Podiatrists

2017 Factsheet

Podiatrists are registered healthcare practitioners trained to assess, diagnose and treat foot, ankle, and lower limb problems. Podiatrists treat biomechanical, pain related, and skin conditions as well as assisting in the management of chronic conditions such as poor circulation, and conditions affecting toenails.

To gain registration as a podiatrist, practitioners must complete a minimum three-year undergraduate or two-year postgraduate Master program of study approved by the Podiatry Board of Australia. Further training is required for the registration in the specialty of podiatric surgery.

The following analysis of the podiatry workforce is drawn from the number of podiatrists with general/specialist registration who are employed (4,491 in 2017) unless otherwise stated.

Workforce

Figure 1: Podiatry registrations, 2017

Table 1: Podiatrists, 2014-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Registered</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Clinicians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>4,316</td>
<td>3,951</td>
<td>3,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4,547</td>
<td>4,127</td>
<td>3,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4,756</td>
<td>4,327</td>
<td>4,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4,900</td>
<td>4,491</td>
<td>4,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. annual growth</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2017, 26 podiatrists held a ‘Podiatric Surgeon’ specialty, an increase from 24 podiatrists in 2014.

Demographics

In 2017, female podiatrists comprised 58.6% of the workforce; a decrease from 59.8% in 2014.

Figure 2: Registered podiatrists, gender distribution, 2014-2017

In 2017, the average age of the workforce was 38.1 years, an increase from 37.6 years in 2014. The proportion of female podiatrists aged under 35 years decreased from 29.0% of the workforce in 2014 to 27.7% in 2017.

Figure 3: and gender distribution, 2014 and 2017

The number of registered podiatrists increased by 13.5% from 4,316 in 2014 to 4,900 in 2017 (average annual growth of 4.3%). The number of employed podiatrists (‘workforce’) increased by 13.7% from 3,951 to 4,491 over the same period (an average annual increase of 4.4%).
Quick Facts - 2017

Figure 4: Summary, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>Average age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>Average weekly hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>% female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>% born in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>% with Australian qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>% in major cities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Replacement Rate

In 2017, there were 1.9 new registrants for every podiatrist that did not renew their registration from 2016.

Hours Worked

In 2017, podiatrists worked an average of 36.0 hours per week in total, and worked an average of 4.4 hours per week in non-clinical roles.

Table 2: Average hours per week, 2014-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average hours worked</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-clinical</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2017, female podiatrists worked an average of 32.9 hours per week, a decrease from 33.3 in 2014. Male podiatrists worked an average of 40.2 hours per week, decreasing from 40.8 hours in 2014. In 2017, males in the 35-44 age group worked the most hours, at 41.6 hours per week on average.

Figure 5: Average hours per week by gender and age group, 2014 and 2017

Principal Role

In 2017, 95.5% of podiatrists worked as clinicians in their principal role, an increase from 95.0% in 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Principal role, 2014 and 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headcount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher or educator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Endorsements

In 2017, 1.8% of the podiatry workforce held a scheduled medicines endorsement, an increase from 1.6% in 2014.

Principal Work Sector

In 2017, 13.0% of the workforce reported that in their principal role, they worked only in the public sector, a decrease from 13.3% in 2014.

Figure 6: Sector in which clinical hours were worked, 2014 and 2017

Principal Work Setting

In 2017, 43.1% of podiatrists worked in Group private practice, an increase from 41.4% in 2014 and 28.7% worked in Solo private practice, a decrease from 29.5% in 2014.

In 2017, podiatrists working in Locum private practice reported the highest average weekly hours (40.4) and those in an Aboriginal health service reported the lowest average weekly hours (26.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Principal work setting, 2014 and 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal work setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group private practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solo private practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other community health care service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outpatient service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential aged care facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contact: healthworkforcedata@health.gov.au

NHWDS Data Tool and Resources: http://hwd.health.gov.au
Distribution

State and Territory

In 2017, the jurisdictions with the highest rates of full-time equivalent podiatrists per 100,000 population (FTE rate) were SA and VIC. Between 2014 and 2017, the total FTE rate increased from 16.1 to 17.3 and TAS had the largest FTE rate increase (2.0).

Table 5: Distribution by state/territory, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State / Territory</th>
<th>Headcount</th>
<th>Total FTE</th>
<th>Avg. total hours</th>
<th>2°FTE rate per 100,000 population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>1,277</td>
<td>1,223.5</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>1,417</td>
<td>1,310.5</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>776.6</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>370.8</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>381.7</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,491</td>
<td>4,249.5</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ‘Not stated/Unknown’ responses are excluded from this table but are included in the total.

In 2017, podiatrists in the NT worked the most hours per week on average (40.1 hours) and those in WA worked the fewest (33.6 hours).

Remoteness Area

In 2017, 93.7% of the podiatry workforce worked in either major cities or inner regional locations, compared to 93.5% in 2014.

Between 2014 and 2017, the largest shift in average hours worked was in very remote areas, decreasing from 41.7 hours per week in 2014 to 40.3 hours per week in 2017. However, due to the increase in the number of podiatrists and a decrease in population in very remote areas, the FTE rate in increased by 2.6.

Table 6: Distribution by remoteness area, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remoteness Area</th>
<th>Headcount</th>
<th>Total FTE</th>
<th>Avg. total hours</th>
<th>2°FTE rate per 100,000 population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major cities</td>
<td>3,391</td>
<td>3,182.3</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner regional</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>782.9</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer regional</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>232.2</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very remote</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,491</td>
<td>4,249.5</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ‘Not stated/Unknown’ responses are excluded from this table but are included in the total
Other Work Location Outside Major Cities

In 2017, 14.7% of the podiatry workforce reported that they had worked in a regional, rural or remote location, in addition to their principal job location. Of these respondents, 51.0% had worked in an inner regional location, 30.0% had worked in an outer regional location, 4.7% had worked in remote and 4.1% had worked in very remote locations.

Modified Monash Model locations

In 2017, the majority (74.9%) of FTE podiatrists were located in a major city or a location considered as MMM1 under the Modified Monash Model (MMM) classification system – a decrease from 75.9% in 2014. (see www.doctorconnect.gov.au for more information on the MMM). MMM3 locations had the highest FTE rate of podiatrists (21.8), followed by MMM4 (19.1). The lowest FTE rate was in MMM5 locations (5.5).

Figure 9: FTE distribution by MMM location, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MMM1</th>
<th>MMM2</th>
<th>MMM3</th>
<th>MMM4</th>
<th>MMM5</th>
<th>MMM6</th>
<th>MMM7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Tele-health

The workforce survey asks podiatrists to report their hours practiced via tele-health in podiatry in the previous year.

Note: Tele-health is the use of telecommunication techniques for the purpose of providing telemedicine, medical education, and health education over a distance.

A total of 189 podiatrists (4.2%) provided a response to the Tele-Health question in 2017. On average, these respondents practiced via Tele-Health for 10.5 hours per week, with the majority (73.0%) of Tele-Health services provided by podiatrists based in a major city.

Table 7: Tele-Health workforce remoteness location, 2017

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