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More comprehensive statistics from the 2002 Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey are also available from the Institute's web site.

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Most importantly, we thank the physiotherapists who took the time to complete the survey. Without their cooperation, it would not be possible to compile the data, which are used to inform the community about the physiotherapy profession.

Symbols and notes

Throughout this publication, data from the AIHW surveys may not add to the totals shown because of the estimation process used for non-response (see 'Explanatory notes'). As a result of this process, numbers of physiotherapists may be in fractions, but are rounded to whole numbers for publication. Percentages are calculated on the unrounded figures. Where tables contain a 'not stated' category, percentage calculations exclude this category. Per cent distributions may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Italics within a table denote a subtotal.

- Nil or rounded to zero
- .. Not applicable
- n.a. Not available
- n.p. Not publishable because of small numbers, confidentiality concerns, or other concerns about the quality of the data.

Main findings

- To practise physiotherapy in Australia, physiotherapists must be registered with a state or territory physiotherapy registration board. Not all of those registered are employed.
- In 2002 there were approximately 16,000 registrations in Australia (excluding the Northern Territory, for which registration figures were not available).
- In 2005, the estimated number of employed physiotherapists, from the ABS Labour Force Survey, was 14,300, an increase of 18.2% from 12,100 in 2000.
- The AIHW, in conjunction with the state and territory registration boards and health departments, conducted surveys of registered physiotherapists in 1993, 1998 and 2002. This publication presents findings from the 2002 survey, which was undertaken in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.
- From the AIHW survey it is estimated that, in the five jurisdictions surveyed, there were 10,728 physiotherapists working in physiotherapy in 2002 (excluding those on extended leave), an increase of 13.6% on the 1998 estimate for the same five jurisdictions. The estimate for 2002 is consistent with ABS Labour Force Survey estimates for employed physiotherapists for the same five jurisdictions.
- In 2002 the number of physiotherapists per 100,000 population varied across the participating jurisdictions from a low of 50 per 100,000 in Queensland to 85 per 100,000 in the Australian Capital Territory. Although full-time-equivalent (FTE) rates provide a more accurate and comparable measure of supply of physiotherapists, they could only be calculated for three jurisdictions (Victoria, 70 per 100,000; South Australia, 72; and the Australian Capital Territory, 81).
- The 2002 AIHW survey found that employed physiotherapists were, on average, aged 39.1 years and predominantly female (76.3%). They were over-represented in metropolitan areas with 94.5% of physiotherapists working in these areas. In comparison, 87.1% of the 2002 Australian population resided in these areas.
- Most employed physiotherapists (92.4%) were practising as clinical physiotherapists in 2002. Most worked in hospitals or their own or group practice. Clinical physiotherapists reported working mainly across a range of practice areas and in the manipulative/musculoskeletal area of physiotherapy.
- Data from the ABS National Health Surveys shows that, in 2004–05, an estimated 436,100 people consulted a physiotherapist or hydrotherapist in the 2 weeks before being surveyed. This is equivalent to 2,158 per 100,000 population, a rise from 1,870 per 100,000 population in 2001.
- The rise in consultations with physiotherapists was most evident for older people. The rate of consultation for people aged 65 years and over rose from 2,012 per 100,000 in 2001 to 2,882 per 100,000 in 2004–05.

Introduction

Physiotherapists are allied health professionals who assess, diagnose and treat people with movement problems resulting from an injury, surgery or a health condition. They use a wide range of techniques, such as joint mobilisation and manipulation, therapeutic exercise, stretches, electro-physical agents, soft tissue massage and breathing techniques, to relieve pain, restore or optimise function and movement, and prevent further problems. They also educate and promote health issues related to the prevention of injuries and disabilities in the workplace, at home and during recreational activities (APA 2006). Physiotherapists are required to be registered with the relevant state or territory registration board to practise.

Physiotherapists work in a variety of settings including private practice, hospitals, sports facilities, schools and universities, community centres, aged care facilities and workplaces. They may specialise in specific areas such as musculoskeletal physiotherapy, women's health, aged care, chest conditions, occupational health and safety, sports medicine, babies and young children, problems of the nervous system and spinal injuries, administration, education or research.

In order to register as a physiotherapist, a person must have completed an accredited course (such as the 4-year full-time Bachelor of Physiotherapy course offered at a number of Australian universities). Postgraduate courses in physiotherapy are also available. In 2004, 913 Australian students completed courses in physiotherapy at Australian universities, an increase of 16.5% on the number completing in 1998. In 2004, 32.1% of those completing were males and 76.1% were undergraduates (Tables A1 and A2).

Data sources

Several sources of information on the number and characteristics of physiotherapists in Australia are referenced in this publication. These include registration data from state/territory physiotherapy registration boards, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing, the ABS Labour Force Surveys and the AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey. These sources vary in coverage, scope, timing and collection methodologies, as outlined in the 'Explanatory notes'.

All physiotherapists who practise in Australia must be registered with a state or territory physiotherapy registration board. In addition, some qualified physiotherapists who are not practising (such as those on leave or working in another type of job) may also choose to be registered. As part of the process of registration (and renewal of registration) the boards collect basic demographic and qualification data from each applicant. Only very limited detail on the characteristics of physiotherapists is available from registration data, with only the total number of registrations available for some jurisdictions. Note also that physiotherapists may be registered in more than one state or territory and, if so, will be counted in more than one jurisdiction's registration numbers.

The ABS Census of Population and Housing and the ABS Labour Force Surveys provide estimates of the number of people who were *employed* in physiotherapy in Australia at the time of data collection. Both sources rely on self-reporting of employment status and occupation. As not all registered physiotherapists are employed, these figures are lower than registration numbers.

The latest data available from the ABS Census is 2001. Data from the monthly ABS Labour Force Survey provide a more recent estimate of the number of employed physiotherapists, along with information on broad demographic characteristics and hours worked. Because the survey is conducted on a sample of households, however, the data collected can be subject to relatively large standard errors for small populations and occupations.

Most of the data on the demographic and work characteristics of physiotherapists provided in this publication are estimated from the latest AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey. This survey was administered by state/territory physiotherapy registration boards in conjunction with renewals of registration in 2002, and conducted with the cooperation of the state/territory health authorities. Five jurisdictions participated in the 2002 survey (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory), with an overall estimated response rate of around 72.4% (Table 1). Details regarding the scope, coverage and methodology of the 2002 AIHW survey are provided in the 'Explanatory notes' of this publication.

Table 1: Physiotherapy labour force survey: estimated response rate for participating states/territories, 2002

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT	Total ^(a)
Registration numbers	5,892	3,813	2,464	1,407	336	13,912
Number of valid responses	4,972	2,141	2,061	728	169	10,071
Estimated response rate	84.4	56.2	83.6	51.7	50.3	72.4

(a) The survey was not conducted in Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory in 2002. The total response rate is an approximation only as some physiotherapists were registered in more than one state/territory, and may have completed a questionnaire in only one state/territory.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

To provide estimates for all registered physiotherapists in the participating jurisdictions, survey responses were weighted by the AIHW using state/territory registration data for 2002. It is these weighted data, or estimates, that are reported in this publication. In the absence of accurate information on non-respondents, it was assumed, for the purposes of estimation, that their personal and employment characteristics were the same as those of the respondent population. As a result of this assumption it is possible that the estimates in this publication may contain some bias. The extent of this is unknown.

The Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey was also conducted by the AIHW in all states and territories in 1993 and 1998 (AIHW 1995, 2001). Only limited comparisons of the 2002 and the 1998 survey are possible, and none with the 1993 survey because of changes in the questionnaires over time. The AIHW has also improved its methods of editing, cleaning and weighting labour force survey data since the 1998 survey results were reported. To provide consistency with the 2002 survey data, the 1998 survey data reported in this publication have been revised using these new methods.

In addition to the data on registered and employed physiotherapists, this publication also refers to information on the usage of physiotherapy services from the ABS National Health Surveys (NHS) and higher education course completions from the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

The physiotherapist population

Estimated number of physiotherapists

In 2002 there were almost 16,000 *registrations* of physiotherapists in Australia (excluding the Northern Territory). This was an increase of 10.9% from the number of registrations in 1998 (Table 2). All jurisdictions, except Tasmania, experienced an increase in registrations over the 4 years.

A small proportion of physiotherapists register in more than one jurisdiction and are therefore counted more than once in the total registration figures in Table 2. The 2002 AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey found that 3.3% of registered physiotherapists in the five participating states and territories were registered in more than one jurisdiction (Table 3). Applying this proportion to the total number of *registrations* from Table 2 gives an estimated number of *registered physiotherapists* in Australia in 2002 of around 15,440 (not including the Northern Territory).

Table 2: Physiotherapist registrations: states and territories, 1998 and 2002

Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas ^(a)	ACT	NT ^(b)	Total ^(b)
1998	5,040	3,540	2,389	1,528	1,296	341	258	n.a.	14,392
2002	5,892	3,813	2,464	1,781	1,407	274	336	n.a.	15,967
% change	16.9	7.7	3.1	16.6	8.6	-19.6	30.2	n.a.	10.9

(a) The number of registrations in Tasmania for 2002 may be an underestimate.

(b) Total does not include the Northern Territory as data were not available. In 2005, the Northern Territory reported 116 registrations of physiotherapists.

Note: Numbers for Western Australia and Tasmania are as of 31 December. Numbers for other states and the Australian Capital Territory are as of 30 June.

Source: State and territory physiotherapist registration boards.

From the ABS Census of Population and Housing it is estimated that there were 10,242 *employed physiotherapists* in Australia in 2001 (AIHW 2003). The ABS Labour Force Surveys in 2000 and 2005 both give higher estimates of the number of *employed physiotherapists* than the Census: 12,100 in 2000 and 14,300 in 2005 (Table A3).

Based on weighted data from the AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, the estimated number of *employed physiotherapists* in 2002 (in the five participating jurisdictions of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory) is 10,728 (Table 3). This is higher than the ABS Census estimate of the number of employed physiotherapists for the same five jurisdictions (8,834) (AIHW 2003), but consistent with the ABS Labour Force Survey estimates (10,480 in 2000 and 12,147 in 2005 for the five participating jurisdictions). The estimated number of registered physiotherapists from the AIHW survey, in the five states/territories that participated in the survey, is 13,446 (Table 3).

Table 3: Registered physiotherapists: labour force status and field of physiotherapy, surveyed jurisdictions, 2002

Labour force status/field	NSW	Vic ^(a)	Qld	SA	ACT	Total ^(b)
<i>In physiotherapy labour force</i>	4,370	3,405	1,935	1,204	286	11,201
<i>Working in physiotherapy</i>	4,191	3,257	1,849	1,156	274	10,728
Clinical physiotherapist	3,955	2,931	1,717	1,051	258	9,913
Non-clinical physiotherapist	236	326	133	104	16	815
<i>Not working in physiotherapy</i>	179	148	86	48	12	473
On extended leave	108	114	44	43	n.p.	311
Looking for work in physiotherapy	71	34	42	6	10	162
<i>Not in physiotherapy labour force</i>	1,313	322	426	149	34	2,245
Overseas	499	144	148	64	8	863
Not looking for work in physiotherapy	814	178	278	85	26	1,382
Total registered physiotherapists	5,683	3,728	2,362	1,353	320	13,446
Multiple registrations	209	85	102	54	16	466
Total registrations	5,892	3,813	2,464	1,407	336	13,912

(a) The numbers for Victoria should be treated with caution. The increase from 1998 to 2002 in the number employed (21.7%), and the associated declines in the numbers 'looking for work in physiotherapy' and 'not in the labour force', are higher than would be expected from the increase in registrations over the same period (7.7%) (see Tables 2 and 4).

(b) Excludes Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

Employed physiotherapists

This section outlines findings from the 2002 AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey on the demographic and work characteristics of those physiotherapists who were employed in physiotherapy at the time of the survey. Additional information on the group of employed physiotherapists identified as 'clinicians' is also provided. Because of variations in the questionnaires used for the 2002 survey (see 'Explanatory notes'), some data items cannot be aggregated across the five surveyed jurisdictions. A separate analysis of these is provided for each participating state and the Australian Capital Territory, in the section 'State and territory profiles'.

As noted above, the estimated number of employed physiotherapists from the 2002 AIHW survey, in the five participating jurisdictions and excluding those on extended leave, is 10,728 (Table 3). This is an increase of 13.6% in the estimated number of employed physiotherapists for the same five jurisdictions in 1998 (9,442) (Tables 4 and A4). There were increases in the number of employed physiotherapists in each of the surveyed jurisdictions. The increase in the number of employed physiotherapists in Victoria (21.7%) is larger than expected given that registration numbers in that state increased by only 7.7% over the same period (Table 2). This large increase is reflected in the raw data provided to the AIHW and is therefore possibly a function of the collection or coding processes in that state, probably in 2002. The numbers of employed physiotherapists and clinicians in Victoria should, as a result, be treated with caution.

Table 4: Employed physiotherapists, 1998 and 2002

Year	NSW	Vic ^(a)	Qld	SA	ACT	Total ^(b)
1998	3,694	2,676	1,752	1,108	213	9,442
2002	4,191	3,257	1,849	1,156	274	10,728
% change	13.5	21.7	5.6	4.3	28.6	13.6

(a) The increase in employed physiotherapists in Victoria should be treated with caution as it is not consistent with the increase in registrations in that state from 1998 to 2002.

(b) Excludes Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Surveys, 1998 and 2002.

The average age of employed physiotherapists in the surveyed jurisdictions in 2002 was 39.1 years, with the Australian Capital Territory having the highest average age (41.5 years) (Table 5). Just over one-quarter (25.7%) of employed physiotherapists were male (ranging from 17.4% in the Australian Capital Territory to 28.6% in Victoria). The proportion male was greater in the younger age groups, with nearly one-third (32.2%) of employed physiotherapists under age 30 being males, compared with only 22.1% of those aged 40–49 and 10.5% of those aged 60 years and over (Table A5).

In 2002, almost all employed physiotherapists were Australian citizens (ranging from 93.6% in New South Wales to 99.3% in the Australian Capital Territory) and most (94.5%) reported that their main workplace was in an area classified as metropolitan (which includes Major cities and Inner regional Australia). The proportion of physiotherapists working in metropolitan areas was higher than the proportion of the population residing in those areas in the five jurisdictions in 2002 (89.3%) (ABS unpublished).

Table 5: Employed physiotherapists: selected characteristics, 2002

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT	Total ^(a)
Average age (years)	39.1	38.3	39.6	39.7	41.5	39.1
% male	25.3	28.6	22.2	26.1	17.4	25.7
% Australian citizens	93.6	94.2	94.4	96.8	99.3	94.5
% in metropolitan areas ^(b)	96.4	97.0	87.3	91.0	100.0	94.5

(a) Excludes Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

(b) Metropolitan areas include 'Major cities' and 'Inner regional Australia' (see Glossary). The geographical classification accorded to the respondent is based on the postcode of the respondent's main job. Percentage calculation excludes missing values.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

Clinical physiotherapists

Across all five jurisdictions surveyed in 2002, 92.4% of employed physiotherapists (9,913) worked as clinicians in their main physiotherapy job (Table 6). A further 3.0% worked in administration and management and the remaining 4.6% worked in other non-clinical fields, including training, education and research (Table 6). The proportion of employed physiotherapists working in clinical physiotherapy was highest in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

The characteristics of clinicians are very similar to the characteristics of all employed physiotherapists with 26.3% being male, a mean age of 38.9 years, and 94.3% working in metropolitan areas (Table A6).

Table 6: Employed physiotherapists: field of physiotherapy in main job, 2002

Field of physiotherapy	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT	Total ^(a)
Clinical physiotherapy	3,955	2,931	1,717	1,051	258	9,913
Non-clinical						
Administration/management	83	121	59	43	12	317
Training/education	93	46	34	35	n.p.	210
Research	33	64	20	15	n.p.	135
Other	27	94	19	12	-	152
Total employed physiotherapists	4,191	3,257	1,849	1,156	274	10,728
% clinical physiotherapists	94.4	90.0	92.8	91.0	94.2	92.4

(a) Excludes Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

Main clients of clinical physiotherapists

The 2002 AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey asked those physiotherapists currently working in clinical roles about the ages of their clients. The group of clients most commonly seen by clinical physiotherapists were adults aged 19–64 years (41.0%), with a further 31.3% reporting that their clients were from a mixture of age groups and 20.2% reporting predominantly seeing clients aged 65 years and over (Table 7).

Table 7: Employed clinical physiotherapists: main client type, 2002

Main clients	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT	Total ^(b)
Paediatrics (0–18 years)	240	212	176	54	20	702
Adult (19–64 years)	1,640	946	801	379	109	3,875
Aged (65 years and over)	663	641	345	228	32	1,909
Mixed age groups	1,148	1,033	343	359	78	2,960
Total^(a)	3,955	2,931	1,717	1,051	258	9,913

(a) Includes clinicians who did not state the age of their clients.

(b) Excludes Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

Another source of information on patient consultations with physiotherapists is the ABS National Health Survey (NHS) (ABS 2002, 2006). This survey includes information on reported consultations with physiotherapists/hydrotherapists in the 2 weeks before the survey.

Data from the ABS NHS indicate that both the number and the proportion of the Australian population consulting a physiotherapist are increasing. An estimated 436,100 people consulted a physiotherapist in Australia in the 2 weeks before the survey in 2004–05, an increase of 15.4% from 2001 (Table 8). The rate of consultation with physiotherapists rose from 1,870 per 100,000 population in 2001 to 2,158 per 100,000 population in 2004–05.

The NHS data also indicate that, in 2004–05, females were slightly more likely to consult a physiotherapist than males and that people aged 65 years and over were the age group with the highest rate of consultation (2,882 per 100,000 population).

Table 8: Persons consulting a physiotherapist or hydrotherapist in the 2 weeks before the survey: age and sex, 2001 and 2004–05

	Client age (years)			Client sex		Total
	0–24	25–64	65+	Males	Females	
2001						
Number	72,300	241,700	49,000	172,400	190,600	363,000
Rate per 100,000	1,088	2,339	2,012	1,790	1,948	1,870
2004–05						
Number	70,600	289,600	75,900	214,800	221,300	436,100
Rate per 100,000	1,043	2,679	2,882	2,137	2,178	2,158

Source: Unpublished data from the ABS NHS 2001 and 2004–05; ABS Estimated Resident Population at 30 June 2001 and 31 December 2004.

Physiotherapists not working in physiotherapy

In 2002, in the five jurisdictions participating in the survey, 162 registered physiotherapists (1.2%) stated that they were not working in physiotherapy at the time of the survey, but were looking for work in physiotherapy (Tables 3 and A7). This is lower than in 1998 (225 and 1.8%) (Table A4). An additional 1,382 registered physiotherapists in 2002 (10.3%) stated that they were not working in physiotherapy and not looking for work in physiotherapy. This is also lower than the figures for 1998 (1,407 or 11.5%).

Those physiotherapists not looking for work were, on average, older than those who were looking for work (44.4 years compared with 39.4 years) and older than employed physiotherapists (39.1 years). They were also less likely to be male (9.1%) than those looking for work (19.6%) or employed physiotherapists (25.7%). A lower proportion of those looking for work in physiotherapy were Australian citizens (83.1%) than either physiotherapists not looking for work (96.1%) or employed (94.5%) (Tables 5 and A7).

State and territory profiles

This section provides a separate summary of demographic and employment characteristics for employed physiotherapists for the five jurisdictions that participated in the 2002 AIHW survey. More detailed information is also provided for employed clinical physiotherapists, who provide direct patient care. As the survey questionnaire was not standard across all five jurisdictions, not all categories of information can be consistently reported. In particular, note that the question relating to hours worked varied (see Glossary) and thus these data should not be compared across all jurisdictions. This is also the case for full-time-equivalent (FTE) rates, as calculations of FTE rely on data on hours worked (refer to the Glossary for an explanation of the calculation of FTE).

New South Wales

There were 4,191 employed physiotherapists in New South Wales in 2002, equivalent to a rate of 63 per 100,000 population (Table 9 and Figure 1). The most common work settings for all employed physiotherapists were in their own practice (43.8%) and in hospitals (34.6%). Almost 60% of employed physiotherapists worked in the private sector in 2002. The proportion of employed physiotherapists in the private sector who were male (31.2%) was almost double that of those in public practice (16.8%).

Clinical physiotherapists, who made up 94.4% of all employed physiotherapists (3,955), reported working an average of 32.9 paid hours per week in 2002 (Table 9). Of these clinicians, 43.4% worked part-time and 12.0% worked 50 hours or more per week. The most common main area of practice for clinical physiotherapists was manipulative physiotherapy, with 33.2% of clinical physiotherapists reporting spending the most hours on this area (Table 10). The next most common response was 'work across all areas' (19.1%).

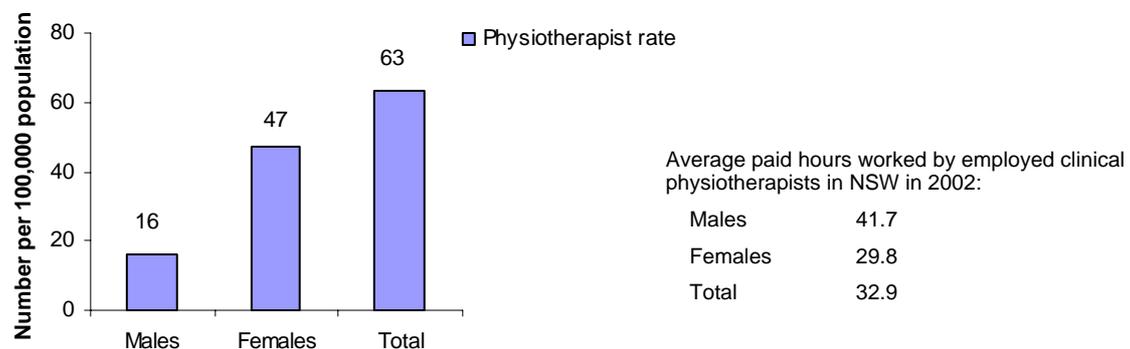
Table 9: Employed physiotherapists: summary characteristics, New South Wales, 2002

Characteristic	Number	Average age (years)	% male	Average weekly paid hours ^(a)	% working 50 hours or more per week ^(a)	
					% part time ^(a)	% more per week ^(a)
	All employed physiotherapists			Employed clinical physiotherapists		
Field of physiotherapy of main job						
Clinical physiotherapy	3,955	39.0	25.9	32.9	43.4	12.0
Administration/management	83	41.4	20.3	..	..	..
Training/education	93	42.3	16.1	..	..	..
Research	33	39.0	11.4	..	..	..
Other	27	40.9	—	..	..	..
Principal work setting of main job						
Own/group practice	1,675	39.7	35.5	34.9	40.8	21.4
Hospital	1,324	35.8	19.5	33.2	36.9	3.4
Nursing home/hostel	180	50.3	6.2	20.3	87.4	2.6
Community health service	92	44.6	6.3	28.7	62.9	2.7
Domiciliary care service	63	45.3	5.8	24.4	67.3	—
Physical/development disability institution	54	47.3	4.2	25.8	68.7	2.4
Tertiary education institution	70	42.0	18.5	30.7	30.6	—
Defence forces	20	37.1	54.6	37.0	28.0	5.6
Government department/organisation	94	41.9	6.2	29.7	61.8	3.6
Sports centre/clinic	126	31.6	41.9	37.0	28.0	17.4
Industry	48	38.6	17.9	31.9	39.6	6.4
Schools	13	46.9	8.7	29.7	62.2	8.7
Other	64	39.0	7.6	30.9	58.2	9.0
Sector of main job						
Public	1,540	37.6	16.8	32.8	40.2	2.6
Private	2,284	39.8	31.2	33.1	45.2	18.2
Total^(b)	4,191	39.1	25.3	32.9	43.4	12.0

(a) In 2002, information on hours worked was collected only for clinical physiotherapists, not for all employed physiotherapists. In addition, clinical physiotherapists were asked to record paid hours only and, as a result, no information is available on total hours.

(b) Total includes 'not stated' responses for the various characteristics in the table, but percentage calculations exclude 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.



Note: The FTE rate for New South Wales in 2002 cannot be calculated because information on hours worked was collected only for clinical physiotherapists, not for all employed physiotherapists. In addition, clinical physiotherapists were asked to record paid hours only and, as a result, no information is available on total hours worked.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002; ABS 2002.

Figure 1: Employed clinical physiotherapists: rate by sex, New South Wales, 2002

Table 10: Employed clinical physiotherapists: summary characteristics by main area of physiotherapy practice, New South Wales, 2002

Main area of physiotherapy practice in main job	Number	Average age (years)	% male	Average weekly paid hours ^(a)	% part time ^(a)	% working 50 hours or more per week ^(a)
Cardiopulmonary	212	31.8	21.3	34.4	30.4	4.1
Ergonomics and occupational health	51	34.4	30.5	32.6	39.6	7.0
Gerontology/geriatrics	310	46.4	8.3	25.7	69.9	4.1
Manipulative physiotherapy	1,135	36.7	39.5	36.3	32.8	19.2
Neurological	77	33.1	6.5	31.3	40.6	—
Paediatrics	214	40.8	2.3	28.6	60.3	2.8
Women's health (including obstetrics/gynaecology)	36	41.9	—	23.3	75.7	—
Orthopaedics	186	36.7	25.7	33.4	36.3	6.3
Rehabilitation	245	37.3	17.2	31.5	46.1	5.0
Sports physiotherapy	125	34.2	50.3	37.3	29.8	27.7
Health promotion	10	33.6	26.4	24.0	75.2	12.2
General (work across all areas)	653	42.4	26.8	32.3	47.8	14.3
Other	162	39.4	13.1	30.7	51.3	4.4
Total^(b)	3,955	39.0	25.9	32.9	43.4	12.0

(a) In 2002, clinical physiotherapists were asked to record paid hours only and, as a result, no information is available on total hours.

(b) Total includes 'not stated' responses, but all percentage calculations (including those in the text) exclude 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

Victoria

In 2002 in Victoria there were an estimated 3,257 employed physiotherapists, or 67 employed physiotherapists per 100,000 population. The FTE rate was slightly higher, at 70 per 100,000 (Figure 2). As discussed earlier, however, this may be an overestimate and should be treated with caution. The average age of employed physiotherapists was 38.3 years (Table 11). The most common work settings for employed physiotherapists were hospitals (36.5%) and own or group practices (33.3%). Of employed physiotherapists, 28.6% were male, but this proportion was higher among those in own or group practices (47.1%) and for those in sports clinics (52.9%). These two groups, together with those working in tertiary education, had the highest proportions working 50 hours or more per week (over 30% each).

Of the 2,931 clinical physiotherapists in Victoria, 24.6% reported that they mainly worked across a range of clinical areas (Table 12). The other main areas of practice most frequently reported by clinicians were manipulative physiotherapy (13.0%), orthopaedics (12.6%) and gerontology/geriatrics (11.3%). The longest working hours for clinicians were reported by those specialising in sports physiotherapy (42.9 hours per week), and ergonomics and occupational health (40.9 hours per week).

Table 11: Employed physiotherapists: summary characteristics, Victoria, 2002

Characteristic	Number	Average age	% male	Average weekly hours	% part time	% working 50 hours or more per week
Field of physiotherapy of main job						
Clinical physiotherapy	2,931	37.9	29.6	36.1	38.0	18.6
Administration/management	121	43.1	25.0	42.2	21.2	36.4
Training/education	46	43.6	7.7	39.3	38.5	30.8
Research	64	37.7	16.7	38.3	35.3	23.5
Other	94	42.4	22.6	35.6	40.0	16.0
Principal work setting of main job						
Own/group practice	1,070	40.4	47.1	39.0	34.1	33.3
Hospital	1,175	34.4	17.6	36.7	31.2	12.6
Nursing home/hostel	114	47.5	15.6	24.8	73.0	4.8
Community health service	272	40.2	16.3	31.9	53.9	6.6
Domiciliary care service	52	43.2	17.2	32.1	59.3	3.7
Physical/development disability institution	82	42.3	13.0	31.2	55.6	4.4
Tertiary education institution	73	40.9	12.2	42.9	22.5	37.5
Defence forces	12	40.0	28.6	32.3	57.1	14.3
Government department/organisation	78	46.5	13.6	34.7	43.2	9.1
Sports centre/clinic	151	30.3	52.9	40.8	24.7	30.6
Industry	39	39.4	36.4	37.1	27.3	13.6
Schools	41	46.2	13.0	25.7	69.6	—
Other	57	40.5	21.9	34.2	46.9	9.4
Sector of main job						
Public	1,532	37.3	15.7	36.0	37.2	12.1
Private	1,687	39.1	40.8	36.9	37.3	26.2
Total^(a)	3,257	38.3	28.6	36.4	37.4	19.4

(a) Total includes 'not stated' responses, but all percentage calculations (including those in the text) exclude 'not stated'. The total number of employed physiotherapists in Victoria in 2002 may be an overestimate and should be treated with caution.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

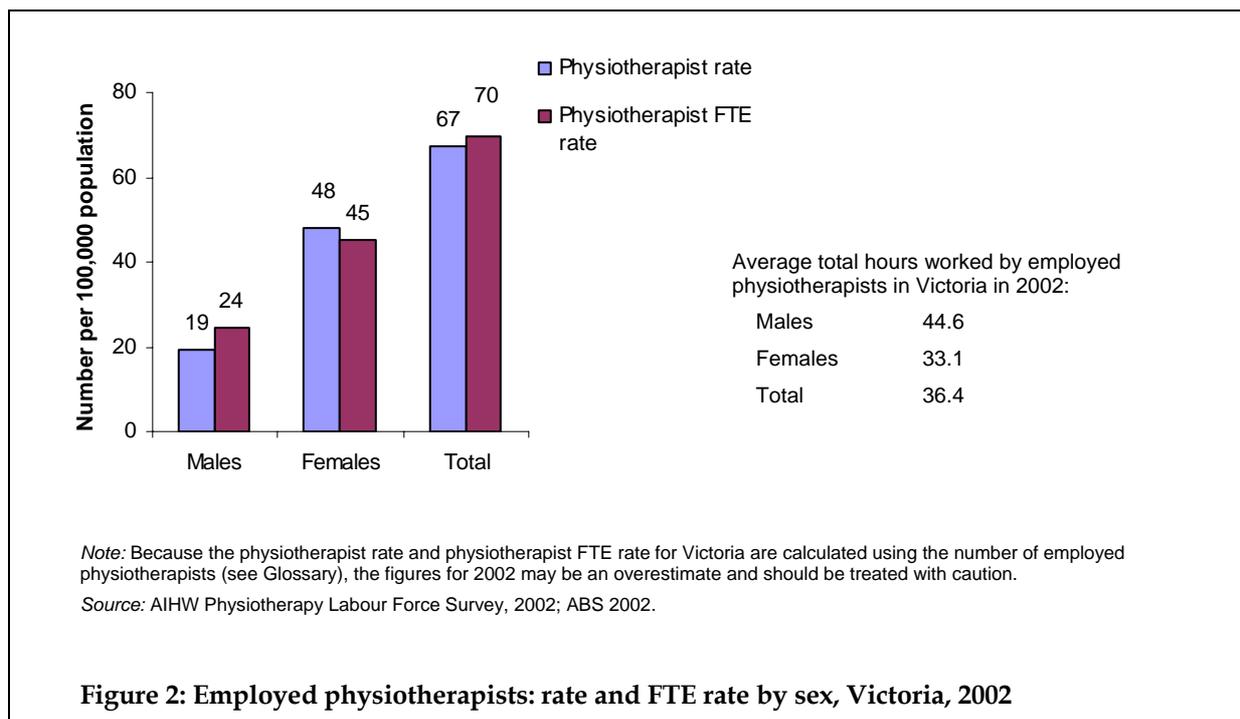


Table 12: Employed clinical physiotherapists: summary characteristics by main area of physiotherapy practice, Victoria, 2002

Main area of physiotherapy practice in main job	Number	Average age	% male	Average weekly hours	% part time	% working 50 hours or more per week
Cardiopulmonary	167	34.0	17.0	36.7	30.9	14.9
Ergonomics and occupational health	32	33.6	27.8	40.9	22.2	16.7
Gerontology/geriatrics	322	43.3	16.6	31.1	55.2	8.3
Manipulative physiotherapy	369	39.1	52.7	38.4	37.2	31.9
Neurological	148	35.9	15.7	35.0	39.8	9.6
Paediatrics	207	40.6	8.6	32.2	53.4	11.2
Women's health (including obstetrics/gynaecology)	55	38.6	—	28.8	51.6	3.2
Orthopaedics	358	33.1	35.8	37.6	28.4	18.4
Rehabilitation	278	34.6	17.3	37.4	27.6	9.6
Sports physiotherapy	110	33.7	56.4	42.9	24.2	40.3
General (work across all areas)	700	38.9	38.2	37.3	35.9	23.4
Other	96	43.1	14.8	31.4	55.6	14.8
Total^(a)	2,931	37.9	29.6	36.1	38.0	18.6

(a) Total includes 'not stated' responses, but all percentage calculations (including those in the text) exclude 'not stated'. The total number of employed physiotherapists, and therefore also of employed clinical physiotherapists, in Victoria in 2002 may be an overestimate and should be treated with caution.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

Queensland

In 2002, there were an estimated 1,849 physiotherapists working in Queensland; equivalent to 50 per 100,000 population (Figure 3). Employed physiotherapists were, on average, 39.6 years of age and worked 31.8 paid hours per week (Table 13). As in other states, a large proportion of employed physiotherapists worked in their own group practice (36.5%) or hospitals (31.1%). Just over half (52.7%) worked in the private sector. The private sector had higher proportions of males than the public sector (26.1% compared with 17.6%) and a higher proportion of physiotherapists working 50 hours or more per week (16.7% compared with 2.5%).

Just over a fifth (21.6%) of clinical physiotherapists reported that they mainly worked across a number of clinical areas of practice, with the other most common main area of practice being manipulative physiotherapy (19.1%) (Table 14). Although only 22.5% of clinical physiotherapists were male, some areas of practice had much higher proportions of males than others (such as sports, with 50.1% males).

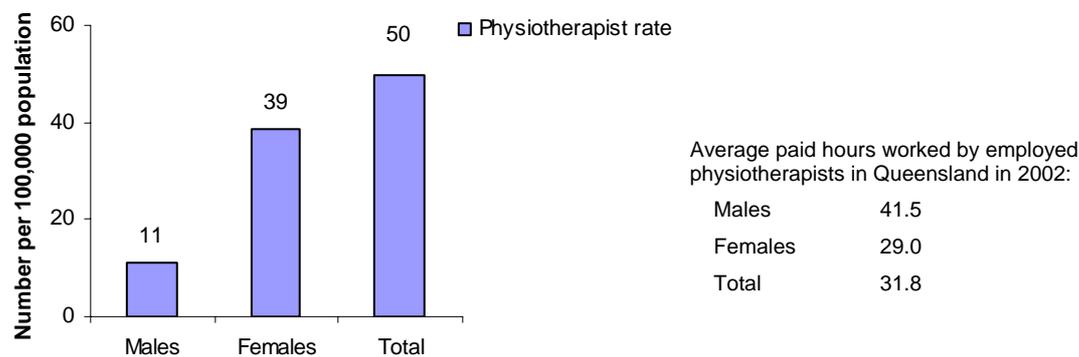
Table 13: Employed physiotherapists: summary characteristics, Queensland, 2002

Characteristic	Number	Average age	% male	Average weekly paid hours ^(a)	% part time ^(a)	% working 50 hours or more per week ^(a)
Field of physiotherapy						
Clinical physiotherapy	1,717	39.4	22.5	31.6	44.2	9.9
Administration/management	59	43.9	18.2	36.4	20.8	10.5
Training/education	34	46.0	10.4	31.8	46.3	7.6
Research	20	34.8	23.9	30.8	49.7	6.1
Other	19	38.6	31.1	35.3	26.6	13.0
Principal work setting						
Own/group practice	627	38.8	31.8	34.7	38.4	21.9
Hospital	535	36.4	20.2	32.4	33.8	3.5
Nursing home/hostel	118	47.7	7.0	23.9	75.2	1.0
Community health service	95	43.8	8.9	27.1	58.8	—
Domiciliary care service	44	44.7	8.4	28.8	54.1	5.8
Physical/development disability institution	38	42.7	13.0	31.5	48.2	3.3
Tertiary education institution	47	40.8	18.2	31.0	46.1	7.5
Defence forces	17	38.1	43.1	34.6	28.4	—
Government department/organisation	71	42.7	10.1	31.8	42.4	1.6
Sports centre/clinic	39	32.5	48.3	35.3	39.8	12.0
Industry	14	37.8	16.4	26.2	57.9	8.1
Schools	58	45.9	1.9	25.7	65.4	—
Other	15	42.2	7.2	26.1	75.2	—
Sector of main job						
Public	812	39.4	17.6	31.5	40.2	2.5
Private	906	39.6	26.1	32.3	45.4	16.7
Total^(b)	1,849	39.6	22.2	31.8	43.4	9.9

(a) In Queensland in 2002 information on 'paid hours' only was collected. Information on 'total hours' was not collected.

(b) Total includes 'not stated' responses, but all percentage calculations (including those in the text) exclude 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.



Note: The FTE rate for Queensland in 2002 cannot be calculated as information on 'paid hours' only was collected.
Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002; ABS 2002.

Figure 3: Employed physiotherapists: rate by sex, Queensland, 2002

Table 14: Employed clinical physiotherapists: summary characteristics by main area of physiotherapy practice, Queensland, 2002

Main area of physiotherapy practice in main job	Number	Average age	% male	Average weekly paid hours ^(a)	% part time ^(a)	% working 50 hours or more per week ^(a)
Cardiopulmonary	135	34.9	21.4	31.0	33.9	6.9
Ergonomics and occupational health	38	36.8	18.7	30.4	50.1	3.2
Manipulative physiotherapy	308	37.8	37.4	36.0	33.8	21.5
Neurological	65	39.9	18.7	31.3	44.7	3.9
Women's health (including obstetrics/gynaecology)	42	42.2	—	16.5	83.4	—
Orthopaedics	158	38.4	27.7	33.1	37.1	12.6
Rehabilitation	141	40.7	12.2	31.1	42.5	1.8
Sports physiotherapy	84	32.5	50.1	35.8	33.0	15.6
Health promotion	7	37.7	50.5	30.4	50.4	—
General (work across all areas)	349	40.4	19.4	32.9	43.3	10.3
Other	284	43.1	9.1	27.0	60.1	3.0
Total^(b)	1,717	39.4	22.5	31.6	44.2	9.9

(a) In Queensland in 2002 information on 'paid hours' only was collected. Information on 'total hours' was not collected.

(b) Total includes 'not stated' responses, but all percentage calculations (including those in the text) exclude 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

South Australia

There were an estimated 1,156 employed physiotherapists in South Australia in 2002, or 76 per 100,000 population. Taking into account hours worked, there were 72 FTE employed physiotherapists per 100,000 population (Figure 4). Employed physiotherapists were, on average, 39.7 years of age, worked 33.2 hours per week and worked mainly in own/group practice (45.6%) or in hospitals (24.4%) (Table 15). Just over 60% were employed in the private sector. The majority of employed physiotherapists were clinicians (90.9%).

The average age of clinical physiotherapists in 2002 in South Australia was 39.5 years. They worked an average of 32.9 hours per week, with 43.1% reporting that they worked part time and 11.3% reporting that they worked 50 hours or more per week. Just under a third (31.1%) of clinical physiotherapists reported working mainly across a number of areas of practice, with manipulative physiotherapy and gerontology/geriatrics areas (both 15.1%) also being relatively common main areas of practice (Table 16).

Table 15: Employed physiotherapists: summary characteristics, South Australia, 2002

Characteristic	Number	Average age	% male	Average weekly hours	% part time	% working 50 hours or more per week
Field of physiotherapy of main job						
Clinical physiotherapy	1,051	39.5	26.5	32.9	43.1	11.3
Administration/management	43	40.9	27.3	34.4	38.1	4.8
Training/education	35	41.6	11.1	39.0	35.3	23.5
Research	15	44.1	25.0	34.9	50.0	12.5
Other	12	45.3	33.4	37.8	16.7	—
Principal work setting of main job						
Own/group practice	503	40.5	36.9	35.6	37.3	17.3
Hospital	269	34.8	20.1	33.8	31.7	5.0
Nursing home/hostel	52	43.3	11.1	22.8	74.1	3.7
Community health service	95	42.5	10.2	26.9	67.3	—
Domiciliary care service	66	42.0	14.7	30.3	51.5	3.0
Physical/development disability institution	27	43.2	14.3	28.7	61.5	7.7
Tertiary education institution	27	44.5	7.1	41.8	42.9	28.6
Defence forces	4	43.0	100.0	32.5	50.0	—
Government department/organisation	21	38.5	18.2	35.7	27.3	18.2
Sports centre/clinic	21	32.5	54.6	36.1	36.4	18.2
Industry	8	50.3	50.0	37.8	25.0	25.0
Schools	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Other	8	42.5	25.0	30.5	50.0	25.0
Sector of main job						
Public	435	38.1	17.3	32.8	39.9	5.8
Private	667	40.6	33.0	33.9	42.6	15.1
Total^(a)	1,156	39.7	26.1	33.2	42.6	11.3

(a) Total includes 'not stated' responses, but all percentage calculations (including those in the text) exclude 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

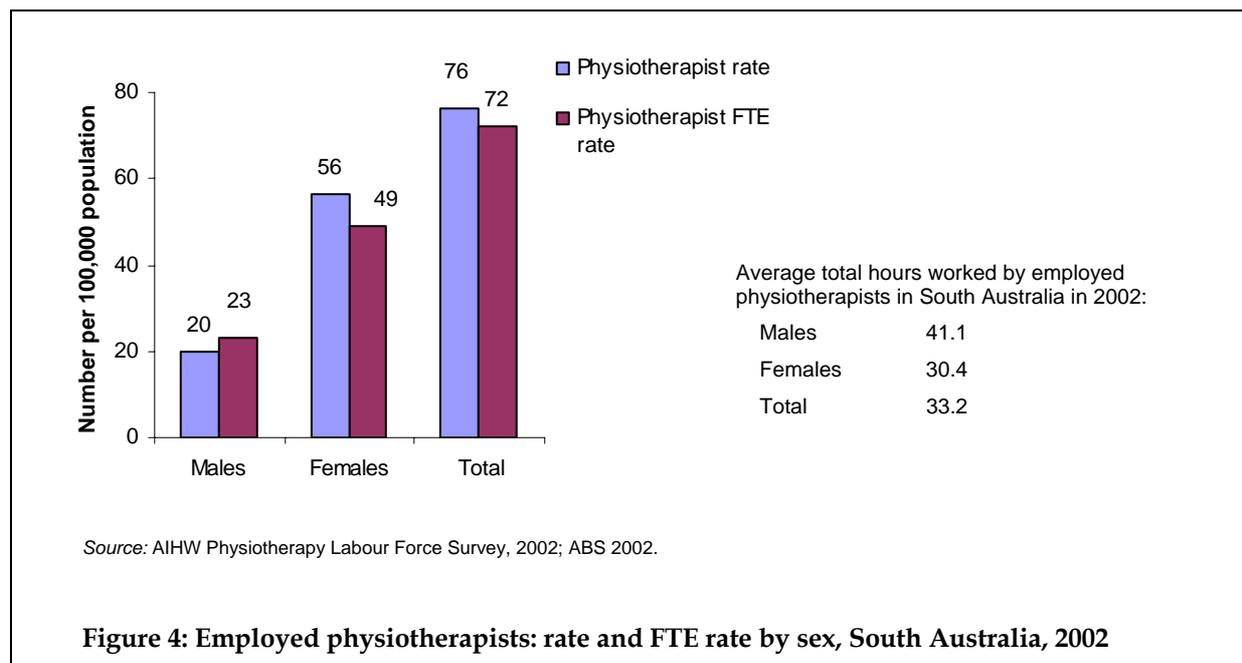


Table 16: Employed clinical physiotherapists: summary characteristics by main area of physiotherapy practice, South Australia, 2002

Main area of physiotherapy practice in main job	Number	Average age	% male	Average weekly hours	% part-time	% working 50 hours or more per week
Cardiopulmonary	35	36.6	16.7	35.1	27.8	5.5
Ergonomics and occupational health	25	43.4	23.1	38.8	23.1	15.4
Gerontology/geriatrics	155	42.9	7.5	26.2	67.5	3.8
Manipulative physiotherapy	155	38.1	43.7	37.7	31.3	18.8
Neurological	46	38.4	8.3	34.5	33.3	8.3
Paediatrics	66	40.8	8.8	28.1	64.7	—
Women's health (including obstetrics/gynaecology)	23	45.5	—	18.3	83.3	—
Orthopaedics	75	37.8	41.0	34.8	38.5	20.5
Rehabilitation	66	31.7	23.5	34.6	26.5	5.9
Sports physiotherapy	27	38.0	64.3	32.5	57.1	21.4
General (work across all areas)	319	39.6	32.1	34.4	37.6	13.3
Other	35	41.5	33.3	34.5	33.3	16.7
Total^(a)	1,051	39.5	26.5	32.9	43.1	11.3

(a) Total includes 'not stated' responses, but all percentage calculations (including those in the text) exclude 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory had 274 employed physiotherapists in 2002, equivalent to 85 physiotherapists per 100,000. Taking into account hours worked, there were 81 FTE physiotherapists per 100,000 in the Australian Capital Territory in 2002 (Figure 5). These are the highest ratios of the five jurisdictions surveyed. The average age of employed physiotherapists in 2002 was 41.5 years (the highest of the five surveyed jurisdictions), and 17.4% were male (the lowest of the five jurisdictions). As with other jurisdictions, most worked in own/group practice (36.4%) or in hospitals (34.8%) and most were clinical physiotherapists (94.2%). Just under half (46.0%) reported working in the private sector (Table 17).

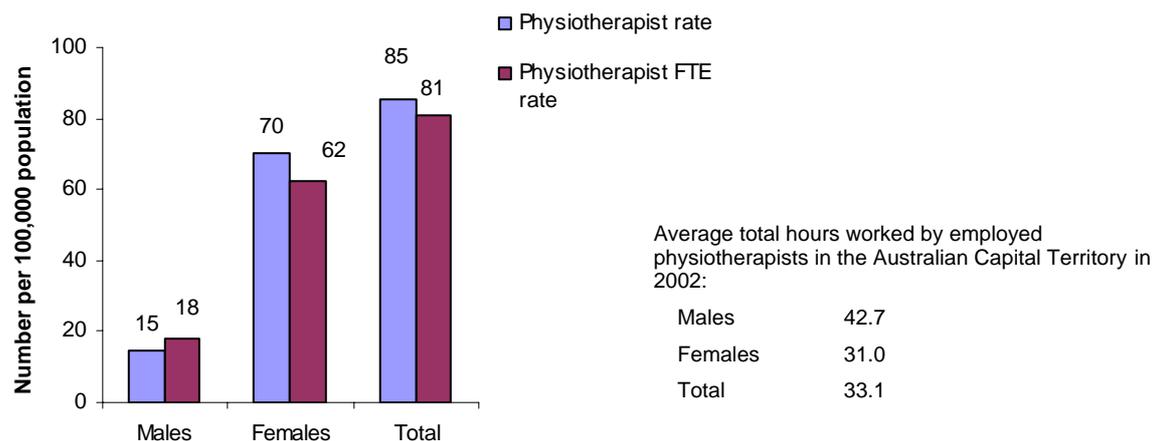
Most commonly, clinical physiotherapists in the Australian Capital Territory reported that they mainly worked across a number of areas of practice (22.0%). Orthopaedics and manipulative physiotherapy (both 12.7%) were the other most common main areas of practice in 2002 (Table 18).

Table 17: Employed physiotherapists: summary characteristics, Australian Capital Territory, 2002

Characteristic	Number	Average age	% male	Average weekly hours	% part-time	% working 50 hours or more per week
Field of physiotherapy						
Clinical physiotherapy	258	41.6	18.5	33.0	41.1	10.5
Administration/management	12	40.2	—	38.8	20.0	—
Training/education	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Research	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Other	—	—	—	—	—	—
Principal work setting						
Own/group practice	91	43.0	30.4	35.7	37.0	17.4
Hospital	87	39.6	6.8	29.5	47.6	4.8
Nursing home/hostel	4	50.5	50.0	32.0	100.0	—
Community health service	24	45.3	8.3	34.0	25.0	8.3
Domiciliary care service	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Physical/developmental disability institution	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Defence forces	12	38.0	16.7	36.4	—	—
Government department/organisation	14	40.9	14.3	31.8	40.0	—
Sports centre/clinic	6	29.0	—	39.0	33.3	—
Industry	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.
Other	6	41.3	—	25.0	66.7	33.3
Sector of main job						
Public	135	40.5	8.8	31.8	38.1	4.8
Private	115	42.5	25.9	34.4	41.4	15.5
Total^(a)	274	41.5	17.4	33.1	40.5	9.9

(a) Total includes 'not stated' responses, but all percentage calculations (including those in the text) exclude 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.



Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002; ABS 2002.

Figure 5: Employed physiotherapists: rate and FTE rate by sex, Australian Capital Territory, 2002

Table 18: Employed clinical physiotherapists: summary characteristics by main area of physiotherapy practice, Australian Capital Territory, 2002

Main area of physiotherapy practice in main job	Number	Average age	% male	Average weekly hours	% part-time	% working 50 hours or more per week
Cardiopulmonary	20	38.1	10.0	26.6	60.0	10.0
Ergonomics and occupational health	6	47.0	—	38.0	33.3	33.3
Gerontology/geriatrics	14	47.3	14.3	30.7	57.2	14.3
Manipulative physiotherapy	30	44.3	26.7	33.5	40.0	13.3
Neurological	4	45.0	—	46.5	50.0	50.0
Paediatrics	14	36.7	—	35.6	42.8	14.3
Women's health (including obstetrics/gynaecology)	12	41.0	—	26.0	50.0	—
Orthopaedics	30	42.9	20.0	32.8	33.3	6.7
Rehabilitation	18	40.0	22.2	32.7	33.3	—
Sports physiotherapy	20	33.6	40.0	39.8	10.0	10.0
General (work across all areas)	52	43.1	23.1	33.3	46.2	7.7
Other	16	39.3	25.0	33.1	50.0	25.0
Total^(a)	258	41.6	18.5	33.0	41.1	10.5

(a) Total includes 'not stated' responses, but all percentage calculations (including those in the text) exclude 'not stated'.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

Additional tables

Table A1: Australian citizens and permanent residents completing physiotherapy courses at Australian universities: sex and level, 1998 to 2004

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Number	784	774	791	784	739	891	913
% undergraduate	72.1	74.9	74.8	80.9	78.8	76.4	76.1
% male	39.8	36.0	38.6	39.9	34.2	38.4	32.1

Note: Excludes New Zealand citizens with or without permanent residency status in Australia.

Source: Higher Education Student Data (unpublished), Department of Education, Science and Training.

Table A2: Australian citizens and permanent residents completing physiotherapy courses at Australian universities: sex and state, 2004

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Total ^(a)
Males	97	66	70	34	26	293
Females	196	201	96	66	61	620
Total	293	267	166	100	87	913

(a) Physiotherapy courses were not available at universities in Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory in 2004.

Note: Excludes New Zealand citizens with or without permanent residency status in Australia.

Source: Higher Education Student Data (unpublished), Department of Education Science and Training.

Table A3: Employed physiotherapists and all health workers, selected characteristics, 2000 and 2005 (ABS Labour Force Survey)

	Estimated number	Number employed per 100,000 population	% distribution by age			% male	Average weekly hours worked
			< 35	35-44	45+		
Employed physiotherapists							
2000	12,100	63	41.8	31.2	27.0	17.6	33.7
2005	14,300	71	46.2	27.3	26.5	40.4	32.9
All employed health workers							
2000	451,800	2,359	31.8	31.2	37.0	26.7	32.7
2005	569,700	2,802	30.6	26.2	43.1	25.8	31.4

Notes

1. Figures for 2000 and 2005 are an average of the four quarters in each year. Estimates are based on a survey of a sample of households (ABS 2006).
2. 'Employed' is defined according to the ABS standards (i.e. includes worked for 1 hour or more for pay; or without pay in a family business or on a farm) (ABS 2006).
3. 'Hours worked' refers to all jobs.
4. Because of the small numbers of physiotherapists in the survey samples, estimates are subject to relatively large standard errors and should be treated with caution.

Source: ABS Labour Force Surveys, 2000 and 2005, unpublished data.

Table A4: Registered physiotherapists: labour force status and field of physiotherapy, selected jurisdictions, 1998

Labour force status/field of physiotherapy	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT	Total^(a)
<i>In physiotherapy labour force</i>	3,823	2,823	1,861	1,147	220	9,874
<i>Working in physiotherapy</i>	3,694	2,676	1,752	1,108	213	9,442
Clinical physiotherapist	3,482	2,528	1,636	1,031	204	8,881
Non-clinical physiotherapist	212	148	116	76	10	561
<i>Not working in physiotherapy</i>	129	148	109	39	7	431
On extended leave	64	74	39	22	7	206
Looking for work in physiotherapy	65	74	70	17	—	225
<i>Not in physiotherapy labour force</i>	1,076	653	448	114	27	2,317
Overseas	346	347	162	53	n.p.	910
Not looking for work in physiotherapy	729	306	286	61	25	1,407
Total registered physiotherapists	4,899	3,476	2,309	1,260	247	12,190
Multiple registrations	141	64	80	36	12	333
Total registrations	5,040	3,540	2,389	1,296	258	12,523

(a) Excludes Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 1998.

Table A5: Employed physiotherapists: age distribution and sex, 2002

Age	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT	Total^(a)
Less than 30	968	915	339	257	34	2,513
30–39	1323	912	613	298	78	3,223
40–49	1152	848	588	381	111	3,080
50–59	543	436	252	180	38	1,449
60 years or over	204	146	58	41	14	463
Total physiotherapists	4191	3257	1849	1156	274	10,728
<i>Average age</i>	39.1	38.3	39.6	39.7	41.5	39.1
% male						
Less than 30	33.2	32.1	34.7	24.8	35.3	32.2
30–39	31.7	31.8	32.6	33.8	10.3	31.6
40–49	20.9	29.4	11.0	26.9	21.4	22.1
50–59	11.5	17.6	9.9	16.1	10.5	13.6
60 years or over	7.4	15.9	7.8	14.3	—	10.5
Total physiotherapists	25.3	28.6	22.2	26.1	17.4	25.7

(a) Excludes Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

Table A6: Employed clinical physiotherapists: selected characteristics, 2002

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT	Total ^(a)
Average age (years)	39.0	38.0	39.4	39.5	41.6	38.9
% male	25.9	29.6	22.5	26.5	18.5	26.3
% metropolitan ^(b)	96.3	96.9	86.8	90.5	100.0	94.3
Average weekly hours ^(c)	32.9	36.1	31.6	32.9	33.0	n.a.

(a) Excludes Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

(b) Metropolitan areas include 'Major cities' and 'Inner regional Australia' (see Glossary). The geographic classification accorded to the respondent is based on the postcode of the respondent's main job. Percentage calculation excludes missing values.

(c) Hours worked are based on 'paid hours' in New South Wales and Queensland, and 'total hours' in other jurisdictions (see Glossary). Comparisons across jurisdictions should take these differences into account.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

Table A7: Registered physiotherapists not working in physiotherapy: selected characteristics, 2002

Labour force status/characteristic	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	ACT	Total ^(a)
Looking for work in physiotherapy						
Number	71	34	42	6	10	162
Average age (years)	38.6	38.5	38.4	53.3	44.0	39.4
% male	15.6	10.5	31.6	33.3	20.0	19.6
% Australian citizens	82.5	79.0	85.8	100.0	80.0	83.1
Not looking for work in physiotherapy						
Number	814	178	278	85	26	1,382
Average age (years)	45.6	41.5	43.7	49.5	49.5	45.0
% male	9.4	10.0	7.9	11.4	—	9.1
% Australian citizens	96.3	96.0	94.9	97.7	100.0	96.1

(a) Excludes Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

Source: AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, 2002.

Explanatory notes

Method

The AIHW is responsible for the collation, analyses and dissemination of data from a number of health labour force surveys conducted in each state and territory. In the absence of centralised national lists for each profession, the surveys largely rely on the various state and territory registration boards to administer survey questionnaires as part of the registration renewal process.

The focus of this publication is data obtained from the 2002 Labour Force Survey administered by the physiotherapist registration boards in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. A questionnaire was sent by these Boards to physiotherapists in 2002, as part of the registration renewal process. The respective state/territory health authorities then collated this data and forwarded a computer file of the survey data to the AIHW for editing, compilation, weighting and analysis.

The 2002 Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey was conducted at various times during 2002, depending on the licence renewal procedure operating in each jurisdiction.

The questionnaire distributed by the state/territory registration boards was based on one developed by the AIHW. However, some changes to the survey form, and to the wording of some questions, were made by individual jurisdictions (for example, the question relating to hours worked). The result is that some information is not comparable across jurisdictions and is presented in this publication for individual states/territories only.

Scope and coverage

The scope of the Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey was intended to be all physiotherapists who were eligible to practise and who were renewing their registration with the physiotherapist boards in each state/territory in 2002. However, as the 2002 survey was conducted in only five jurisdictions (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory) the scope of the data in that year is restricted to physiotherapists renewing registrations in those five states/territories. The number of registrations in those jurisdictions comprised around 87% of physiotherapy registrations nationally in 2002 (excluding the Northern Territory for which no registration figures were available) (Table 1).

Coverage may exclude physiotherapists who registered for the first time during 2002. These physiotherapists may not be required to renew their registration at the standard renewal date if the initial registration in that state or territory had occurred during the preceding 12 months.

Response rate

The overall response rate to the survey can be roughly estimated by dividing the number of registrations by the number of questionnaires used to compile the data for participating jurisdictions. Estimated response rates for the 2002 survey varied across the participating jurisdictions from 50.3% in the Australian Capital Territory to 84.4% in New South Wales. The overall rate for the five jurisdictions was 72.4% (Table A8). As some physiotherapists were registered in more than one jurisdiction but may have completed a questionnaire in just one state or territory, this may be an underestimate. It is not known how often this occurred, because it is not possible to match survey records between states and territories.

Notes on the AIHW labour force estimates

This publication provides estimates of the total physiotherapist population in the five jurisdictions that participated in the 2002 Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey. Because not all physiotherapists who were sent a questionnaire responded, estimates of the characteristics of population of physiotherapists have been derived by weighting survey responses to match available registration data provided to the AIHW by state/territory registration boards. Some boards provided the number of registrations by age and sex. In these cases, the AIHW weighted survey responses to the total number of registered physiotherapists taking these broad characteristics into account. For other jurisdictions only very limited information on the population of registered physiotherapists was available. In these cases, it was possible to weight only to the total number of registered physiotherapists. In weighting survey responses it was assumed that the characteristics of non-respondents were the same as respondents. This may lead to some inaccuracies in estimation where response rates are very low, or where the population of physiotherapists is very small (such as in the Australian Capital Territory).

Respondents to the survey who stated that they worked 'mainly or only in another state/territory' (466 in 2002) (Table 3) were assumed to be registered in more than one jurisdiction, and therefore to have been 'surveyed' more than once. Because it is not possible to assign these respondents to the state/territory in which they worked, or to determine whether they also responded to the survey in the jurisdiction in which they were mainly working, they are excluded for the purposes of weighting.

Some respondents did not answer all the questions in the survey, leading to 'missing data' or 'not stated' values for some variables. In cases where the number of missing values was small (less than 5% of the number of responses) these values were imputed for the key variables of *age*, *sex* and *labour force status*, based on other known characteristics.

Comparisons between AIHW and ABS data

Differences in methodology, scope and timing of the AIHW Physiotherapy Labour Force Survey, the ABS Census of Population and Housing and the ABS Labour Force Survey contribute to variability in results from these sources.

The ABS Census and Labour Force Surveys collect information on the occupation of people who are employed. The occupation is self-reported by respondents. In contrast, the AIHW physiotherapy survey is distributed to people who are recognised as physiotherapists through their registration with a state/territory physiotherapy registration board. As physiotherapists must be registered to practise, all working physiotherapists are included. Some people who are qualified as physiotherapists but not working as physiotherapists (such as those on extended leave) are also registered, and these too are covered in the AIHW survey.

The ABS Labour Force Survey is based on a sample and thus subject to sampling variability and relatively large standard errors for small populations and occupations. The ABS Census covers all persons living in Australia and has no sampling error. The AIHW survey is conducted as a census of registered physiotherapists within each participating jurisdiction and, therefore, has no sampling error. However, estimates derived from the AIHW survey are subject to some potential error as a result of non-response to the survey.

Another difference between the sources is that, in the compilation of ABS data, physiotherapists are assigned to their jurisdiction of residence (i.e. where they were surveyed). In the AIHW data, physiotherapists are assigned to the jurisdiction in which they did most of their work.

The data collection periods vary across the three surveys, also limiting comparability.

Glossary of AIHW survey terms

Area of physiotherapy

The area of physiotherapy in which a clinical physiotherapist practised, such as manipulative physiotherapy or sports physiotherapy. The survey allowed for multiple clinical areas to be recorded. The clinical area reported in this publication is the one in which the respondent worked the greatest number of hours.

Employed physiotherapist

A physiotherapist who reported working in a physiotherapy job, mainly or only in the state/territory of registration, at the time of the survey. Registered physiotherapists who, at the time of the survey, were on maternity or other extended leave for more than 3 months, are not included in the tables on employed physiotherapists in this publication.

Field of physiotherapy

The function of the physiotherapy work undertaken in the physiotherapist's main physiotherapy job. The fields are:

Clinical physiotherapy: a registered physiotherapist who spends most of his/her work in the care and treatment of patients, including diagnosis, therapeutic and preventive action.

Non-clinical physiotherapy:

- Administration/management: a registered physiotherapist who administers or manages a physiotherapy care unit in a health care facility, or supervises physiotherapy staff.
- Teaching/education: a person who teaches or trains persons in physiotherapy for their initial qualification or in advanced skills after initial qualification.
- Research: a person engaged in physiotherapy research.
- Other: a job function in physiotherapy which is not one of the above, for example, industrial relations.

Geographical classification

The Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) and the Remoteness Area Structure within it, produced by the ABS, has been used in this publication to present regional data.

The Remoteness Area Structure of the ASGC is based on the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+), where the remoteness index value of a point is based on the physical road distance to the nearest town or service in each of five population size classes based on the 2001 Census of Population and Housing. These classes are:

- Major cities of Australia
 - Inner regional Australia
 - Outer regional Australia
 - Remote Australia
 - Very remote Australia.
- } Described as 'metropolitan' in this report
- } Described as 'non-metropolitan' in this report

The ASGC accorded to the respondent is based on the postcode of the respondent's main job.

Hours worked

The number of weekly hours worked is self-reported by physiotherapists and relates to the number of hours worked in all physiotherapy-related jobs.

In the 2002 survey there was some variation in the way the question on hours was asked, and the targeting of the question, across jurisdictions:

- In New South Wales, only employed clinicians (rather than all employed physiotherapists) were asked to record the number of **paid hours usually worked per week** in physiotherapy jobs. Non-clinical physiotherapists were not asked to record their hours worked.
- In Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory all employed physiotherapists were asked to record the number of **total hours worked per week in the 4 weeks prior to the survey** in physiotherapy jobs.
- In Queensland, all employed physiotherapists were asked to report **paid hours per week usually worked** in physiotherapy jobs, excluding unpaid professional and/or voluntary activities and travel time.

Care should be taken when comparing data relating to hours worked across jurisdictions. The question relating to hours worked also varied from that asked in 1998 in most jurisdictions. For this reason, no comparison between the 2 years on hours worked is provided in this publication.

Average hours are calculated excluding respondents who have no hours recorded. For example, average paid hours are calculated only for those respondents who have at least 1 hour of paid work recorded.

FTE (Full-time equivalent)

FTE measures how many 35-hour-week workloads are being worked by employed physiotherapists. This provides a measure of the supply of physiotherapists as it takes into account both physiotherapists working full time and those working part time. By defining supply in terms of FTE per 100,000 population (or the FTE rate), meaningful comparisons across geographic areas and over time can be made.

The full-time equivalent (FTE) measure of supply is calculated using the following method: *'average total hours worked' multiplied by 'the number of employed physiotherapists', divided by 35 hours (the standard of 35 hours being consistent with the ABS cut-off for part-time work).*

This method was applied in 2002 to obtain a measure of FTE for Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. As data on 'total hours' worked was not collected in New South Wales or Queensland in 2002, the calculation of FTE in those two states was not possible.

Full-time work

In this publication the ABS definition has been used:

- *full-time work*: 35 hours or more per week
- *part-time work*: less than 35 hours per week.

Metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas

In this report the metropolitan/non-metropolitan split is based on the ASGC Remoteness Areas as follows (see 'Geographical classification' above).

- Metropolitan areas include Major cities of Australia and Inner regional Australia.
- Non-metropolitan areas include Outer regional Australia, Remote Australia and Very remote Australia.

Physiotherapist

A person who is on the register maintained by the state or territory physiotherapists board to practise physiotherapy in that state or territory. To register, physiotherapists must have a qualification in physiotherapy that is recognised by the board.

Physiotherapy labour force

The physiotherapy labour force in this publication includes:

- registered physiotherapists who stated that they were 'currently working in physiotherapy' (employed as physiotherapists)
- registered physiotherapists who stated that were 'not employed in physiotherapy but looking for work in physiotherapy'
- registered physiotherapists who stated that they were 'on maternity or other extended leave for more than 3 months'.

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