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INTRODUCTION

The annual podiatrist labour force survey

Introduction

Each year, as part of the annual registration process for podiatrists in NSW, an Annual Labour Force Survey is sent to each podiatrist currently registered with the Podiatrists Registration Board of New South Wales. This report provides an overview of information from the 2003 workforce survey.

The response rate to the survey was 77.9% in 2002 and 81.8% in 2003, indicating a slight increase in the response rate. The continued support of the Podiatry Registration Board of New South Wales, professional organisations and podiatrists participating in the survey is appreciated.

Availability of survey information

The most recent summary of the Annual Survey data was produced in 2001, entitled "Profile of the Podiatrist Labour force in NSW, 2001". This profile reproduces the same data as for the 2001 profile as there have been no coding or design changes to the survey form in that time. Additional survey analysis data such as additional cross tabulations can be obtained by forwarding a written request to the contact address in the front of the publication. Contact should be made to clarify the information required and to determine if a fee may apply. A charging policy is available on request.

Strict procedures are followed to ensure the privacy of individual podiatrists who respond to the Survey. There is no access to identifying data, as individual names and addresses are not included by the Board on the data file. Survey information will not be made available in any format that enables the identification of individual respondents.

Methodology

Timing of the 2003 Survey

Information from the 2003 Annual Labour Force Survey relates to the 2003 registration renewal period. Renewal notices and surveys were forwarded in April 2003 to podiatrists registered with the Podiatrists Registration Board of New South Wales at that time. The renewal fee was due by the end of June in order for the podiatrist to be retained on the register, as non-financial podiatrists had their status altered on the data base by the beginning of July, 2003 and by Board consent in mid-July, 2003. Survey respondents completed the survey with information about their usual working situation at that time.

Information regarding the registration status of podiatrists was provided by the Board which related to the period from July 2002 to end June 2003.

Labour force Survey coverage

Information from the Annual Labour Force Survey does not cover all registered podiatrists in NSW. Only those registrants renewing their registration are forwarded a survey form. This excludes:

- **New registrants:** New registrants include new local graduates, interstate graduates and overseas trained podiatrists registering for the first time with the NSW Board who have had their qualifications recognised in NSW. These persons will normally not receive the labour force survey, but new registrants receive the survey form if they also renew in the same financial year.
- **Restorations:** Restorations are persons who have been restored to the register after a period in which they were not financial. These persons will not normally receive the annual survey, unless they also renew in the same financial year.
- **Technical restorations:** Some podiatrists are restorations simply due to late payment, as they are removed from the register and then reinstated on receipt of the payment of the renewal fee. These podiatrists have usually completed a survey form, and therefore if they have provided survey data they have been included in the data analysis for this profile. Prior to the 2000 profile the definition of respondents was those podiatrists **renewing** their registration who completed or part completed a survey form.
- **Technical renewals:** There are a group of podiatrists who either pay their registration fee early or who pay in advance and earn a credit as they will not be able to make their payment at the usual time. If these podiatrists were sent a survey form in the year of renewal and are still financial in that year they have now been included in the survey population, and their returned survey forms included as respondents. This group has now been defined as **technical renewals, even though no transaction may have been recorded for the year of the survey**. This process has occurred for 2001, 2002 and 2003.

The definition of response until the 2000 profile was restricted to those respondents who completed the question on workforce status. It has been identified that a number of podiatrists have not completed the question on workforce status, but have completed the majority of the remainder of the survey form including the provision of a New South Wales postcode for work location, as well as other data such as hours worked. It was therefore decided for data completeness, to include both of those categories in the definition of respondents, as a workforce status could be derived.

The adoption of these changes in the approach to survey coverage, and definition of respondents, means that the data will now be compatible with definitions of the workforce used by the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare in preparing national profiles. However, it also means that the raw data on workforce size may show considerable variation from previous years. This is analysed in detail in the Section on "Estimating Workforce Size".

Care should be taken when interpreting this data as some individual podiatrists may be included in more than one of the categories during the twelve month period.

Figures have not been adjusted for non-response

Data in this publication have not been adjusted for unknown information (both survey non-response and registration data such as year of birth or sex). When interpreting the tables, consideration should be given to the impact of unknown data:

- The absence of data due to non-response results in an under-representation of the size of the labour force in individual tables.
- The labour force characteristics of non-respondents may differ from the characteristics of survey respondents (for example, respondents may be more likely than non-respondents to be in the labour

force). Weighting the survey data according to non-response alone may result in an overestimation or under-estimation in some categories.

- The labour force characteristics of podiatrists who are not part of the survey target group (that is, new registrants and restorations) may differ from the characteristics of the survey population.

Calculating total unknown data for the survey

In determining the total unknown data for a particular question, consideration should be given to:

- **Unknown data for the question or questions comprising the table**, as indicated at the foot of each table. This may also include information that is unknown due to registration data (eg, year of birth) being unavailable from the Board.
- **Non-response to any filtering questions**. Data on second and other practice location/job will be affected by the lack of the explicit question “Do you work from other location(s), and if so how many?” The number of persons with second locations/jobs can be estimated from the highest response to any one question (Table 3.19 n=164 for second practice location) and can be used to estimate unknown data in relevant questions.
- **Non-response to the survey**. Survey response rates are presented in Table 1.1.

It should be noted that limitations in the survey data prevent a distinction between non-response and alternatives such as “no”, “other” or “zero”. Information regarding this is noted at the foot of the relevant tables.

Conventions used in this publication

Throughout this publication, figures within the tables may not add to the total shown where it has been necessary to round numbers. Percentages printed as 0.0 may denote less than 0.05%.

Italics are used to report unknown data.

— denotes not applicable.

Bold is used to indicate a total or subtotal.

n/a denotes data is not available.

Category of Podiatrist Registration

Table 1.1: Persons registered as Podiatrists in NSW, 2003

Category of registration	No.	Row %	No.	Row %	No.	Row %
	Female		Male		Total	
New registrants ²	5	71.4%	2	28.6%	7	100.0%
Renewals	402	60.5%	263	39.5%	665	100.0%
Technical restorations	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
True restorations ³	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%
Technical renewals	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%
Deletions	23	56.1%	18	43.9%	41	100.0%

Notes:

- 1 The table includes information on podiatrists who were financial with the Board during 2003. Some podiatrists are included in more than one category during the twelve month period.
- 2 The Board data indicated that there were 42 financial and 5 unfinancial new registrations. A large number of these had multiple transactions, and 35 financial new registrations were reclassified as renewals where they renewed their registration within the same year.
- 3 The Board data indicated that there were 18 financial restorations and 2 who were unfinancial. A large number of these had multiple transactions, and therefore 16 financial restorations were reclassified as renewals where they renewed their registration within the same year; and one record had no renewal status.

In 2003, there were 676 podiatrists financially registered with the Podiatrists Registration Board of NSW. Of these, 60.8% were female and 39.2% were male. Table 1.1 provides an overview of the number of podiatrists in each category of registration.

Response rate to Labour Force Annual Survey

The response rate to the 2003 Podiatrist Labour Force Annual Survey was 81.8%, higher than the 2002 response rate of 77.9%, although both years were lower than the 2001 response rate of 87.5%.

Table 1.2: Response Rate to Podiatrist Annual Labour Force Survey, 2001 - 2003

	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
	2001		2002		2003	
Formal response rate						
<i>Survey respondents</i> ¹ who were <i>renewals</i> ²	590		505		545	
<i>Total renewals</i> ²	674	87.5%	648	77.9%	666	81.8%

- Notes:**
1. A "survey respondent" is defined as a renewal or technical registration who provides information to the question on work status, or whose work status can be derived from other data. In 2003, there were 117 podiatrists who did not return a survey form, and 4 survey forms with work status question unanswered, and no capacity to derive the work status from a NSW postcode for place of work.
 2. A renewal is defined to include a person who paid their registration fee on time, who was a renewal but was late in paying the renewal fee, and was therefore de-registered and then restored (ie technical restoration), or who was sent a survey form and returned a form or was still financial at the end of the relevant year while having no financial status (technical renewal).

Determining the response rate to the survey is complicated by the relationship between the survey and the renewal process. While new registrants and restorations do not generally receive the survey, some may if they also receive a renewal notice within the twelve month survey period. Additionally, some persons sent renewal notices do not renew their registration and therefore do not return surveys. All survey responses from financially registered podiatrists are presented in Tables 1.3 and 1.4. Tables 3.1 to 3.22 describe the working renewals cohort only.

Work Status

There were 474 working renewal survey respondents in 2003. Working renewals are those respondents who:

- Were financially registered and renewed their registration in 2003 or were technical restorations or technical renewals
- Returned a labour force survey indicating their work status or provided sufficient data for a status of working in NSW to be derived; and
- Indicated that their work status was one of the following two categories:
 - Working in podiatry only in NSW
 - Working in podiatry mainly in NSW, but also in other states (see Table 1.3)

Table 1.3: Work status of Podiatrist Labourforce Survey respondents¹, NSW, in 2003

Work Status	No.		%		No.		%	
	Female		Male		Total		Female	
Working in podiatry								
Only in NSW	272	83.7%	193	87.7%	465	85.3%	58.5%	
Mainly in NSW, but also in other states	5	1.5%	4	1.8%	9	1.7%	55.6%	
Mainly in other states, but also in NSW	12	3.7%	10	4.5%	22	4.0%	54.5%	
Only in states other than NSW	8	2.5%	1	0.5%	9	1.7%	88.9%	
Overseas	0	0.0%	2	0.9%	2	0.4%	0.0%	
Not Working in podiatry								
Not working, not looking for work, retired	19	5.8%	7	3.2%	26	4.8%	73.1%	
Not in paid work, but looking for work	2	0.6%	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	100.0%	
In paid work, but not in podiatry	7	2.2%	3	1.4%	10	1.8%	70.0%	
Total	325	100.0%	220	100.0%	545	100.0%	59.6%	
<i>Non response</i>	2	0.6%	2	0.9%	4	0.7%		

Notes:

1. There were 513 forms from podiatrists renewing their registration, of whom 8 did not reply to the question on working status, and did not provide a NSW postcode for place of work (see Note 1 to Table 1.2).

Podiatrists seeking work

Table 1.4: Seeking work in Podiatry in NSW, 2002

Nature of work sought	No.		%	
	Total			
Not looking for work in podiatry	10	83.3%		
Looking for work in podiatry				
- either full time or part time	0	0.0%		
- full time	1	0.0%		
- part time	1	8.3%		
Total	12	100.0%		
<i>Non-response</i>	0	0.0%		

Note:

Table includes only those survey respondents in Table 1.3 who were not in paid work but looking for work, or in paid work but not in podiatry (n = 12) AND who indicated whether they were looking for work in podiatry (n = 2)

Estimating Workforce Size

The 2000 Profile of the Medical Workforce in NSW (NSW Health Department, 2001) estimated the size of the medical workforce in New South Wales, using the following approach:

- Assume the proportion of survey respondents working in NSW represents the proportion of all renewals working in NSW (87.0% for podiatrists in 2003)
- Assume 90% of new registrants are working in NSW
- Assume 80% of other registrants are working in NSW (excluding deletions)

Using this approach for podiatrists results in an estimated 579 working renewals, 6 working new registrants, and 1 working registrant who was a restoration, with a total estimated workforce size of 586

podiatrists. Table 1.5 shows variation in the estimated size of the workforce over the three year period. This is due to the variation in the response rate by year (which is taken into account in the estimates in Table 1.5). The lower response rate in 2002 and 2003 makes the sampling error greater when assuming that non respondents have the same workforce participation as respondents.

Table 1.5: Estimating the Size of the Podiatrist Workforce, 2001-2003

	No.		
	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Size of Workforce (Unadjusted) ¹	507	436	474
Total respondents to work status	590	505	545
% working	85.9%	86.3%	87.0%
No. of renewals ²	674	648	666
1) estimated workforce from renewals	579	559	579
No. of new registrants ³	17	6	7
2) estimated workforce from new reg. (90%)	15	5	6
No. of restorations ³	2	1	1
3) estimated workforce from restorations (80%)	2	1	1
Total Estimated Workforce (1+2+3)	596	566	586
Total number of financial new registrations	50	46	42
Total number of financial restorations	11	12	18

- Notes:**
- 1 The unadjusted size of the workforce is based on renewals, technical restorations and technical renewals who answered the work status question as working in NSW (see Section on work status). This is the workforce size unadjusted for non response.
 - 2 The number of renewals includes renewals, technical restorations and technical renewals
 - 3 The total number of new registrants and restorations in each year are shown below the table. However, a large number had multiple transactions in the year, and therefore are counted as renewals as they returned a survey form.

Estimating Full-Time Equivalent Workforce (FTE)

The numbers of hours worked by podiatrists on average per week for all jobs together (see Table 3.16) can be converted to full-time equivalents (FTEs) which becomes a measure of the productive workforce. This is shown in Table 3.12, where the total hours worked by podiatrists in each age and hours worked group are divided by 35 to calculate the FTE workforce. Thirty five hours is used as the measure of full time work based on labourforce definitions developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. A ratio of FTEs to the total headcount workforce can then be calculated, to determine the relative productivity of the workforce. Table 3.12 has not been adjusted to the estimated size of the workforce accounting for non response.

The full-time equivalent podiatrist workforce is 506.3, which when divided by the number of podiatrists recording hours (n=460) results in an FTE ratio of 1.101. Therefore podiatrists are on average 10.1% more productive than a 35 hour per week participant in the labourforce. The FTE ratio of 1.101 applied to the estimated workforce size of 586 headcount results in an estimated FTE workforce of 645.2 FTE podiatrists.