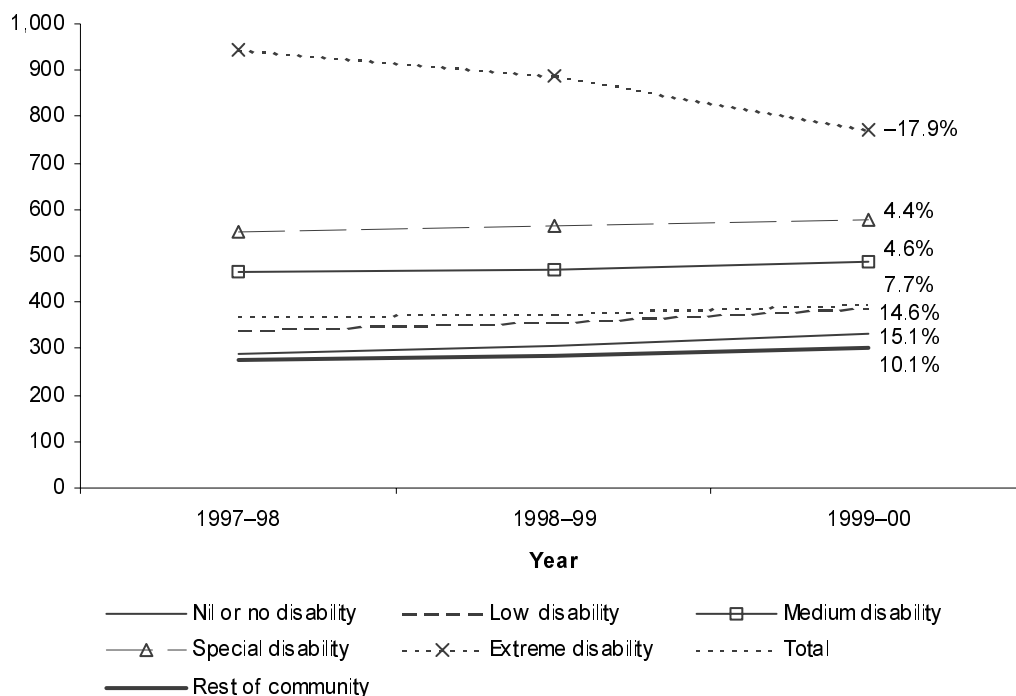


Figure 9: Expenditure per person on LMO and GP services, Gold Card holders, persons, aged 40 years or more, by level of service-related disability pension, Australia, 1997-98 to 1999-00

Expenditure per person growth can be split into utilisation and price components. The utilisation growth has been discussed above and is the main driver of the differences in expenditure per person growth.

The price component – the growth in cost per attendance – was 8.1% for Gold Card holders, compared to a 7.1% growth for the rest of the community (Table 16). General inflation for the period 1997-98 to 1999-00 was 2.1%. Thus the excess health price inflation for Gold Card holders was 5.8% compared to an excess health price inflation for the rest of the community of 4.8%. (Note: some of this excess health price inflation may have been compositional shift, i.e. movement to a more costly mix of services, but there is unlikely to have been much compositional shift for LMO/GP services).



**Table 16: Growth in expenditure per person, attendances per person and cost per attendance on LMO and GP services for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community aged 40 years and over, Australia, 1997–98 to 1999–00 (per cent)**

	Gold Card holders			Rest of community <sup>(a)</sup>		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Growth in expenditure per person <sup>(b)</sup>	5.8	10.5	7.7	11.7	8.5	10.1
Growth in attendances per person	-2.2	2.4	-0.4	4.3	1.1	2.8
Growth in cost of LMO/GP services <sup>(c)</sup>	8.2	8.0	8.1	7.1	7.3	7.1
General inflation <sup>(d)</sup>	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
Excess health inflation and compositional drift	5.9	5.7	5.8	4.8	5.1	4.8

(a) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

(b) Growth in expenditure per person is a product of growth in 'attendance per person' and growth in 'cost per LMO/GP attendance'.

(c) Growth in 'cost per attendance' is a product of 'general inflation' and 'excess health inflation'. 'Excess health inflation' is the growth in health prices over and above 'general inflation'.

(d) General inflation refers to the Gross Domestic Product deflator.

## 3.2 Pharmaceuticals

### Key findings

- Male Gold Card holders have a higher usage rate of pharmaceuticals than the rest of the community, for all age groups (Table 17). These differences are related to the higher number of LMO/GP consultations for Gold Card holders, whereas the propensity to prescribe pharmaceuticals in each consultation seems to be similar to the rest of the community.
- Estimates of script usage for Gold Card holders by disability group have not been analysed at present, but could be the subject of further work. However even without this data, it is our expectation that Gold Card holders without service-related disabilities will show lower script usage per person than the rest of the community, as a consequence of their lower LMO/GP consultation rates.
- In contrast to males, on the DVA database, female Gold Card holders show lower pharmaceutical utilisation rates compared with their rest of community counterparts, with fewer scripts filled per LMO/GP consultation. However, this difference is not supported by the BEACH GP survey data (see Appendix B p56), which indicated no difference in scripts written per LMO/GP visit between the two groups. A possible explanation is that some female Gold Card holders may be processing their scripts through the PBS (with or without using a seniors concession card), rather than using the Gold Card, resulting in only a proportion of their script purchases being recorded on the DVA Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) database.

## PBS script usage per person

In comparing pharmaceutical usage between the community (via PBS data) and Gold Card holders (via RPBS data), only pharmaceuticals available on both schemes were used. There are some pharmaceuticals provided under the RPBS not available under the PBS, and these items are excluded from the analysis. To reflect this approach, all tables and graphs in this section only refer to PBS prescriptions.

For males, all age groups show higher script usage per person for Gold Card holders as compared with the rest of community (Table 17 and Figure 10). The largest difference occurs in the 40–69 years age group, where Gold Card holders use more than twice the number of scripts per person than the rest of the community. For other age groups, Gold Card holders show utilisation rates between 17% and 26% higher than the rest of the community.

**Table 17: Age-standardised PBS script utilisation per person for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00**

Age	PBS scripts per person per year				Ratio of Gold Card holders to rest of community
	Gold Card holders	95% confidence interval	Rest of community <sup>(a)</sup>	95% confidence interval	
<b>Males</b>					
40–69	36.4	36.4 – 36.5	17.2	17.2 – 17.2	2.11
70–79	45.7	45.7 – 45.8	37.0	36.9 – 37.0	1.24
80–89	45.4	45.4 – 45.5	38.9	38.9 – 39.0	1.17
90+	41.1	40.9 – 41.3	32.5	32.4 – 32.6	1.26
40+	44.5	44.4 – 44.5	35.1	35.1 – 35.1	1.27
<b>Females</b>					
40–69	27.2	27.2 – 27.3	22.6	22.6 – 22.6	1.20
70–79	36.5	36.4 – 36.5	39.8	39.7 – 39.8	0.92
80–89	38.6	38.5 – 38.7	40.1	40.1 – 40.1	0.96
90+	35.6	35.4 – 35.7	36.9	36.9 – 37.0	0.96
40+	36.0	36.0 – 36.1	37.8	37.8 – 37.8	0.95
<b>Persons</b>					
40–69	33.1	33.0 – 33.1	19.9	19.9 – 19.9	1.66
70–79	42.3	42.3 – 42.4	38.6	38.6 – 38.6	1.10
80–89	42.8	42.8 – 42.9	39.7	39.7 – 39.7	1.08
90+	37.7	37.6 – 37.9	35.8	35.8 – 35.9	1.05
40+	41.3	41.3 – 41.3	36.7	36.6 – 36.7	1.13

(a) Rest of community includes White Card and Orange Card holders.

In contrast to the male population, the utilisation of PBS scripts per female Gold Card holder is lower than for the rest of the community for those over age 70 (Table 17). The 40–69 age group has 20% higher utilisation per person among Gold Card holders, whereas the older Gold Card holders have 4% to 8% lower utilisation than

the rest of the community. Despite females having 10–20% higher LMO/GP attendances per Gold Card holder, lower utilisation rates are the result of substantially fewer scripts filled per LMO/GP visit for Gold Card holders (as reported by the DVA RPBS data), when compared to the corresponding rates for the rest of the community.

The lower numbers of scripts filled per LMO/GP visit for female Gold Card holders may be explained by female Gold Card holders processing their scripts through the PBS, rather than the Gold Card scheme (RPBS).



Figure 10: PBS script utilisation per person, males, Australia, 1999-00

**Cost per PBS script**

The cost of each script in Table 18 is the overall retail cost of the pharmaceutical. It therefore includes both the Government subsidy and the patient co-payment.

There is very little difference in the cost per script for male Gold Card holders and the rest of the community. This indicates there is very little compositional cost difference (mix of high- and low-cost drugs) between pharmaceuticals used by male Gold Card holders and those used by the rest of the community.

In contrast to male Gold Card holders, the cost per script is significantly lower (16%) for female Gold Card holders as compared to the rest of the community (Table 18). This difference is hard to explain, beyond that female Gold Card holders are systematically using a much higher proportion of low-cost drugs than the rest of the community. This is a simplistic understanding and requires further analysis beyond the scope of this report.

**Table 18: Age-standardised cost per PBS script for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00 (\$)**

Age	Cost per PBS script				Ratio of Gold Card holders to rest of community
	Gold Card holders	95% confidence interval	Rest of community <sup>(a)</sup>	95% confidence interval	
<b>Males</b>					
40–69	30.74	30.67 – 30.81	29.24	29.23 – 29.25	1.05
70–79	27.39	27.37 – 27.42	28.18	28.17 – 28.20	0.97
80–89	26.21	26.18 – 26.24	26.50	26.47 – 26.52	0.99
90+	23.29	23.15 – 23.42	23.31	23.25 – 23.37	1.00
40+	27.32	27.30 – 27.33	27.75	27.74 – 27.76	0.98
<b>Females</b>					
40–69	24.60	24.52 – 24.69	27.02	27.02 – 27.03	0.91
70–79	23.78	23.75 – 23.81	28.15	28.14 – 28.16	0.84
80–89	21.48	21.45 – 21.52	26.45	26.44 – 26.47	0.81
90+	18.88	18.79 – 18.98	24.98	24.94 – 25.01	0.76
40+	22.93	22.91 – 22.96	27.39	27.39 – 27.40	0.84
<b>Persons</b>					
40–69	28.90	28.84 – 28.95	28.13	28.13 – 28.14	1.03
70–79	26.25	26.23 – 26.27	28.17	28.16 – 28.17	0.93
80–89	24.57	24.54 – 24.59	26.47	26.45 – 26.48	0.93
90+	20.77	20.69 – 20.85	24.56	24.53 – 24.59	0.85
40+	25.87	25.86 – 25.89	27.57	27.56 – 27.57	0.94

(a) Rest of community includes White Card and Orange Card holders.

### Pharmaceutical script expenditure per person

The average cost per script is practically the same for male Gold Card holders and the rest of the community. Therefore differences in expenditure on PBS scripts per person (the product of script usage per person and cost per script), reflects differences in script usage. These differences seem to be related to the higher number of LMO/GP consultations for Gold Card holders. For male Gold Card holders aged 70–79, expenditure per person is 20% higher than for the rest of the community (Table 19).

This is in contrast to females whose expenditure on PBS scripts per person is substantially lower (around 20%) among Gold Card holders for age groups above 70 (Table 19) than the rest of the community. As with the PBS script usage per person, the recorded DVA cost of scripts for female Gold Card holders may understate the full utilisation of PBS scripts by female Gold Card holders, if they are processing some of their script purchases through the PBS scheme, rather than the Gold Card scheme.

In the 40–69 years age group, overall expenditure per person is 71% higher for Gold Card holders, reflecting a greater number of scripts per LMO/GP visit and the higher rates of LMO/GP visits among Gold Card holders compared with the rest of the community. This is especially the case for males aged 40–69, whose expenditure per person is more than double that for the rest of the community. While the analysis at this stage cannot distinguish the conditions for which these drugs are being used, the high prevalence of mental health conditions in this age group is likely to lead to higher use of pharmaceuticals and therefore higher expenditure.

**Table 19: Age-standardised PBS script cost per person for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00 (\$)**

Age	PBS script cost per person				Ratio of Gold Card holders to rest of community
	Gold Card holders	95% confidence interval	Rest of community <sup>(a)</sup>	95% confidence interval	
<b>Males</b>					
40–69	1,119.92	1,117.45 – 1,122.40	504.14	504.01 – 504.27	2.22
70–79	1,252.38	1,251.25 – 1,253.51	1,041.43	1,040.90 – 1,041.95	1.20
80–89	1,191.09	1,189.57 – 1,192.61	1,031.46	1,030.51 – 1,032.40	1.15
90+	957.07	951.45 – 962.70	757.72	755.73 – 759.72	1.26
40+	1,214.37	1,213.53 – 1,215.21	969.83	969.61 – 970.05	1.25
<b>Females</b>					
40–69	670.35	668.09 – 672.62	611.44	611.29 – 611.58	1.10
70–79	867.06	865.91 – 868.21	1,119.16	1,118.69 – 1,119.63	0.77
80–89	829.28	827.83 – 830.73	1,060.29	1,059.65 – 1,060.93	0.78
90+	671.53	668.11 – 674.95	922.53	921.21 – 923.85	0.73
40+	825.96	825.14 – 826.77	1,036.37	1,036.17 – 1,036.56	0.80
<b>Persons</b>					
40–69	956.03	954.26 – 957.79	560.69	560.59 – 560.79	1.71
70–79	1,111.36	1,110.53 – 1,112.19	1,086.44	1,086.09 – 1,086.79	1.02
80–89	1,051.74	1,050.65 – 1,052.82	1,051.39	1,050.86 – 1,051.92	1.00
90+	784.12	781.10 – 787.14	879.75	878.65 – 880.86	0.89
40+	1,067.89	1,067.28 – 1,068.49	1,009.46	1,009.32 – 1,009.61	1.06

(a) Rest of community includes White Card and Orange Card holders.

### 3.3 Hospital services

#### Key findings

- Utilisation of acute hospital services by Gold Card holders is higher than for the rest of the community. Hospital separations per person for 1999–00 show 21% higher use for all Gold Card holders.

- As with LMO and GP services, the utilisation of acute hospital services by Gold Card holders is strongly related to their level of service-related disability. In 1999–00, the hospital separation rate for Gold Card holders aged 40 years and over increased from 0.8 separations per person for those with nil or no disability to 2.4 separations per person for those with an Extreme Disablement Adjustment. The hospital separation rate for those with nil or no service-related disability was similar to the rate for the rest of the community in 1999–00. Those with low disability (5–95% disability pension) had a rate 14% higher. Those with special disability pensions had a rate 62% higher.
- There was generally little difference in the average length of stay spent in hospital per person between Gold Card holders and the rest of the community for the 70 and over age group. However, the average length of stay for Gold Card holders with special disability pensions in 1999–00 was 26% higher than for the rest of the community and for those with extreme adjustment allowance 30% higher.
- Hospital separations can be cost weighted to reflect the relative cost of different hospital procedures undertaken for each separation. A comparison of the resulting DRG cost-weighted separations between Gold Card holders and the rest of the community indicates that there is little difference in the costliness of hospital procedures undertaken for each group although, as for length of stay, as disability levels increase there is some increase in relative complexity and cost.
- The methodology used here aims to estimate the resources required to meet the costs of hospital episodes and associated medical services of veterans and war widow(er)s assuming that the cost per DRG-weighted episode is the same as for the rest of the community, i.e. these methods do not estimate the actual amount paid out for hospital episodes by DVA. There is data to investigate the amount paid out by DRG and age group for veterans and war widow(er)s using private hospitals, and to compare this to other users of private hospitals, but this is an analysis for a later stage.

### **Separations and DRG cost-weighted separations per person, 1999–00**

Only acute hospital separations were analysed in this report so as to make the results more comparable. If we had included non-acute separations such as nursing home type patients (NHTPs) (maintenance patients), and rehabilitative and palliative patients there would have been comparability problems particularly with NHTPs, as it is expected that veterans would have a different pattern of NHTP care use compared to non-veterans. Only if residential aged care was examined in association with NHTP use would it be possible to make a valid comparison.

Gold Card holders at ages 40 and over were admitted to hospitals for acute care at a rate 21% higher than for the rest of the community in 1999–00 (Tables 20 and 21). Male Gold Card holders showed 24% higher rates than the rest of the community for males, with female Gold Card holders only 13% higher than the rest of their community counterparts.

As with LMO and GP services, the utilisation of hospital services by Gold Card holders is strongly related to their level of disability. In 1999-00, the hospital separation rate for Gold Card holders aged 40 years and over increased from 0.8 separations per person for those with nil or no disability to 2.4 separations per person for those with an Extreme Disablement Adjustment. The hospital separation rate for those with nil % or no disability was similar to the rate for the rest of the community in 1999-00, while those with low disability (5-95% disability allowances) had a 14% higher rate than the rest of the community.

The age pattern of hospital separations per person is substantially different between Gold Card holders and the rest of the community for males but not for females (Table 20). The number of hospital separations per male Gold Card holder aged 40 years and over was about one in 1999-00, no matter what their age. In contrast, the number of hospital separations per person for the rest of the community males was only 0.3 visits per person at ages 40-59. This rate increased steadily at each age group but did not reach a rate of one separation per person until the 70-84 years age group.

The number of hospital separations per person for male Gold Card holders aged 40-59 was more than double that of the rest of the community. It should be noted that the hospital separations for male Gold Card holders aged 40-59 is only 5% of total male Gold Card holder separations, and that 80% of these separations are for those with special or extreme disability.

**Table 20: Age-standardised acute hospital separations per person for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	0.38	0.39 *	0.54 *	0.85 *	..	0.75 *	0.32
60–69	0.61	0.78 *	1.07 *	1.36 *	2.87 *	1.01 *	0.62
70–84	0.87 *	1.07 *	1.53 *	1.54 *	2.99 *	1.19 *	0.99
85+	1.01 *	1.22 *	1.61 *	1.58 *	2.79 *	1.25 *	1.12
40+	0.84 *	1.01 *	1.44 *	1.49 *	2.73 *	1.16 *	0.93
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	0.40 *	0.25	0.40	0.57 *	..	0.42 *	0.34
60–69	0.66 *	0.25 *	0.71	0.50	..	0.66 *	0.54
70–84	0.82 *	0.91 *	1.05 *	1.36 *	2.01 *	0.83 *	0.72
85+	0.85	1.21 *	0.73	0.73	1.48	0.85	0.82
40+	0.79 *	0.84 *	0.99 *	1.24 *	1.75 *	0.80 *	0.71
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	0.39 *	0.36 *	0.52 *	0.81 *	..	0.69 *	0.32
60–69	0.64	0.48 *	0.87 *	0.88 *	1.27 *	0.82 *	0.58
70–84	0.85 *	1.01	1.36 *	1.48 *	2.63 *	1.06 *	0.89
85+	0.93 *	1.22 *	1.18 *	1.16 *	2.15 *	1.06	0.97
40+	0.82 *	0.96	1.26 *	1.37 *	2.35 *	1.02 *	0.85

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.



**Table 21: Ratio of acute hospital separations per person for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	1.21	1.22 *	1.71 *	2.70 *	..	2.37 *	1.00
60–69	0.98	1.27 *	1.74 *	2.20 *	4.65 *	1.64 *	1.00
70–84	0.88 *	1.08 *	1.55 *	1.56 *	3.02 *	1.20 *	1.00
85+	0.90 *	1.09 *	1.44 *	1.41 *	2.49 *	1.12 *	1.00
40+	0.90 *	1.09 *	1.55 *	1.59 *	2.93 *	1.24 *	1.00
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	1.19 *	0.74	1.16	1.68 *	..	1.24 *	1.00
60–69	1.22 *	0.45 *	1.31	0.91	..	1.22 *	1.00
70–84	1.14 *	1.27 *	1.47 *	1.90 *	2.81 *	1.16 *	1.00
85+	1.04	1.49 *	0.89	0.90	1.81	1.04	1.00
40+	1.11 *	1.17 *	1.39 *	1.74 *	2.45 *	1.13 *	1.00
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	1.20 *	1.14 *	1.61 *	2.52 *	..	2.17 *	1.00
60–69	1.11	0.84 *	1.51 *	1.52 *	2.20 *	1.42 *	1.00
70–84	0.96 *	1.13	1.52 *	1.66 *	2.96 *	1.19 *	1.00
85+	0.95 *	1.25 *	1.21 *	1.20 *	2.21 *	1.09 *	1.00
40+	0.97 *	1.14	1.49 *	1.62 *	2.77 *	1.21 *	1.00

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.

### Average length of stay in hospital, 1999–00

Gold Card holders on average spend the same time in hospital per admission as the rest of the community of the same age (Tables 22 and 23). Gold Card holders spent an average of 4.6 days in hospital per admission in 1999–00, compared with an average of 4.7 days per admission for the rest of the community. Only the younger age groups showed any difference in average length of stay, with Gold Card holders experiencing 11% (ages 40–59) and 21% (ages 60–69) higher lengths of stay than for the rest of the community.

As expected, the average length of stay increases with increasing disability, though only markedly so for the special disability group (TPI, TTI, BLI and INT recipients), and those with an Extreme Disablement Adjustment. The special disability group

experienced an average length of stay in 1990–00 of 5.9 days per hospital separation (26% higher than the rest of the community), while veterans with an Extreme Disablement Adjustment stayed an average of 6.1 days in hospital per separation (30% higher than the rest of the community).

**Table 22: Age-standardised average length of hospital stay for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, acute hospital episodes, by age, Australia, 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	6.1 *	3.4 *	3.0 *	2.9 *	..	3.0 *	2.7
60–69	3.5 *	3.5 *	3.9 *	4.2 *	7.7 *	4.0 *	3.2
70–84	4.1 *	4.0 *	4.3 *	5.2 *	5.3 *	4.4 *	4.4
85+	6.0 *	6.3	6.9 *	7.4 *	7.3 *	6.4	6.5
40+	4.4 *	4.2 *	4.5 *	5.2 *	5.6 *	4.5 *	4.6
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	3.1 *	2.3	1.0	7.4 *	..	3.1 *	2.7
60–69	3.8 *	1.1 *	..	9.0 *	..	3.8 *	3.2
70–84	4.8	5.0	5.2 *	7.2 *	7.7 *	4.8	4.8
85+	7.5	7.7	7.2	9.0	7.3	7.5	7.5
40+	4.8	4.9	5.2 *	7.6 *	7.5 *	4.8	4.8
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	5.6 *	3.2 *	2.7	3.4 *	..	3.0 *	2.7
60–69	3.6 *	2.8 *	4.3 *	5.7 *	7.7 *	3.9 *	3.2
70–84	4.4 *	4.3 *	4.6	5.8 *	6.0 *	4.5	4.5
85+	6.6 *	7.0	7.0	7.9 *	7.3	6.9	6.9
40+	4.6 *	4.6 *	4.7	5.9 *	6.1 *	4.6 *	4.7

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.

**Table 23: Ratio of average length of hospital stay for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, acute hospital episodes, by age, Australia, 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	2.24 *	1.24 *	1.10 *	1.07 *	..	1.10 *	1.00
60–69	1.07 *	1.10 *	1.20 *	1.31 *	2.37 *	1.24 *	1.00
70–84	0.93 *	0.89 *	0.97 *	1.16 *	1.20 *	0.98 *	1.00
85+	0.92 *	0.97	1.06 *	1.13 *	1.12 *	0.99	1.00
40+	0.95 *	0.91 *	0.98 *	1.14 *	1.22 *	0.98 *	1.00
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	1.15 *	0.85	0.38	2.79 *	..	1.17 *	1.00
60–69	1.18 *	0.34 *	.. *	2.83 *	..	1.18 *	1.00
70–84	1.00	1.03	1.09 *	1.50 *	1.61 *	1.00	1.00
85+	1.00	1.03	0.96	1.20	0.97	1.00	1.00
40+	0.99	1.02	1.09 *	1.57 *	1.55 *	0.99	1.00
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	2.05 *	1.20 *	1.01	1.27 *	..	1.11 *	1.00
60–69	1.13 *	0.89 *	1.35	1.79 *	2.39 *	1.21 *	1.00
70–84	0.96 *	0.94 *	1.01	1.29 *	1.31 *	0.99	1.00
85+	0.96 *	1.01	1.01	1.14 *	1.05	0.99	1.00
40+	0.98 *	0.97 *	1.00	1.26 *	1.30 *	0.98 *	1.00

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.

The number of separations tells us about the use of hospitals, but does not tell us about the resource intensity of these separations. Adjusting for complexity using the DRG casemix system tells us about the cost intensity of the use of hospitals by Gold Card holders as compared to the rest of the community.

The average DRG cost weights for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community are very similar (Table 24). This indicates that veterans on average do not experience more or less costly procedures than do the rest of the community. However there is a tendency for the younger veterans and for the higher disability groups to have a more costly mix of hospital services relative to the rest of the community.

The methodology used here aims to estimate the resources required to meet the costs of hospital episodes and associated medical services of veterans and war widow(er)s assuming that the cost per DRG weighted episode is the same as for the rest of the

community, i.e. these methods do not estimate the actual amount paid out for hospital episodes by DVA. While there are data to investigate the amount paid out by DRG and age group for veterans and war widow(er)s using private hospitals, and to compare them with other users of private hospitals, this has been held over to a later stage of analysis.

**Table 24: Age-standardised hospital DRG weights for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, acute hospital episodes, by age, Australia, 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	1.13 *	1.04 *	0.97 *	0.90	..	0.92	0.90
60–69	1.19 *	1.14 *	1.22 *	1.11 *	1.39 *	1.16 *	1.05
70–84	1.22	1.20	1.22	1.34 *	1.27	1.23	1.24
85+	0.72 *	1.44 *	1.44	1.48	1.54	1.42 *	1.53
40+	1.23	1.21	1.23	1.32 *	1.30 *	1.23 *	1.25
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	0.93 *	0.98	0.34 *	1.26 *	..	0.93 *	0.81
60–69	1.10 *	0.80	..	0.80	..	1.10 *	0.95
70–84	1.25	1.24	1.36	1.28	1.38	1.25	1.27
85+	1.55 *	1.44 *	1.84	1.67	1.37	1.56 *	1.65
40+	1.24	1.23	1.37	1.25	1.36	1.24	1.26
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	1.10 *	1.03 *	0.89	0.94 *	..	0.92 *	0.88
60–69	1.14 *	1.04	1.20 *	1.01	1.39 *	1.13 *	1.00
70–84	1.23	1.21 *	1.26	1.32 *	1.30 *	1.24	1.25
85+	1.45 *	1.44 *	1.56	1.54	1.48 *	1.48 *	1.58
40+	1.25 *	1.23 *	1.28	1.31 *	1.32 *	1.24 *	1.27

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.

**Table 25: Ratio of age-standardised hospital DRG weights for Gold Card holders and the rest of the community, by age, Australia, 1999–00**

Age	Gold Card holders					Total	Rest of community <sup>(f)</sup>
	Nil or no disability <sup>(a)</sup>	Low disability <sup>(b)</sup>	Medium disability <sup>(c)</sup>	Special disability <sup>(d)</sup>	Extreme disability <sup>(e)</sup>		
<b>Males</b>							
40–59	1.26 *	1.16 *	1.08 *	1.01	..	1.02	1.00
60–69	1.13 *	1.09 *	1.16 *	1.06 *	1.33 *	1.10 *	1.00
70–84	0.99	0.97	0.99	1.08 *	1.03	0.99	1.00
85+	0.47 *	0.94 *	0.94	0.97	1.01	0.93 *	1.00
40+	0.98	0.97	0.99	1.06 *	1.04 *	0.98 *	1.00
<b>Females</b>							
40–59	1.15 *	1.21	0.42 *	1.57 *	..	1.15 *	1.00
60–69	1.16 *	0.84	..	0.84	..	1.16 *	1.00
70–84	0.98	0.97	1.07	1.00	1.08	0.98	1.00
85+	0.94 *	0.87 *	1.12	1.01	0.83	0.94 *	1.00
40+	0.98	0.98	1.09	0.99	1.07	0.98	1.00
<b>Persons</b>							
40–59	1.25 *	1.17 *	1.01	1.07 *	..	1.04 *	1.00
60–69	1.14 *	1.05	1.21 *	1.01	1.40 *	1.13 *	1.00
70–84	0.99	0.97 *	1.01	1.06 *	1.04 *	0.99	1.00
85+	0.92 *	0.91 *	0.99	0.97	0.94 *	0.93 *	1.00
40+	0.98 *	0.97 *	1.01	1.04 *	1.04 *	0.98 *	1.00

(a) Includes war widow(er)s, non-pensionable incapacity veterans and other Gold Card holders without service-related disability.

(b) Low disability are 5–95% disability pensioners.

(c) Medium disability are 100% disability pensioners.

(d) Special disability include special and intermediate rate disability pensioners—TTI, TPI, BLI and INT.

(e) Extreme disability are pensioners receiving extreme disablement adjustment (EDA).

(f) Rest of community includes White Card holders.

**Notes**

1. .. Denotes not applicable, as there are no veterans or war widow(er)s with these disability allowances in these age groups.

2. \* Denotes significantly different at the 5% level from the rest of community.