**Palliative medicine**

2016 Factsheet

Palliative medicine is the study and management of patients with active, progressive and far-advanced disease, for whom the prognosis is limited and the focus of care is on their quality of life. Up to six years full-time advanced training through the Royal Australasian College of Physicians Australasian Chapter of Palliative Medicine is required to specialise in this area.

# Workforce

In 2016, there were 280 palliative medicine specialists employed in Australia, of whom 20.0% worked in the private sector. Over 90% of specialists in this field who completed the 2016 National Health Workforce Survey indicated they were clinicians.

# Demographics of clinicians

Males represented 41.1% clinicians in 2016 and had an average age of 54.5 years. Females represented 58.9% of clinicians and were on average 6.9 years younger than male clinicians. Palliative medicine clinicians worked an average of 32.7 hours per week.

# Distribution of clinicians

Most clinicians (84.6%) were located in a major city or a location considered as MMM1 under the Modified Monash Model classification system in 2016.

In 2016, New South Wales was listed as the principal place of practice for 33.6% of clinicians and Victoria for 22.1% of clinicians.

Tasmania had the highest ratio of clinicians in 2016, with 1.9 per 100,000 population followed by the Northern Territory with 1.6 per 100,000 population.

# New fellows

In 2015, there were 18 new fellows, 21 less than in 2014. Overseas trained new fellows who obtained their specialist qualification outside of Australia represented 22.2% of new fellows in 2015.

# Vocational training

The number of trainees in 2016 (39) was 51.3% less than the number in 2013 (80).

# Vocational intentions

In 2016, there were 48 Hospital Non-Specialists (HNS) who indicated their intention to undertake vocational training in palliative medicine. 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.

# References

1. National Health Workforce Dataset (NHWDS): Medical Practitioners 2016.
2. Australian Medical Association (AMA) Career Pathways Guide.
3. Medical Education and Training Report 1st edition (Unpublished).
4. ABS 3101.0 – Australian Demographics Statistics. Released 22/09/16.
5. National Medical Training Advisory Network (NMTAN) – Prevocational Doctor Factsheet Methodology Paper.

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