

WORKFORCE DYNAMICS INDICATORS

I. Crettenden¹, F. S. Szuster¹, B. Fenech¹,

¹Health Workforce Australia, Adelaide, SA, AUS

Objectives:

To establish a set of key indicators that can be used to highlight aspects of the current workforce that may be of concern in the future. These indicators represent the key dynamics of workforce recruitment, retention, return to practice and retirement.

Methods:

Health Workforce Australia (HWA) has developed a set of Workforce Dynamics Indicators (WDIs). These have been based on Health Workforce New Zealand's medical discipline vulnerability ranking method, where a traffic light approach is used to score workforces against the selected indicators. The first set of WDIs were developed with the indicators of average age of existing workforce, replacement rate (ratio of annual workforce entries to exits), dependence on international graduates (migrant inflows as a percentage of all inflows) and duration of training program (years). Five categories were selected for each indicator with the range boundaries set to be relatively equal, rather than being established using a statistical base. The five categories were green for minimal concern, yellow, orange, amber and red for significant concern. Subsequently, the set of WDIs were extended to include percent aged 55 years and older and changes in average hours worked for males and females.

Findings:

The first set of WDIs was determined for medical specialties in HWA's Health Workforce 2025 (HW 2025) – Volume 3. The WDIs were prepared for 2012 from the study baseline data and for 2025 from the comparison scenario workforce projections. For the WDIs the majority of medical specialties were determined to be of minimal concern (green) for the replacement rate while significant concern (red) was identified for the dependence on international graduates for General Practice, Psychiatry, Radiology and Other Surgery. The revised set of WDIs was prepared for the HW 2025 – Allied and Other Health Professions which is currently being drafted.

Conclusions:

WDIs provide a visual summary of aspects of the current workforce. They provide an easily understood presentation of health workforce planning information for a broad audience. Further development is needed to determine whether the WDIs would benefit from additional indicators. In addition, the range boundaries of the five categories of the WDIs need to be refined on a statistical base.