



General practitioners in teaching practices

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The BEACH program is a continuous national study of general practice activity in Australia. Approximately 6000 general practitioners have taken part so far. Participants' demographics and some of their practice details are gathered to validate the representativeness of our sample. One of the items in year 5 of BEACH (2002–2003) was information on teaching practices for undergraduates or general practice registrars. We examined some details about GPs from these practices and made a descriptive comparison with the total BEACH sample. This provides a backdrop against which the theme articles in this issue of *Australian Family Physician* can be further considered.

The GPs

Of the 1008 general practitioners who took part in BEACH between April 2002 and March 2003, 482 (48.0%) said they worked in a practice that provided training for undergraduates or general practice registrars. General practitioners who reported they were in a teaching practice were more likely than average to be women (38.4% compared with 35.2%). Their age distribution inclined toward the younger age group with

a much higher percentage of GPs from teaching practices being under 45 years of age (42.0% compared with the average of 33.9%). Accordingly, only 23.4% of teaching GPs were over 55 years of age compared with the average of 30.9%.

There was little difference between the two groups in the number of sessions worked per week. General practitioners from teaching practices were more likely to have graduated in Australia (77.4%) than were total respondents (72.0%). On the other

hand, they were much less likely to have graduated in Asia (5.8%) than the average (9.9%). Fellowship of The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (FRACGP) was much more common among GPs from teaching practices than among the total BEACH participants for that year, with 44.6% holding FRACGP compared with the average of 35.5%.

Their practices

Analysis of practice size found that 61.1% of GPs who were working in teaching practices were in practices of five or more GPs and only 6.2% were in solo practice. The comparative figures from the total data were 47.9% for large practices and 13.7% for solo practices.

A much higher proportion of GPs in teaching practices worked in rural areas (39.0% compared with the average of 26.8%). The proportion whose practices were accredited was also much higher than average (91.0% compared with 79.3%).

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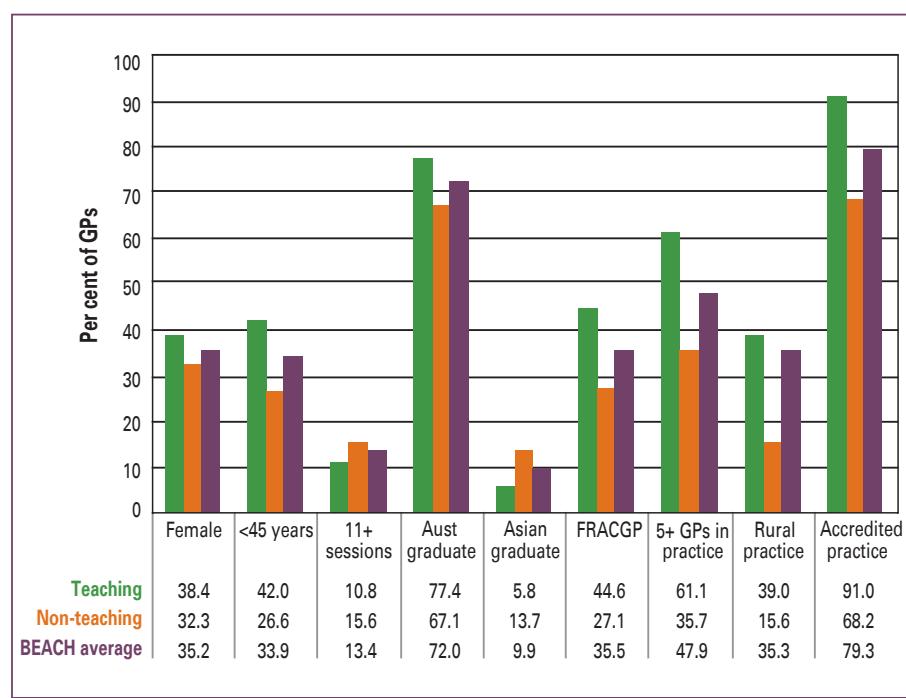


Figure 1. GPs who work in teaching practices compared with those who do not and with the BEACH average for all GPs

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