General practitioners (GPs) are often the first point of contact in matters of personal health. General practice provides person centred, continuing, comprehensive and coordinated whole person health care to individuals and families in their communities. A minimum of 3 years full-time training through the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners is required to specialise in this area.

**Workforce**

In 2016, there were 23,283 GPs employed in Australia, of whom 90.5% worked in the private sector. The majority (96.2%) of GPs who completed the 2016 National Health Workforce Survey indicated they were clinicians.

**Demographics of clinicians**

Males represented 59.4% of clinicians in 2016 and had an average age of 55.8 years. Females represented 40.6% of clinicians and were on average 4.8 years younger than male clinicians.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% of clinicians</th>
<th>Average age</th>
<th>Average hours per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinician total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 32% of clinicians were aged 50-59 years and over 25% were aged 40-49 years.

**Distribution of clinicians**

In 2016, the majority (74.7%) of clinicians were located in a major city or a location considered as MMM1 under the Modified Monash Model classification system.

**Quick facts of clinician workforce**

- 31.7% Aged 60 or older
- 53.8 Average age
- 37.4 Average hours per week
- 40.6% Female
- 74.7% Located in a major city
- 51.5% Intend to retire within 10 years

Over 30% of clinicians indicated their principle place of practice was in New South Wales and 24% indicated it was in Victoria.

There was an average of 92.5 clinicians per 100,000 population across Australia in 2016. Tasmania had the highest ratio of clinicians in 2016, with 105.6 per 100,000 population followed by South Australia with 104.3. Only three jurisdictions had less than the national average of Australia; New South Wales (89.3), Victoria (88) and Western Australia (88.2).

**New fellows**

The number of general practice new fellows increased by 10.9% between 2013 and 2015. Overseas trained new fellows who obtained their specialist qualification outside of Australia increased by 12.3% during this period.
Vocational training

The total number of trainees increased by 36.3% from 2013 to 2016. 61.5% of trainees were female.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2,609</td>
<td>1,565</td>
<td>4,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,861</td>
<td>1,728</td>
<td>4,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3,267</td>
<td>1,961</td>
<td>5,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>2,189</td>
<td>5,689</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change 2013-16 (%)

- 34.2% 39.9% 36.3%

Vocational intentions

In 2016, there were 1,321 Hospital Non-Specialists (HNS*) who indicated their intention to undertake general practice vocational training.

*A HNS is a medical practitioner employed in a salaried position mainly in a hospital. They do not hold a specialist qualification and are not training to obtain one. They include career medical officers, hospital medical officers, interns, principal house officers, resident medical officers and registrars.

References

2) RACGP and ACRRM.
4) ABS 3101.0 – Australian Demographics Statistics. Released 22/09/16.

Workforce dynamics indicator*

The workforce dynamics indicator highlights areas of concern in the future. The indicators measured and their current status is highlighted in the table below.

**Note:** The workforce dynamics indicators are for workforce assessment purposes only and are not intended to guide future training numbers.

- Further information on the workforce dynamics indicator is available at health.gov.au

**Indicator**

- **Ageing of workforce**
  - Workforces with higher average ages are more susceptible to higher exit rates due to retirements.
  - Status: Significant concern (Orange)

- **Replacement rate**
  - This measure indicates whether trainee numbers are sufficient to replace the numbers leaving the workforce.
  - Status: Minimal concern (Green)

- **Reliance on Overseas Trained Specialists (OTS)**
  - Workforces with high proportions of OTS are of concern because they depend on a supply stream affected by immigration policies that change.
  - Status: Minimal concern (Green)

- **Duration of training program**
  - This measure indicates how long it takes to train a replacement workforce.
  - Status: Minimal concern (Green)

Copyright

© 2017 Commonwealth of Australia as represented by the Department of Health. This work is copyright. You may copy, print, download, display and reproduce the whole or part of this work in unaltered form for your own personal use or, if you are part of an organisation, for internal use within your organisation, but only if you or your organisation:

- do not use the copy or reproduction for any commercial purpose; and
- retain this copyright notice and all disclaimer notices as part of that copy or reproduction.

Apart from rights as permitted by the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) or allowed by this copyright notice, all other rights are reserved, including (but not limited to) all commercial rights.

Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and other rights to use are to be sent to the Communication Branch, Department of Health, GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601, or via e-mail to corporatecomms@health.gov.au.