



Ageing and the health workforce

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Data from the 1% 2001 Census Household Sample is used to examine the impact of ageing on the health workforce, especially health professionals. As demonstrated by the 2005 enquiry into the health workforce by the Productivity Commission, Australia is experiencing major problems with an expanding demand for health services as the population ages. An increasing burden of chronic disease is combined with a declining supply of health professionals. The 1% sample shows quite clearly that the ageing of the baby boomers is being paralleled by the ageing of the health workforce, raising the question of who will care for the boomers. The 1% sample allows the comparison of the age-sex distribution of health professionals in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, and provides indicators of population movement, birthplace, citizenship, language and hours worked. Census information can be supplemented by various professional datasets which provide insights into possible paths to coping with the shortage of medical professionals. This paper builds upon earlier presentations to the Australian Gerontology Conference and the Census Analysis Conference using helpful audience suggestions to showcase the wealth of data available.