Nuclear Medicine

The Workforce

Nuclear medicine uses very small amounts of unsealed radioactive materials to diagnose and treat disease. Nuclear medicine imaging is unique in that it provides doctors with information about both the anatomy of the body and its physiology.

In the 2010 calendar year, there were 78 Nuclear Medicine Physicians who primarily worked within NSW. This workforce had the following characteristics:

- **Average Age**: 49 years
- **Females**: 20.8% of the workforce
- **Average Hours**: Nuclear Medicine Physicians worked an average 34.8 hours per week (of a standard 40 hour week)
- **Over 50s**: Approximately 45% were aged 50 years and over and 14% of the workforce were older than 60 years

Source: AIHW (2012) 2010 Medical Workforce Profile extracts for NSW (unpublished data)

Trainees and New Fellows

- **Advanced Trainees (AT)**: 2 ATs in NSW in 2012 with an average of 14 ATs in Australia between 2011 and 2012
- **Females**: In 2012, females represent less than 1% of the ATs in Australia
- **New Fellows**: Nationally, an average of 4 per year from 2010-2011 (19% female)
- **Medical Specialty College**: Royal Australasian College of Physicians (www.racp.edu.au)
- **HETI Supported Training**: Not part of Health Education and Training Institute Training Networks (www.heti.nsw.gov.au)

Source: Medical Training Review Panel (MTRP)  * Basic Physician Training must be completed before entering Advanced Training

Retirement Intentions in NSW

- **1-2 Years**: 1.3% of Nuclear Medicine Physicians intend to retire within 1-2 years
- **3-5 Years**: 7.7% of Nuclear Medicine Physicians intend to retire within the next 3-5 years
- **6-9 Years**: 2.6% of Nuclear Medicine Physicians intend to retire within the next 6-9 years

Source: AIHW (2012) 2010 Medical Workforce Profile extracts (unpublished data)
Supply and Distribution

Distribution: The Nuclear Medicine specialist workforce is located mainly within metropolitan Sydney Local Health Districts (LHDs), Hunter New England and Illawarra Shoalhaven LHDs.

Rural & Regional: There are small workforces of Nuclear Medicine specialists located in rural and regional LHDs.

A higher proportion of non-metropolitan Sydney nuclear medicine specialists indicate an intention to retire within the next 5 years (12.5%).

The Future in NSW – Workforce Planning to 2025

Estimated Demand Growth: Between 2% to 5% to 2025

Estimated Workforce Size: In 2025, between 88 to 115 Full Time Equivalents

Additional Fellows: All demand scenarios require additional trainees as of 2014

Range: Up to 10 additional new trainees per annum

Workforce Planning Priority and Risk Rating

Ageing: The risk associated with the workforce aged over 60 and 70.

Small Workforce Size: The risk associated with the sustainability of small workforces.

Retirement Intentions: The risk associated with the retirement intentions of the current workforce.

New Fellow Requirements: The risk associated with the requirement to recruit additional trainees, based on workforce planning to 2025.

Training Supervision: The risk associated with the availability of the existing workforce to provide supervision to new trainees.

Future Workforce Considerations

Workforce outside of metropolitan Sydney and Hunter New England LHDs is small and at risk through either retirement or unexpected employment changes.