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DENTISTS WORKING IN NSW

This section documents the number and characteristics of dentists working in NSW in 2001.

- From 1998 to 2001, the NSW dentist labour force is estimated to have grown from a headcount of 3,197 to 3,267 (after adjusting for non response, see Section 1, p.5, "Estimating Labour force Size"). This represents an increase of 2.2% over the three years, or a growth of 0.7% per annum on average. This estimate assumes that non-respondents to the survey participated at the same rate in the labour force as respondents.
- Labour force participation rates for dentists in NSW were at similar levels between 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001 (80.5%, 80.3%, 80.0% and 80.2% respectively).
- Male dentists are 76.7% of the total labour force, while the proportion of women in the dentist labour force is 23.3%, with a greater proportion of females in younger age groups. Some 56.5% of the female labour force were aged under 40, while only 28.7% of males were under forty years in 2001. However, men are greater in numbers in all age groups except for the group 24 years and younger, varying from 98.4% of all dentists in the 70 to 74 age group, to the lowest proportion of 40.5% for those under 25 years.
- Just over one third or 35.3% of the labour force are aged under forty years, 31.6% are aged 40 to 49 years, 20.2% are aged 50 to 59 years, and 13.0% of the labour force are 60 years and older. This indicates a middle aged labour force overall, with the modal age range being 40 to 44 years and 45 to 49 years (ie the age range with the greatest number of working dentists).
- Some 5.3% of dentists working in NSW are also registered interstate, with the highest proportion being registered in Queensland (2.5% of the total workforce), followed by Victoria (1.8%).
- Of the 2,700 dentists in the labour force, some 719 identified that they worked in a second practice location (26.6% of the labour force), while some 185 identified that they worked in a third practice location (6.9%) (see comments, page 3, non-response to filtering questions)
- Some 87.0% of the labour force are working in a general practice in their main practice, with 9.8% in a registered specialist practice. Only 1.1% were working in administration, 1.1% in teaching/education, 0.3% in research, and 0.7% in other positions. This varies with the second practice, with 71.0% in a general practice, 20.8% in a registered specialist practice, 0.6% working in administration, 5.3% in teaching/education, 0.6% in research, and 1.8% in other positions. For the third practice, 48.6% were in a general practice, 37.3% in a registered specialist practice, 1.6% in administration, 8.6% in teaching/education, 1.1% in research, and 2.7% in other positions.

- Some 266 dentists or 9.9% of the total labour force indicated an area of registered specialist practice (NOTE: "Registered specialist practice" is the practice of a dentist who is recognised by the Dental Board of New South Wales as a specialist practitioner in one special branch of dentistry.) The largest group worked in orthodontics (48.1% of the respondents to this question), followed by prosthodontics (13.2%) and oral & maxillofacial surgery (10.5%).
- The overwhelming majority of the labour force are in private practice (84.3%) in their main practice, with 12.7% of the total labour force working in the public sector, 1.1% in tertiary education, 0.4% in industry and 1.4% in other jobs. Some 36.9% were in solo private practice, with another 15.1% in solo practice with assistants. Some 12.3% were in an associateship, 9.1% in a partnership, and 10.1% in an assistant role. The major area of employment in the public sector was dental hospital (4.5% of the total labour force) followed by other hospitals (3.2%). The private sector participation rate was lower with the second practice, with 78.4% working in the private sector, and 15.3% in the public sector; including other hospitals (3.8%), and the dental hospital (3.6%). Tertiary education accounted for 4.5% of the labour force in a second job. For the third practice, some 69.6% of dentists were working in a private practice, 21.2% in public practice and 6.5% in tertiary education.
- The proportion of self-employed dentists changes from 72.9% for the main practice, to 59.5% to the second practice, to 50.3% for the third practice.
- Some 51.3% of dentists reported working part time (hours worked less than 35 hours per week) **in direct patient care in their main practice location**. Women were more likely to work part time than men (65.3% of women compared with 47.0% of men). Virtually all respondents worked less than 35 hours per week in direct patient care in their second and third practice locations. The direct patient care hours were added together across the three practice locations to give total direct patient care hours (Table 3.19). Some 37.2% of dentists reported working part time in direct patient care in terms of total hours worked. Women were still more likely to work part time than men (53.6% of women compared with 32.0% of men).
- Some 36.4% of dentists reported working part time (hours worked less than 35 hours per week) in terms of **total hours worked in their main practice location**. Women were more likely to work part time than men (49.8% of women compared with 32.3% of men). Virtually all respondents worked less than 35 hours per week in total in their second and third practice locations. The total hours were added together across the three practice locations to give total hours usually worked per week (Table 3.23). **Some 21.7% of dentists reported working part time in terms of total hours worked across all practice locations**. Women were still more likely to work part time than men (36.7% of women compared with 17.3% of men).
- The full time equivalent dentist labour force (FTE labour force) consists of an estimated 2,939.7 FTE (see Table 3.15) from the 2,487 dentists who provided data on their hours worked (Table 3.23). Therefore the ratio of the FTE labour force of 1.1820 compared to total numbers indicates that dentists work on average 18% more than a participant in the general labour force working 35 hours a week. This is due to the larger number of dentists who work 35 hours or greater contributing more to the productive labour force. Women were 591.8 FTE (20.1% of the FTE labour force) and men 2,347.9 (79.9%).
- In 2001, the main practice location for 85.4% of dentists was in Metropolitan Area Health Services, with 73.5% in Metropolitan Sydney and 11.9% in other major Metropolitan areas. South Eastern Sydney was the main job location for 25.2% of dentists with Northern Sydney having 19.5%. Rural Area Health services were the main job location for 14.5% of dentists, with Northern Rivers having the highest proportion in a rural area at 3.4%. The distribution showed a similar proportion of dentists in Metropolitan Area Health Services in their second practice location (85.9%), although the proportion was lower for a third practice location (83.4%). Women were more likely than men to work in Metropolitan Area Health Service locations in their main practice (89.2% of women, 84.9% of men) and very few female dentists worked in rural areas in a second and third practice.