Sexual health medicine

2016 Factsheet

Sexual health medicine is the specialised area of medical practice concerned with healthy sexual relations, including freedom from sexually transmissible infections (STIs), unplanned pregnancy, coercion, and physical or psychological discomfort associated with sexuality. A minimum of three years full-time advanced training through the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Australasian Chapter of Sexual Health Medicine is required to specialise in this area.

Workforce

In 2016, there were 114 sexual health medicine specialists employed in Australia, of whom 28.1% worked in the private sector. Over 85% of sexual medicine specialists who completed the 2016 National Health Workforce Survey indicated they were clinicians.

Demographics of clinicians

Males represented 45.4% of clinicians in 2016 and had an average age of 56.3 years. Females represented 54.6% of clinicians and were on average 2.2 years younger than males.

Distribution of clinicians

In 2016, the majority (84.5%) 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

- 35.1% Aged 60 or older
- 55.1% Average age
- 26.9% Average hours per week
- 54.6% % Female
- 84.5% % Located in a major city
- 60.4% % Intend to retire within 10 years

Nearly half of all sexual health medicine clinicians indicated their principle place of practice was located in New South Wales.

The Australian Capital Territory had the highest ratio of clinicians in 2016 with 1.0 per 100,000 population. The Northern Territory had the second highest ratio with 0.8 per 100,000 population.

New fellows

The number of sexual health medicine new fellows in 2015(6) was double the number in 2013(3). The number of overseas trained new fellows who obtained their specialist qualification outside of Australia in 2015(4) was four times higher than the number in 2013(1).
In 2015, 66.7% of new fellows were female.

**New fellows by gender, 2013-15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Change 2013-16 (%)**

- Females: -42.9%
- Males: -16.7%
- Total: -35.0%

**Vocational training**

Female trainees outnumbered male trainees in every year between 2013 and 2016. During this period, the total number of trainees decreased by 35.0%.

**Trainee numbers, 2013-16**

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**Change 2013-16 (%)**

- Females: -42.9%
- Males: -16.7%
- Total: -35.0%

**Vocational intentions**

In 2016, there were 5 Hospital Non-Specialists (HNS*) who indicated their intention to undertake vocational training in sexual health medicine. They were aged between 25 and 39 years old.

* 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.

**Ages of HNS who intend to undertake sexual health medicine training, 2016**

- Ages: 25-29 and 35-39

**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

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ageing of workforce</td>
<td>Workforces with higher average ages are more susceptible to higher exit rates due to retirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replacement rate</td>
<td>This measure indicates whether trainee numbers are sufficient to replace the numbers leaving the workforce.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reliance on Overseas Trained Specialists (OTS)</td>
<td>Workforces with high proportions of OTS are of concern because they depend on a supply stream affected by immigration policies that change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration of training program</td>
<td>This measure indicates how long it takes to train a replacement workforce.</td>
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</table>

**References**

4. ABS 3101.0 – Australian Demographics Statistics. Released 22/09/16.

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