

Health workforce

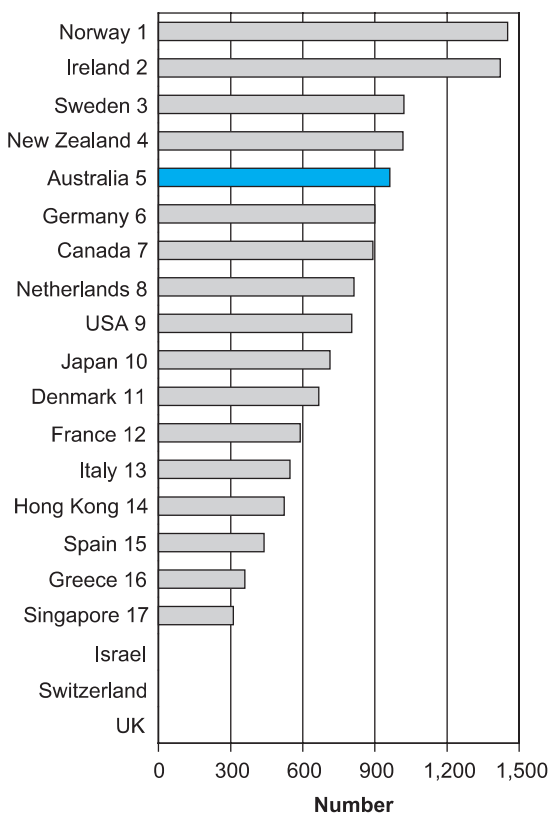


Figure 1: Nurses per 100,000 population, 1995



Figure 2: Dentists per 100,000 population, 1995

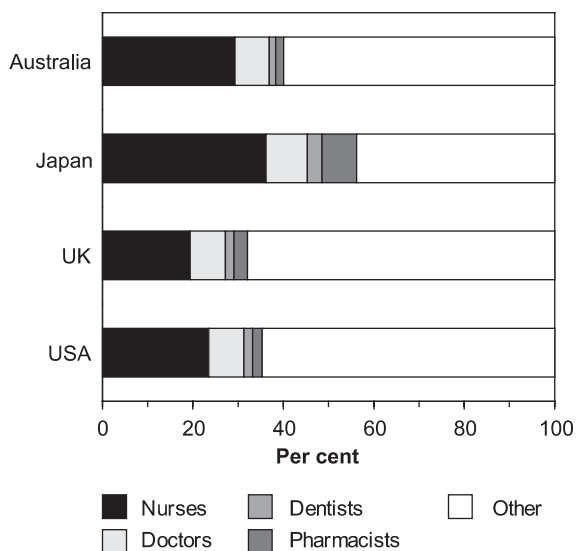


Figure 3: Health professions as a proportion of total health industry, 1993

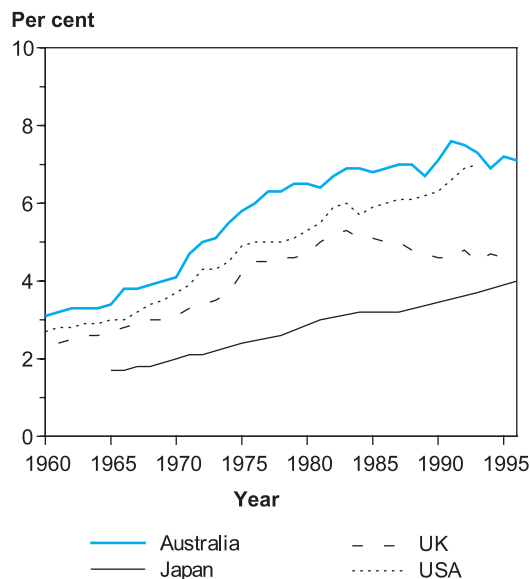


Figure 4: Proportion of the labour force employed in the health industry, 1960 to 1996

Health workforce

Proportion of the workforce employed in the health industry^(a), and nurses, dentists and pharmacists per 100,000 population

Country	% workforce in health industry		Registered nurses (per 100,000 pop.)		Dentists (per 100,000 pop.)		Community pharmacists (per 100,000 pop.)	
	Year	Ratio	Year	Ratio	Year	Ratio	Year	Ratio
Australia	1996	7.1	1995	962	1995	43	1995	59
Canada	1994	5.5	1995	892	1997	54	1991	62
Denmark	1993	4.3	1995	667	1995	52	1996	18
France	1994	6.9	1995	589	1995	68	1996	99
Germany	1995	6.7	1995	900	1996	75	1996	56
Greece	1992	3.4	1993	359	1995	103	1994	78
Hong Kong	—	—	1993	523	1993	26	1993	15
Ireland	1996	5.1	1996	1,479	1996	44	1996	70
Israel	1994	2.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Italy	1992	4.8	1995	547	1996	52	1992	96
Japan	1996	4.0	1996	738	1994	63	1994	85
Netherlands	1995	5.3	1993	813	1995	47	1995	17
New Zealand	1991	4.0	1996	1,017	1996	37	1996	66
Norway	1994	15.2	1996	1,489	1996	84	1996	42
Singapore	—	—	1994	311	1994	26	1994	26
Spain	1992	3.8	1996	451	1996	38	1995	106
Sweden	1995	8.0	1995	1,021	1995	100	1996	68
Switzerland	1991	9.5	1990	1,380	1995	49	1990	49
UK	1996	4.5	1988	430	1995	37	1993	59
USA	1993	7.0	1996	814	1996	63	1996	70

(a) Definitions and concepts may vary between countries.

Sources: OECD 1998, United Nations 1996a, Israel CBS 1996.

- The number of health personnel, their distribution and supply reflect changing needs and demands for the provision of health services. Workers employed in the health industry include health professionals (e.g. medical practitioners and nurses), other professionals (e.g. social workers and accountants) and support staff (e.g. clerks and orderlies).
- In the past 15 years, workers employed in the health industry have comprised between 6 and 7% of the total workforce in Australia (Figure 4). In 1996, an estimated 7.1% of the Australian workforce was employed in the health industry. The health industry in Norway, Sweden and Switzerland comprises 8% or more of the workforce. In Greece, Israel, Japan, New Zealand and Spain the health industry comprises 4% or less of the total workforce. However, there may be considerable definitional differences between countries in the data provided to OECD.
- The proportion of the workforce employed in the health industry in Australia, Japan and the United States has steadily increased over the past several decades (Figure 4). A similar increase occurred in the United Kingdom, but plateaued in the mid-1980s.
- Nursing is the largest of the health professions. In 1995, Australia had more registered nurses per 100,000 population than most other developed countries, but the numbers were well below New Zealand and some European countries. Greece and Singapore had comparatively low ratios (Figure 1).
- Australia had a lower ratio of dentists than many other developed countries—7,700 active dentists with a ratio of 43 per 100,000 population in 1995 (Figure 2). Pharmacists numbered approximately 10,700 in 1995—a ratio of 59 per 100,000 population—similar to the ratio for Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

For more information, see:

AIHW 1998. Australia's health 1998: the sixth biennial health report of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Canberra: AIHW.

WHO 1997. The world health report 1997: conquering suffering, enriching humanity. Geneva: WHO.