

# 11 Referrals and admissions

A referral is defined as the process by which the responsibility for part or all of the care of a patient is temporarily transferred to another health care provider. Only new referrals arising at the encounter were included (that is, continuations were not recorded). For each encounter, GPs could record up to two referrals. These included referrals to specialists, allied health professionals, hospitals for admission, emergency departments or other medical services. Referrals to hospital outpatient clinics and other GPs were classified as referrals to other medical services.

## 11.1 Annual results, 2006–07

### Number of referrals and admissions

Table 11.1 provides a summary of referrals and admissions, and the rates per 100 encounters and per 100 problems for which referrals were provided. The patient was given at least one referral at 11.5% of all encounters, and for 8.3% of all problems managed. The most frequent referrals were to specialists, followed by referrals to allied health services. Very few patients were referred to hospitals, to the hospital emergency department or to other medical services.

**Table 11.1: Summary of referrals and admissions, 2006–07**

Variable	Number	Rate per 100 encounters ( <i>n</i> = 91,805)	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rate per 100 problems ( <i>n</i> = 136,333)	95% LCL	95% UCL
At least one referral <sup>(a)</sup>	10,541	11.5	11.0	11.9	8.3	8.0	8.6
Referrals	11,224	12.2	11.7	12.7	8.2	7.9	8.5
Specialist	7,387	8.0	7.7	8.4	5.4	5.2	5.7
Allied health service	2,819	3.1	2.9	3.3	2.1	1.9	2.2
Hospital	367	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3
Emergency department	149	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other medical services	89	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
Other referrals	413	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3

(a) Rate per 100 problems for at least one referral is calculated using a numerator of number of individual problems with a referral (*n* = 11,277).

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

### Most frequent referrals

Table 11.2 shows the specialists and allied health service groups to whom GPs most often referred. The most common referrals were to surgeons, ophthalmologists and orthopaedic surgeons. Approximately 36% of referrals to allied health services were to physiotherapists, 14% to psychologists, 10% to podiatrists/chiropractors and 8% to dietitians/nutritionists.

**Table 11.2: The most frequent referrals by type, 2006–07**

Professional/organisation	Number	Per cent of referrals <sup>(a)</sup>	Per cent of referral group	Rate per 100 encounters (n = 91,805)	95% LCL	95% UCL
<b>Medical specialist</b>	<b>7,387</b>	<b>72.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>8.4</b>
Surgeon	766	7.4	10.4	0.8	0.8	0.9
Ophthalmologist	714	6.9	9.7	0.8	0.7	0.9
Orthopaedic surgeon	687	6.7	9.3	0.8	0.7	0.8
Dermatologist	558	5.4	7.5	0.6	0.5	0.7
Cardiologist	538	5.2	7.3	0.6	0.5	0.7
Gynaecologist	469	4.6	6.3	0.5	0.5	0.6
Ear, nose and throat	459	4.5	6.2	0.5	0.4	0.6
Gastroenterologist	396	3.9	5.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
Urologist	304	3.0	4.1	0.3	0.3	0.4
Neurologist	209	2.0	2.8	0.2	0.2	0.3
<i>Subtotal: top 10 specialist referrals</i>	<i>5,100</i>	<i>50.0</i>	<i>69.0</i>	—	—	—
<b>Allied health and other professionals</b>	<b>2,819</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.3</b>
Physiotherapy	1,010	9.8	35.8	1.1	1.0	1.2
Psychologist	381	3.7	13.5	0.4	0.4	0.5
Podiatrist/chiropracist	290	2.8	10.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Dietitian/nutritionist	210	2.0	7.5	0.2	0.2	0.3
Dentist	148	1.4	5.3	0.2	0.1	0.2
Optometrist	67	0.7	2.4	0.1	0.1	0.1
Diabetes education	61	0.6	2.2	0.1	0.0	0.1
Audiologist	59	0.6	2.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
Counsellor	53	0.5	1.9	0.1	0.0	0.1
Mental health team	46	0.4	1.6	0.1	0.0	0.1
<i>Subtotal: top 10 allied health referrals</i>	<i>2,325</i>	<i>22.8</i>	<i>82.6</i>	—	—	—
<b>Total specialist and allied health referrals</b>	<b>10,206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>11.6</b>

(a) Per cent of referrals to specialists and allied health services.

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

## Problems most often referred

A referral to a specialist was provided in the management of 7,594 problems. The 10 problems most commonly referred to a specialist accounted for 17.7% of all problems referred to a specialist. The problems most often referred were pregnancy (2.8% of problems referred to a specialist), diabetes, malignant skin neoplasm and ischaemic heart disease (Table 11.3).

Table 11.3 also shows the rate of referral per 100 contacts for each problem. Although pregnancy accounted for the greatest proportion of problems referred, the problem most likely to result in a referral to a specialist was cataract, with GPs referring more than two out of every three contacts with a cataract problem.

**Table 11.3: The 10 problems most frequently referred to a medical specialist, 2006–07**

Problem managed	Number	Per cent of problems referred	Rate per 100 encs (n = 91,805)	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rate per 100 contacts of this problem <sup>(a)</sup>
Pregnancy*	213	2.8	0.2	0.2	0.3	18.4
Diabetes—all*	176	2.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	5.2
Malignant skin neoplasm	169	2.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	16.2
Ischaemic heart disease*	142	1.9	0.2	0.1	0.2	12.0
Osteoarthritis*	130	1.7	0.1	0.1	0.2	5.4
Back complaint*	121	1.6	0.1	0.1	0.2	5.0
Depression*	108	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	3.2
Hypertension*	105	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	1.2
Cataract	90	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	71.2
Abnormal test results*	88	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	10.6
<i>Subtotal: top 10 problems referred to a specialist</i>	<i>1,342</i>	<i>17.7</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>
<b>Total problems referred to specialist</b>	<b>7,594</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>—</b>

(a) The rate of referrals to medical specialists per 100 contacts with the problem.

\* Includes multiple ICPC-2 or ICPC-2 PLUS codes (see Appendix 4, <[www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm)>).

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

There were 2,911 problems referred to an allied health professional or service. The 10 most common of these accounted for 43.7% of all problems referred to allied health services, with depression the most common. However, the problem most likely to result in a referral to an allied health service was teeth/gum disease, with more than one in four contacts resulting in referral (Table 11.4).

**Table 11.4: The 10 problems most frequently referred to allied health services, 2006–07**

Problem managed	Number	Per cent of problems referred	Rate per 100 encs (n = 91,805)	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rate per 100 contacts of this problem <sup>(a)</sup>
Depression*	230	7.9	0.3	0.2	0.3	6.8
Back complaint*	220	7.5	0.2	0.2	0.3	9.1
Sprain/strain*	177	6.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	12.4
Diabetes—all*	173	6.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	5.1
Teeth/gum disease	98	3.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	27.0
Anxiety*	90	3.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	5.7
Osteoarthritis*	83	2.9	0.1	0.1	0.1	3.5
Musculoskeletal injury NOS	76	2.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	9.6
Bursitis/tendonitis/synovitis NOS	64	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	8.8
Shoulder syndrome	58	2.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	13.2
<i>Subtotal: top 10 problems referred to AHS</i>	<i>1,269</i>	<i>43.7</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>
<b>Total problems referred to AHS</b>	<b>2,911</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>—</b>

(a) The rate of referrals to allied health services per 100 contacts with the problem.

\* Includes multiple ICPC-2 or ICPC-2 PLUS codes (see Appendix 4, <[www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm)>).

Note: Encs—encounters; LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit; NOS—not otherwise specified; AHS—allied health service.

The 10 problems most frequently referred to hospital are shown in Table 11.5. Fracture was the most common. However, the problem most likely to result in referral was appendicitis.

**Table 11.5: The 10 problems most frequently referred to hospital, 2006–07**

Problem managed	Number	Per cent of problems referred	Rate per 100 encs (n = 91,805)	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rate per 100 contacts of this problem <sup>(a)</sup>
Fracture*	18	4.7	0.02	0.01	0.03	1.9
Pregnancy*	16	4.2	0.02	0.01	0.03	1.4
Pneumonia	15	3.8	0.02	0.01	0.03	5.2
Appendicitis	14	3.7	0.02	0.01	0.02	31.4
Ischaemic heart disease*	11	2.9	0.01	0.00	0.02	1.0
Disease digestive system, other	10	2.7	0.01	0.00	0.02	4.2
Heart failure	10	2.6	0.01	0.00	0.02	1.6
Anaemia*	8	2.2	0.01	0.00	0.02	1.4
Infectious disease, other/NOS	8	2.1	0.01	0.00	0.02	2.5
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	7	1.9	0.01	0.00	0.01	1.0
<i>Subtotal: top 10 problems referred for admission</i>	117	30.8	—	—	—	—
<b>Total problems referred to hospital</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>—</b>

(a) The rate of referrals to hospital per 100 contacts with the problem.

\* Includes multiple ICPC-2 or ICPC-2 PLUS codes (see Appendix 4, <[www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm)>).

Note: Encs—encounters; LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit; NOS—not otherwise specified.

## 11.2 Changes over time, 1998–99 to 2006–07

Table 11.6 shows there was an increasing likelihood that the patient would be referred at the encounters (at 10.6% of encounters in 1998–99 compared with 11.5% in 2006–07), suggesting that the patient was referred to at least one other provider on about 850,000 more occasions in 2006–07 than in 1998–99. There was a significant increase in the overall number of referrals per 100 encounters, from 11.1 in 1998–99 to 12.2 in 2006–07, reflecting both the increased likelihood of referral and a slight increase in the likelihood of multiple referrals at the encounter once the decision to refer has been made.

There were more referrals made to specialists in 2006–07 than in 1998–99. In 1998–99 referrals to specialists were made at a rate of 7.3 per 100 encounters, and increased to 8.0 per 100 in 2006–07. Of the specialist referrals, rates to cardiologists increased significantly and rates to orthopaedic surgeons increased marginally (Table 11.6).

The likelihood of a referral to an allied health service has changed significantly since 1998–99, but not in a linear manner. It decreased from referral at 3.0% of all encounters in 1998–99 to a low of 2.3% in 2001–02, and then steadily increased to 3.1% in 2006–07, the same proportion as in 1999–00. The rate of referrals to psychologists, podiatrist/chiropractists and dietitians/nutritionists all significantly increased between 1998–99 and 2006–07, and referral rates to physiotherapists showed a marginal increase (Table 11.6).

In 2006–07 there were significantly fewer referrals/admissions to hospitals compared with 1998–99 but the numbers were very small in all years (Table 11.6).

**Table 11.6: The most frequent referrals, summary of annual results, BEACH, 1998–99 to 2006–07**

	Rate per 100 encounters <sup>(a)</sup> (95% CI)									Change <sup>(b)</sup>	
	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	↑ ↓	('000)
	(n = 96,901)	(n = 104,856)	(n = 99,307)	(n = 96,973)	(n = 100,987)	(n = 98,877)	(n = 94,386)	(n = 101,993)	(n = 91,805)		
At least one referral	10.6 (10.2–11.0)	10.4 (10.0–10.8)	9.9 (9.6–10.3)	10.0 (9.6–10.4)	10.6 (10.2–11.0)	11.0 (10.5–11.5)	10.9 (10.5–11.3)	11.3 (10.9–11.8)	11.5 (11.0–11.9)	↑	+850
<b>Specialist</b>	<b>7.4</b> <b>(7.1–7.7)</b>	<b>7.3</b> <b>(7.0–7.6)</b>	<b>7.4</b> <b>(7.1–7.7)</b>	<b>7.3</b> <b>(7.0–7.6)</b>	<b>7.7</b> <b>(7.3–8.0)</b>	<b>7.9</b> <b>(7.5–8.2)</b>	<b>7.7</b> <b>(7.4–8.0)</b>	<b>8.2</b> <b>(7.8–8.5)</b>	<b>8.0</b> <b>(7.7–8.4)</b>	↑	<b>+570</b>
Ophthalmologist	0.7 (0.7–0.8)	0.7 (0.6–0.7)	0.7 (0.6–0.7)	0.8 (0.7–0.8)	0.7 (0.7–0.8)	0.8 (0.7–0.9)	0.8 (0.7–0.9)	0.8 (0.7–0.9)	0.8 (0.7–0.9)	—	—
Surgeon	0.8 (0.7–0.9)	0.8 (0.7–0.8)	0.7 (0.7–0.8)	0.8 (0.7–0.8)	0.7 (0.7–0.8)	0.8 (0.8–0.9)	0.8 (0.7–0.9)	0.8 (0.7–0.8)	0.8 (0.8–0.9)	—	—
Orthopaedic surgeon	0.6 (0.5–0.7)	0.7 (0.6–0.7)	0.7 (0.6–0.7)	0.7 (0.7–0.8)	0.8 (0.7–0.8)	0.7 (0.6–0.8)	0.7 (0.6–0.8)	0.7 (0.6–0.8)	0.8 (0.7–0.8)	↑	+200
Dermatologist	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.6 (0.5–0.6)	0.6 (0.5–0.7)	0.6 (0.5–0.7)	0.6 (0.5–0.6)	0.6 (0.6–0.7)	0.7 (0.6–0.8)	0.7 (0.6–0.8)	0.6 (0.5–0.7)	—	—
Cardiologist	0.4 (0.3–0.4)	0.4 (0.3–0.4)	0.4 (0.3–0.4)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	0.5 (0.4–0.6)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.6 (0.5–0.7)	0.6 (0.5–0.7)	↑	+200
Gynaecologist	0.6 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.6 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.6 (0.6–0.7)	0.6 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	—	—
Ear, nose and throat	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.4–0.5)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.4–0.5)	0.5 (0.4–0.6)	—	—
Gastroenterologist	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	0.3 (0.3–0.4)	0.3 (0.3–0.4)	0.4 (0.3–0.5)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	0.4 (0.3–0.4)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	—	—
Urologist	0.3 (0.3–0.4)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	0.3 (0.3–0.3)	0.3 (0.3–0.4)	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.3 (0.3–0.4)	0.3 (0.3–0.4)	—	—
Neurologist	0.2 (0.2–0.2)	0.2 (0.2–0.2)	0.2 (0.2–0.2)	0.2 (0.2–0.2)	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	—	—
Psychiatrist	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	—	—

(continued)

Table 11.6 (continued): The most frequent referrals, summary of annual results, BEACH, 1998–99 to 2006–07

	Rate per 100 encounters <sup>(a)</sup> (95% CI)									Change <sup>(b)</sup>	
	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	↑ ↓	('000)
	(n = 96,901)	(n = 104,856)	(n = 99,307)	(n = 96,973)	(n = 100,987)	(n = 98,877)	(n = 94,386)	(n = 101,993)	(n = 91,805)		
<b>Allied health service</b>	<b>3.0</b> (2.8–3.2)	<b>3.1</b> (2.9–3.3)	<b>2.3</b> (2.2–2.5)	<b>2.3</b> (2.1–2.4)	<b>2.5</b> (2.3–2.7)	<b>2.6</b> (2.4–2.8)	<b>2.7</b> (2.5–2.9)	<b>2.9</b> (2.7–3.1)	<b>3.1</b> (2.9–3.3)	§	—
Physiotherapy	0.9 (0.8–1.0)	1.0 (0.9–1.1)	1.0 (0.9–1.1)	0.9 (0.8–1.0)	1.1 (0.9–1.2)	1.0 (0.9–1.1)	1.1 (0.9–1.1)	1.1 (1.0–1.3)	1.1 (1.0–1.2)	↑	+200
Psychologist	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	↑	+200
Podiatrist/chiropracist	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.1 (0.1–0.2)	0.1 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.2–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	0.3 (0.3–0.4)	↑	+100
Dietitian/nutritionist	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.2)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.2–0.2)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	0.2 (0.2–0.3)	↑	+100
Dentist	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	—	—
Optometrist	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	—	—
Counsellor	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	—	—
Audiologist/acoustic testing	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	—	—
Diabetes education	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	—	—
Mental health team	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	—	—
Drug and alcohol	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	—	—
Aged care assessment	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	—	—

(continued)

**Table 11.6 (continued): The most frequent referrals, summary of annual results, BEACH, 1998–99 to 2006–07**

	Rate per 100 encounters <sup>(a)</sup> (95% CI)									Change <sup>(b)</sup>	
	1998–99 (n = 96,901)	1999–00 (n = 104,856)	2000–01 (n = 99,307)	2001–02 (n = 96,973)	2002–03 (n = 100,987)	2003–04 (n = 98,877)	2004–05 (n = 94,386)	2005–06 (n = 101,993)	2006–07 (n = 91,805)	↑ ↓	('000)
Chiropractor	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	—	—
Breast clinic	NAv	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.0)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	0.0 <sup>‡</sup> (0.0–0.1)	—	—
<b>Hospital</b>	<b>0.7</b> <b>(0.6–0.8)</b>	<b>0.7</b> <b>(0.6–0.8)</b>	<b>0.5</b> <b>(0.4–0.6)</b>	<b>0.4</b> <b>(0.4–0.5)</b>	<b>0.6</b> <b>(0.5–0.6)</b>	<b>0.6</b> <b>(0.5–0.6)</b>	<b>0.5</b> <b>(0.4–0.5)</b>	<b>0.4</b> <b>(0.3–0.4)</b>	<b>0.4</b> <b>(0.3–0.5)</b>	↓	–310
<b>Emergency department</b>	<b>0.1</b> <b>(0.0–0.1)</b>	<b>0.1</b> <b>(0.1–0.1)</b>	<b>0.1</b> <b>(0.1–0.1)</b>	<b>0.1</b> <b>(0.1–0.2)</b>	<b>0.1</b> <b>(0.1–0.2)</b>	<b>0.2</b> <b>(0.1–0.2)</b>	<b>0.2</b> <b>(0.1–0.2)</b>	<b>0.2</b> <b>(0.2–0.2)</b>	<b>0.2</b> <b>(0.1–0.2)</b>	↑	+100
<b>Other referrals/other medical services<sup>(c)</sup></b>	<b>0.0<sup>‡</sup></b> <b>(0.0–0.0)</b>	<b>0.0<sup>‡</sup></b> <b>(0.0–0.0)</b>	<b>0.2</b> <b>(0.1–0.2)</b>	<b>0.4</b> <b>(0.3–0.4)</b>	<b>0.3</b> <b>(0.2–0.3)</b>	<b>0.4</b> <b>(0.4–0.5)</b>	<b>0.4</b> <b>(0.4–0.5)</b>	<b>0.4</b> <b>(0.3–0.4)</b>	<b>0.5</b> <b>(0.5–0.6)</b>	↑	+510
<b>Total referrals</b>	<b>11.1</b> <b>(10.7–11.6)</b>	<b>11.1</b> <b>(10.7–11.6)</b>	<b>10.4</b> <b>(10.0–10.8)</b>	<b>10.5</b> <b>(10.1–10.9)</b>	<b>11.1</b> <b>(10.7–11.6)</b>	<b>11.6</b> <b>(11.1–12.1)</b>	<b>11.5</b> <b>(11.1–12.0)</b>	<b>12.0</b> <b>(11.5–12.5)</b>	<b>12.2</b> <b>(11.7–12.7)</b>	↑	+1050

(a) Column will not add to 100 because multiple referrals could be written at each encounter.

(b) The direction and type of change from 1998–99 to 2006–07 is indicated for each variable: ↑/↓ indicates a statistically significant change, ↑/↓ indicates a marginal change, § indicates a non-linear significant or marginal change, and — indicates there was no change. Statistically significant linear changes have been extrapolated to estimate the national average annual change and are reported in thousands in the far right column.

(c) Other referrals and other medical services have been reported together for comparability. The 'other medical services' group was introduced in 2003–04, previously these were grouped with 'other referrals'.

‡ Rates are reported to one decimal place. This indicates that the rate is < 0.05 per 100 encounters.

Note: CI—confidence interval; NAv—not available.