Doctor workforce increasingly specialised — and more female clinician specialists and GPs

The last decade has seen a shift toward a medical workforce with more specialist roles, according to a report that explores the characteristics of medical practitioners, released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The report, *Medical practitioner workforce 2015*, shows that the supply of medical practitioners working in general practice (GPs) changed little between 2005 and 2015, ranging from 109 per 100,000 people in 2008 to 114 in 2015 (24,655 to 28,329 GPs).

'In contrast, the supply of non-GP specialists increased from 121 to 143 per 100,000 people between 2005 and 2015 (21,953 to 31,189 employed specialists) and the supply of specialists-in-training increased from 43.4 to 74.8 per 100,000 people (7,268 to 15,336 specialists-in-training),' said AIHW spokesperson Dr Adrian Webster.

'This suggests that while the supply of GPs is keeping pace with population growth, the number of medical practitioners working in, or training to take on, specialist roles is growing faster,' Dr Webster said.

There were 29,269 non-GP specialists employed in clinical roles in 2015 (94% of the total). As in previous years, most (58%) were employed in one of the broad speciality groups of physician (22%), surgery (15%), radiology (6%), obstetrics and gynaecology (5%), paediatrics (5%) and pathology (4%).

'A greater proportion of non-GP specialists in clinical roles were female in 2015-29.5%, up from 20.9% in 2005 and a higher proportion of GPs were women-42.1% in 2015, up from 36.5% in 2005,' Dr Webster said.

'GPs had the highest proportion aged 55 or older-40.5%-of all clinician groups in 2015.'

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**Further information**: Dr Adrian Webster, AIHW, Tel. 02 6244 1119 mob. 0434 022 127

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