

2007 GP Workforce Snapshot - Victoria

Albury Wodonga Regional GP Network

Introduction

Rural GP workforce profile

Practices



Introduction

The Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) collects information on the rural GP workforce to assist with the recruitment and retention of GPs in rural practices.

Information is collected on an ongoing basis from several sources¹.

This report contains information on the demographics and workforce participation of the rural GP workforce and the composition of medical practices in Victorian towns within the Albury Wodonga Regional General Practice Network (AWRGPN).

RWAV would like to thank the rural Divisions of General Practice for their continued support and assistance with the GP and practice survey.

Highlights²

- 28 Victorian GPs (29 full-time equivalent GPs) work principally within AWRGPN – which is 3% of the Victorian rural GP workforce
- The Division covers approximately 3% of the rural Victorian population and has an estimated 1 GP per 1,450 Victorian residents
- GPs within the Division are ageing – the average age of Victorian GPs within the Division is 51.8 years (rural Victorian average is 49.5 years)
- The average length of time Victorian GPs within the Division have worked in their current practice is 10.5 years
- There are 10 Victorian GP practices within the Division of which 30% are solo practices

1) Data sources include the Medical Practitioners Board of Victoria online list of medical practitioners, Divisions of General Practice, contact with practitioners and other medical practice staff, RWAVs annual telephone survey of practices and RWAVs annual mail survey of GPs and practices, and NSWDRD

2) The information in this report was current as at 30 November 2007.

Rural GP workforce profile

There are 1,220 GPs practising in rural³ Victoria. Of these, 140 (11%) are registrars.

This section presents information on the demographics of the permanent rural GP workforce within AWRGPN. As the placement terms of GP registrars are short term – typically ranging from six to twelve months, they are not part of the permanent workforce and thus have not been included in this section.

Three percent (3%) of the rural Victorian GP workforce works principally in a location within AWRGPN, and the Division covers approximately 3% of the total rural Victorian population. There is an estimated 1 GP to every 1,450 residents.

The number of Victorian GPs (headcount and full-time equivalent - FTE) within the Division is presented in Table 1.

FTE values were created based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) definition of full-time work - which is 35 or more hours per week. For GPs this would equate to 9 or more sessions per week of 3.9 hours in duration⁴. Please note that the FTE calculation is based on clinical hours worked in GP practices only, not total hours worked in all settings.

A profile of the GP workforce within the Division, by Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Area (RRMA), gender, age and country of qualification, is presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Headcount and FTE of rural GPs within AWRGPN

	Headcount	FTE
Albury Wodonga RGPN	28	29

Note: Victoria only (excludes NSW)

Table 2: Profile of Victorian rural GPs within AWRGPN (N=28)

RRMA		
3	28	100%
4		
5		
7		
Gender		
Males	21	75%
Females	7	25%
Age (years), mean*		
Males	53.4	
Females	47.0	
Overall	51.8	
*Missing age data for 4 GPs (3 males and 1 female)		
Country of qualification		
Australian graduates	23	82%
International graduates	5	18%

3) Defined as Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Area (RRMA) three to seven classified locations.

4) Consistent with this, the average session length reported by GPs in RWAVs 2007 GP survey is 3.9 hours.

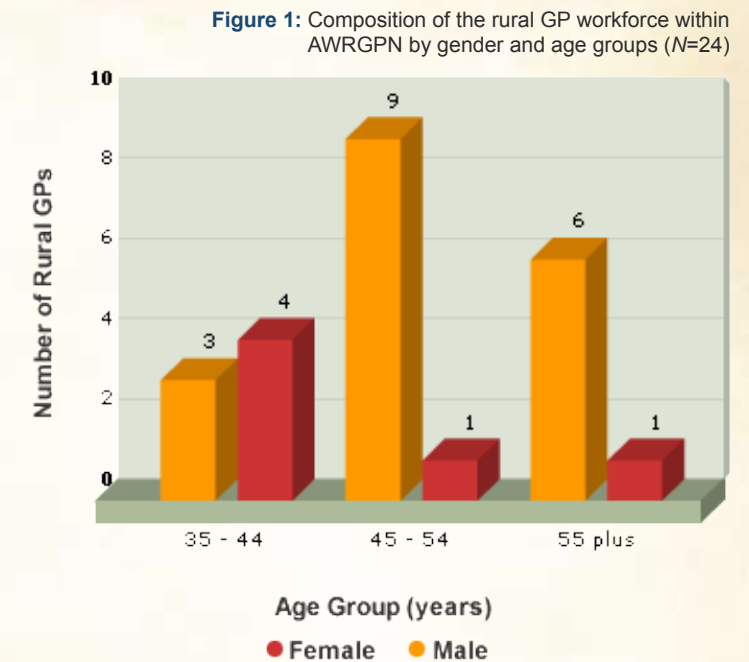
Females comprise one-quarter of the Victorian rural workforce within the Division, which is a lower proportion of female GPs compared to rural Victoria overall (where females comprise 30% of the GP workforce).

Consistent with rural Victoria overall, female GPs within the Division are, on average, younger than their male counterparts. However, the average age of Victorian GPs within the Division is older than the average age of GPs across rural Victoria (which is 49.5 years).

The distribution of male and female GPs across age groups is displayed in Figure 1.

Consistent with rural Victoria overall, the highest number of GPs within the Division are in the 45 – 54 year age group.

Twenty nine percent (29%) of GPs within the Division are aged over 55 years – which is also consistent with rural Victoria overall (where 27% of GPs are aged over 55).



International Medical Graduates

There are proportionally fewer international medical graduates (IMGs) within AWRGPN compared to rural Victoria overall. IMGs comprise 18% of the workforce within the Division - compared to 34% of the total Victorian rural GP workforce.

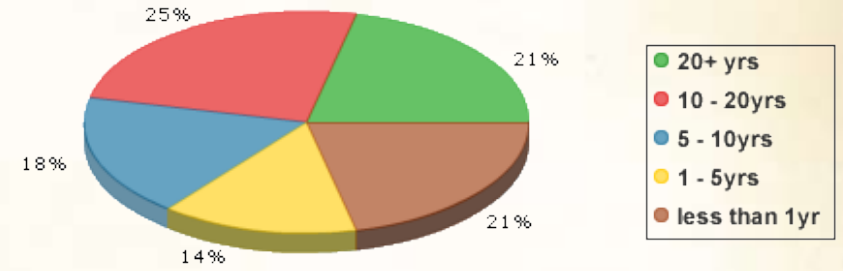
The IMGs practising within the Division gained their basic medical qualification from 4 different countries - with the largest proportion trained India (7%).

Length of employment

Most commonly, GPs have worked at their current practice for 10 to 20 years (Figure 2) - suggesting quite stable patterns of GP availability within the Division.

The average length of time GPs within AWRGPN have worked at their current practice is 10.5 years.

Figure 2: Length of employment - current practice (N=28)



Practices

There are 10 Victorian GP practices within AWRGPN. Almost one-third (30%) are solo practices (refer to Table 3).

Of the 28 Victorian GPs within the Division:

- 11% work principally in solo practice
- 36% work principally in a group practice with four or fewer (principally based) GPs
- 53% work principally in a group practice with five or more (principally based) GPs.

Table 3: Practice types

Division of General Practice	Group	Solo	Total
Albury Wodonga RGPN	7	3	10
% of total Victoria rural practices	3%	3%	3%

Within the Division, GPs also provide services to 1 branch practice.