NAB/MEDFIN AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PRACTITIONERS SURVEY 2018

NAB Behavioural & Industry Economics

August 2018

The 2018 NAB/Medfin Health Practitioners Survey provides a unique insight into Australia's health system through the eyes of those best placed to assess it - our health practitioners. This year, over 150 GPs, Specialists, Dental and Allied health services practitioners again shared their views on the health status of everyday Australians and the quality of our health system, both now and in the future. The report also looks at business conditions and confidence across the various practitioner groups, the challenges facing the industry, growth drivers of practices, attitudes to digital health, and practice management systems used. Finally, the report explores health practitioner's own personal wellbeing and asks what contributes most positively and negatively to their wellbeing.

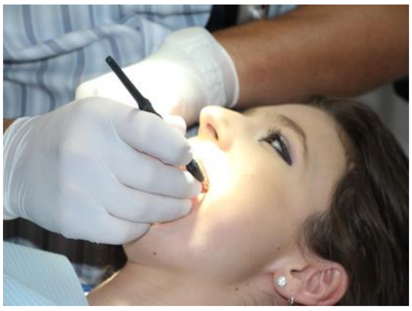
Some highlights include:

- ✓ GP's and Specialists continue to believe **obesity** is Australia's biggest health issue, with **inactivity** set to replace **poor diet** as the main contributor to poor heath over the next decade. **Mental disorders** are also expected to rise, with **dementia** also emerging as a key challenge as our population ages. Allied health practitioners are also concerned about poor diet and inactivity, but believe **stress** will become the biggest cause of poor health in the future.
- ✓ While **periodontal disease** remains our most important oral health issue, over half of all dental practitioners believe that **cosmetic concerns** will emerge as the next big issue. **Socio-economic status** is expected to overtake **poor oral hygiene** and **diet** as the biggest cause of oral health related issues over the next decade.
- ✓ Less than half of all practitioners believe that Australia will still have a **world class health system** in 10 years' time, with GPs and Specialists noticeably more pessimistic than in 2017. Practitioners are also less likely to **recommend their profession** to their family than they were 10 years' ago, with greater competition, higher business costs, corporatisation, over-supply, stress, potential litigation, too many graduates and patient abuse some of the reasons.
- ✓ Health practitioners reported positive **business conditions and confidence** over the past 6 months, and noticeably stronger than in the broader economy. Conditions were strongest for Allied health and Dental services practitioners, with GPs and Specialists reporting conditions more similar to the economy as a whole. Confidence was highest for Allied health practitioners. GPs and Specialists expect a significant improvement in profitability in the next 6 months.
- ✓ **Capital expenditure** was positive for all practitioner groups (led by Dental services) and significantly out-performed the broad economy. Capital expenditure is however expected to soften in the next 6 months, particularly for GPs and Specialists.
- ✓ **Patient recommendations** are the key growth driver for medical practices, followed by a **growing local population**. Online marketing and increased capacity were the next biggest drivers, while bulk billing contributes the least to the growth of a medical practice.
- ✓ **Cost increases** remain the single biggest challenge facing businesses within the health industry. **Revenue pressures** and **compliance** and **regulation** are the next biggest challenges facing the industry.
- ✓ Health practitioners continue to see only 'moderate' potential for **digital health** to favourably impact patient care and significantly favour **face to face** interactions over electronic channels. On average, practitioners regard the effectiveness of their **practice management system** (PMS) quite highly. They are also highly unlikely to consider changing their PMS in the next 12 months.
- ✓ Health practitioners report significantly higher levels of **personal wellbeing** compared to the Australian average, particularly in regards to their sense of "life worth". They also have higher levels of life satisfaction and happiness and lower levels of personal anxiety. The biggest positive driver of practitioner wellbeing came from **making the right decision**, followed by **keeping up to date** and **responsibility at work**. On the negative side, the biggest detractors are **lack of sleep**, **dealing with death** and **long work hours**.

KEY FINDINGS:

PART 1: Australia's health & health system

- GPs, Specialists and Allied health practitioners view Australians as only 'moderately' healthy. Females on average (6.3 points) are believed to be healthier than males (6.1 points) - and in all age groups (particularly after 45). There is also a clear negative relationship between ageing and health.
- Dental services practitioners are even less optimistic about our oral health. On average, females (6.0 points) have better levels of oral health than males (5.6 points). This difference is apparent in all age groups, except for over 65s, where oral health levels are closer.
- Around 2 in 3 GP's and Specialists saw obesity as the biggest health issue today, followed by mental disorders (54%), cardiovascular conditions (51%), diabetes (48%) and cancer (37%). Of concern, they see little progress in tackling obesity in the future - 65% said it will still be the biggest health issue in 10 years' time. Mental disorders (61%) are also expected to increase, with dementia (41%) emerging as a key challenge as our population ages.
- Most Allied health practitioners also highlighted obesity (59%) as the biggest health challenge today, followed by cardiovascular conditions (52%), cancer (52%), mental disorders (50%) and musculoskeletal diseases (41%). They also believe obesity (59%) and mental disorders (57%) will remain our biggest challenge in 10 years' time.
- Around 2 in 3 GPs and Specialists identified poor diet and inactivity as the main causes of our health issues today, followed by alcohol consumption (44%), stress (41%) and smoking (40%). Looking ahead, they expect inactivity (67%) to replace poor diet (62%) as the main health issue in 10 years' time, followed by stress (40%) and alcohol (38%).
- More Allied health practitioners (8 in 10) cited poor diet as the biggest cause of our health issues today, with 2 in 3 also citing inactivity (68%) and stress (66%). But stress (70%) is expected to replace poor diet (61%) and inactivity (61%) as the biggest cause of our health related issues in 10 years' time.
- In terms of our oral health, 7 in 10 Dental services practitioners highlighted periodontal (gum) disease as the number one issue today, followed by tooth decay (58%), toothaches and dental emergencies (48%) and tooth erosion (39%). While most think periodontal disease will still be the main oral health concern in 10 years' time, over half (55%) believe that cosmetic concerns will emerge as the next biggest issue.
- Around 7 in 10 (70%) Dental services practitioners said poor oral hygiene was the biggest cause of our oral health issues today, followed by poor diet (64%) and socio-economic status (58%). But socio-economic status (64%) is set to overtake poor oral hygiene (58%) and poor diet (58%) as the biggest cause of oral health issues in 10 years' time.
- Health practitioners are mostly positive about Australia's current health system - but less so than in 2017. Just over 7 in 10 (71%) believe our health system is world class (80% in 2017). GPs and Specialists (79%) were most positive (87% in 2017), followed by Allied health services practitioners (66% vs. 69% in 2017). Dental services practitioners were far less positive - only 64% said it was world class, down from 80% in 2017.
- Overall expectations for the health system were unchanged. When asked if it will still be world class in 10 years' time, only 46% of all practitioners thought it would (47% in 2017). GPs and Specialists were more pessimistic (46% vs. 58% in 2017). But Dental services (48% vs. 45%) and Allied health practitioners (41% vs. 35%) were more positive. There is also considerable uncertainty about the future, with around 1 in 3 practitioners indicating they 'don't know'.
- All Health practitioner groups are still less likely to recommend their profession to their children or family today (5.6 points) than they were 10 years' ago (7.1 points). Among some of the reasons given were greater competition, higher business costs, corporatisation, over-supply, stress, potential litigation, too many graduates and patient abuse.

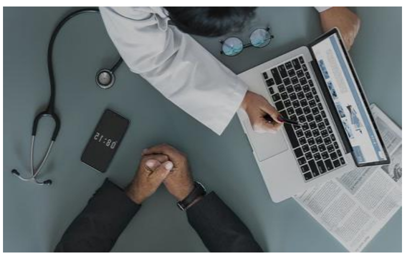


PART 2: Business conditions & confidence, challenges, growth drivers, digital health and practice management systems

- Australian health practitioners reported positive business conditions (+19) in the last 6 months, and stronger than those in the broad economy (+15). Strong trading conditions (+24) were the main driver and it impacted positively on profitability (+14) and employment (+19).
- Business conditions were strongest for Allied health (+23) and Dental services practitioners (+20), with GPs and Specialists (+16) reporting similar conditions to the broad economy (+15). Allied health and Dental services practitioners also out-performed the broad economy for trading conditions, profitability and employment. GPs and Specialists under-performed on all measures except employment.
- Capital expenditure in the past 6 months was positive for all practitioner groups (led by Dental services) and all groups significantly out-performed the broad economy. Overall sales margins for health practitioners in the last 6 months were positive (+11) - in contrast to the negative sales margin index in the broad economy (-5). Sales margins were highest for GPs and Specialists (+19) and negative for Dental services practitioners (-3).
- Business confidence among all health practitioners (+32) was also stronger than the broad economy (+23). Confidence was highest for Allied health practitioners (+45) and much higher than for GPs and Specialists (+27) and Dental services practitioners (+25).
- GPs and Specialists anticipate a significant improvement in their profitability in the next 6 months compared to the last 6 months, but Dental services practitioners see much softer employment conditions.
- Capital expenditure in all practitioner groups is expected to soften in the next 6 months, particularly for GPs and Specialists. The outlook for sales margins in the next 6 months is however much stronger in all groups, led by GPs and Specialists.
- Australian health practitioners continue to identify patient recommendations as the key growth driver of their medical practices, followed by growing local populations. Online marketing and increased capacity were the next biggest drivers, while bulk billing contributed the least to the growth of their medical practice.
- Health practitioners said that cost increases is still the single biggest single challenge facing the health industry - and see it as quite a significant challenge - rating 7.2 points on a scale of 10. Revenue pressures (6.6 points) and compliance and regulation (6.4 points) were identified as the next biggest challenges facing their industry.
- Health practitioners see 'moderate' potential for digital health to favourably impact patient care (5.7 points out of 10) and were least positive about providing patient care via electronic channels rather than face-to-face (2.9 points).
- On average, health practitioners regard the effectiveness of the practice management system (PMS) they are currently using in their practices quite 'highly', rating it 7.5 points out of 10. They are also highly unlikely to consider changing their PMS in the next 12 months, scoring just 3.5 points out of 10.

PART 3: Practitioner Wellbeing

- Health practitioners were asked to assess their own personal wellbeing based on the same methodology used in the NAB Wellbeing Survey and compared against the broad Australian population.
- The results show that health practitioners have significantly higher levels of wellbeing than the average Australian (70.5 points vs. 62.8 points).
- Higher wellbeing among health practitioners was supported mainly by a much higher sense of life worth. Health practitioners also had higher wellbeing in regards to life satisfaction and happiness and reported lower levels of personal anxiety.
- When we asked health practitioners to what extent (either positive or negative) a number of factors influenced their wellbeing, the biggest positive impact came from making the right decision, followed by keeping up to date and responsibility at work. On the negative side, the biggest detractors from their wellbeing were lack of sleep, dealing with death and long work hours.

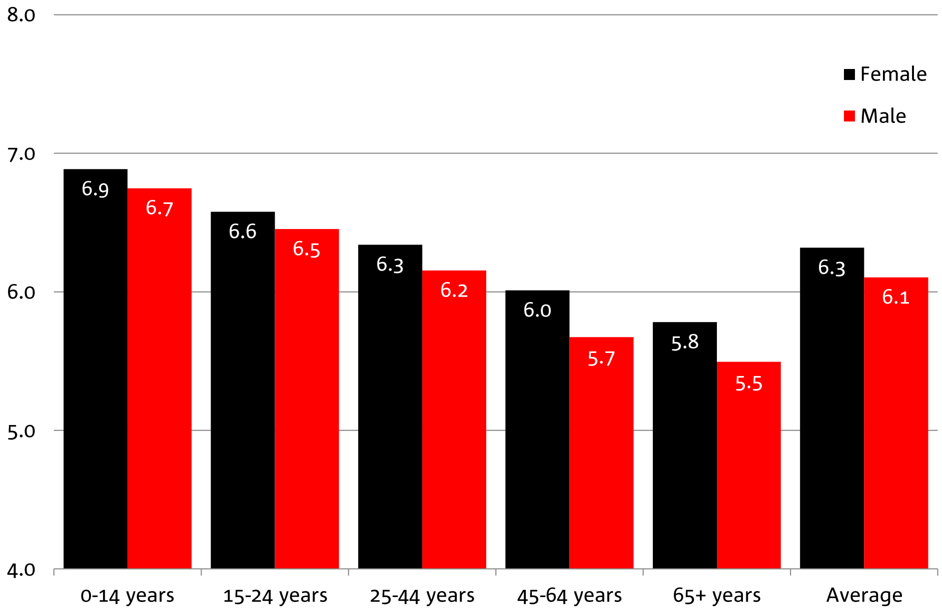


MAIN REPORT: PART 1

HOW GPs, SPECIALISTS, DENTAL SERVICES PRACTITIONERS AND ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES PRACTITIONERS SEE AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE SYSTEM NOW & IN THE FUTURE

HOW PRACTITIONERS RATE THE HEALTH OF AUSTRALIANS

RATING OUR HEALTH: GPs, SPECIALISTS & ALLIED HEALTH
(0 = extremely poor; 10 = outstanding)



On average, GPs, Specialists and Allied health practitioners rated Australians as 'moderately' healthy.

When asked to rate their health on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is outstanding, females (6.3 points) on average scored higher than males (6.1 points).

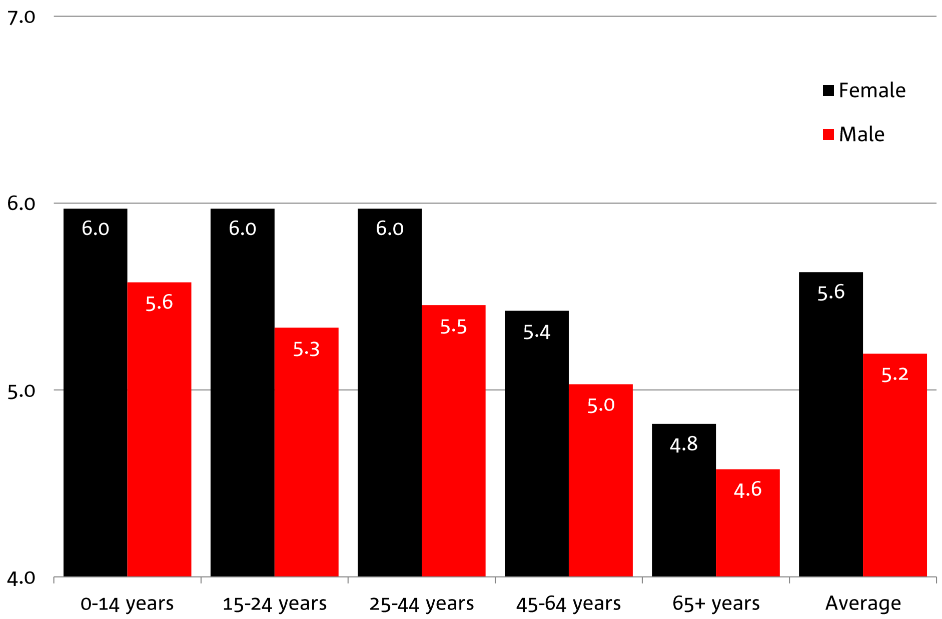
Females were also identified as being healthier than males in all age groups.

There was also a clear negative relationship between health and age - our health falls as we grow older.

Children aged 10-14 were healthiest of all age groups - both girls (6.9 points) and boys (6.7 points). Over 65s were the least healthy age group - both women (5.8 points) and men (5.5 points).

The 'health gap' was biggest in the 45-64 age groups, where females rated noticeably higher than men.

RATING OUR ORAL HEALTH: DENTAL SERVICES
(0 = extremely poor; 10 = outstanding)



When it came to oral health, Dental services practitioners were less optimistic and rated our oral health lower across genders and in all age groups.

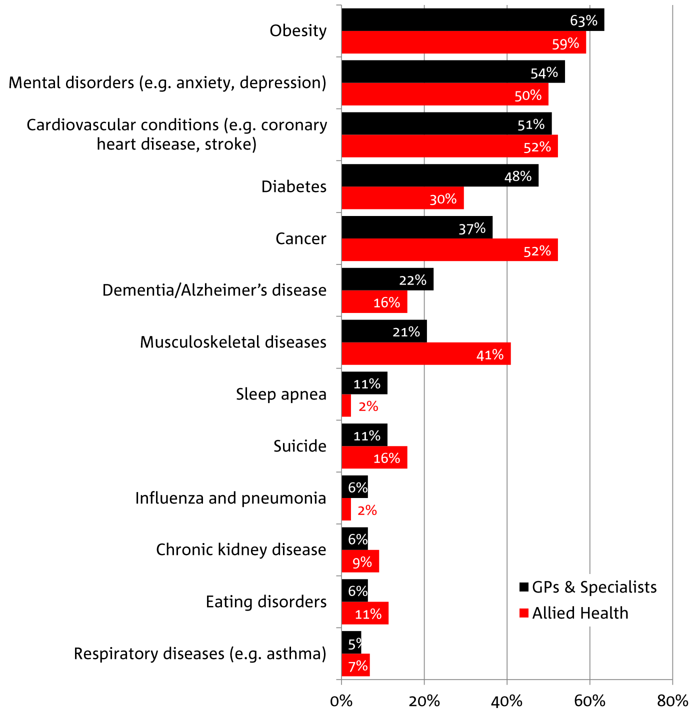
The survey highlights a noticeable difference between the oral health of females overall (5.6 points) and males (5.2 points).

This difference was apparent in all age groups, except after the age of 65, when oral health levels of females and males were noticeably closer.

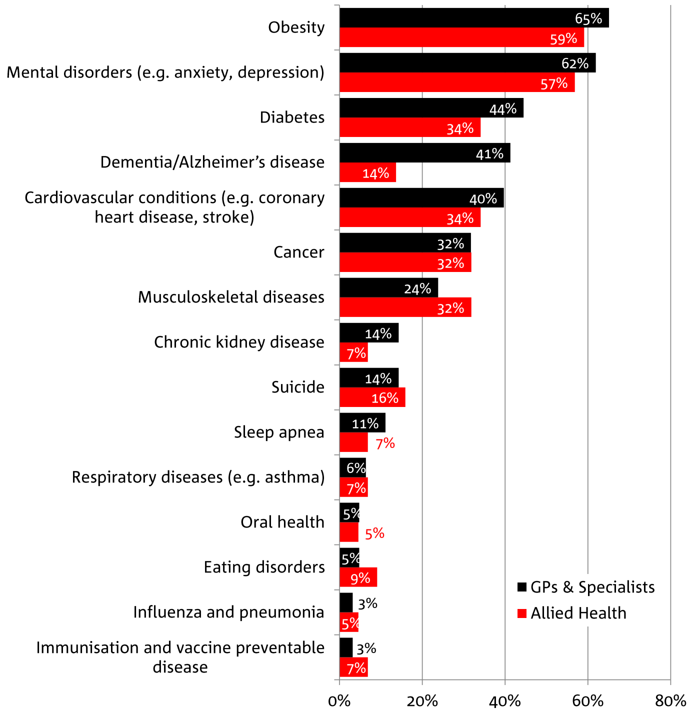
Interestingly, the oral health of females was rated at similar levels in all age groups between 0-44, but it fell away sharply after the age of 45. A similar (but less obvious) pattern was also observed for males.

BIGGEST HEALTH RELATED ISSUES FACING AUSTRALIANS

BIGGEST HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES FACING AUSTRALIANS NOW



BIGGEST HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES FACING AUSTRALIANS IN 10 YEARS' TIME



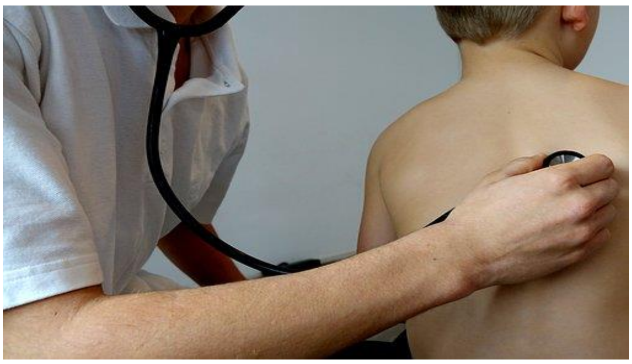
GPs, Specialists and Allied health practitioners were asked to nominate the biggest health-related issues that Australians face today and will face in 10 years' time.

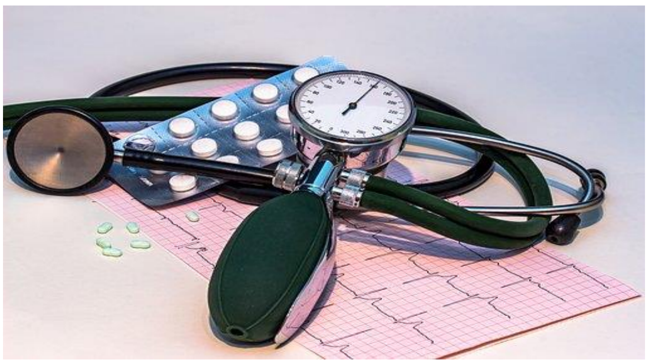
Obesity was considered to be the number one issue we face today by almost 2 in 3 (63%) GPs and Specialists, while around 1 in 2 also nominated mental disorders such as anxiety and depression (54%) and cardiovascular conditions (51%) as key health issues, with diabetes (48%) and Cancer (37%) also significant.

GPs and Specialists anticipate little progress on tackling obesity in the future with 65% expecting obesity to still be the number one health issue facing Australians in 10 years' time. They also expect mental disorders to become more prevalent (62%), but anticipate mild improvements in diabetes (44%) and cancer (32%). But as the population ages, Dementia and Alzheimer's disease are expected to emerge as major health issues according to 41% of GPs and Specialists, compared to just 22% now.

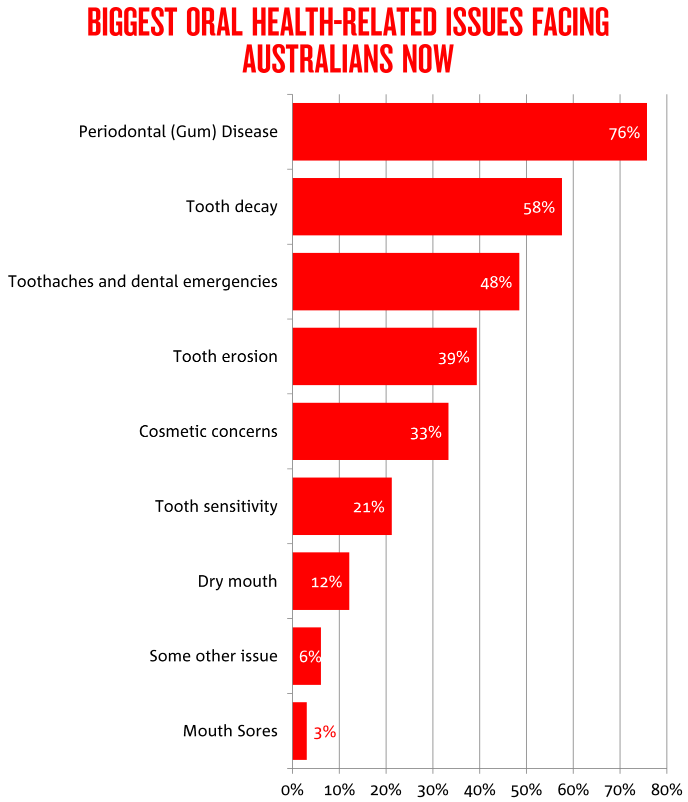
Allied health practitioners are in broad agreement with the majority also identifying obesity (59%) as the biggest health challenge facing us today, followed by cardiovascular conditions (52%) and mental disorders (50%). They were somewhat less concerned about the role of diabetes (30%), but noticeably more worried about the impact cancer (52%) and musculoskeletal diseases (41%) were having on our health.

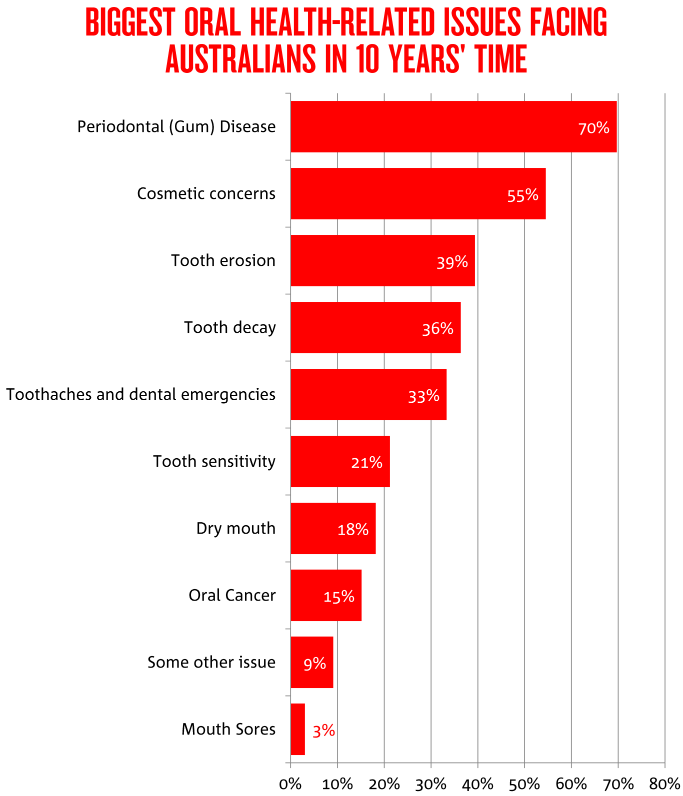
The majority of Allied health practitioners also believe obesity (59%) and mental disorders (57%) will still be the biggest health challenges we face in 10 years' time. Diabetes is also expected to be somewhat more prevalent (34%). Other key health issues in the future include cardiovascular conditions (34%), cancer (32%) and musculoskeletal conditions (32%) - although progress is expected on all these fronts.





BIGGEST ORAL HEALTH RELATED ISSUES FACING AUSTRALIANS





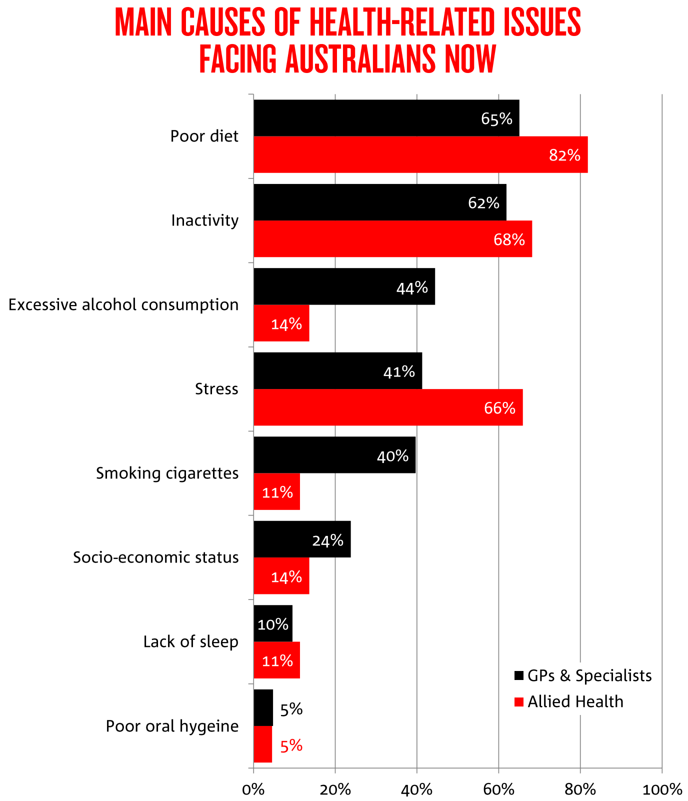
Dental services practitioners were also asked to nominate the biggest oral health-related issues that Australians face today and will face in 10 years' time.

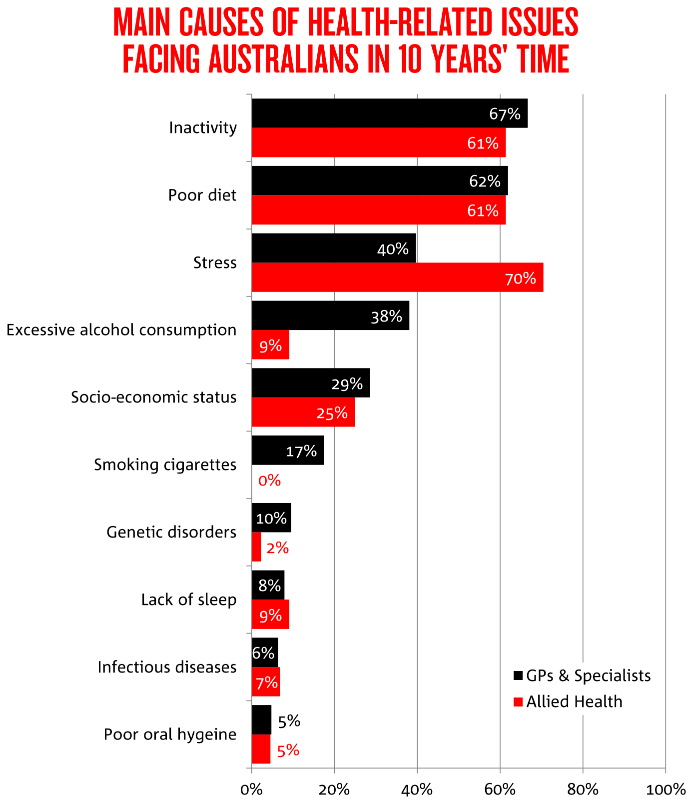
Periodontal or gum disease was highlighted as the number one issue by almost 8 in 10 (76%) Dental services practitioners, followed by tooth decay (58%), toothaches and dental emergencies (48%), tooth erosion (39%), cosmetic concerns (33%) and tooth sensitivity (21%).

While periodontal disease is still expected to still be the main dental health issue in 10 years' time (70%), more than 1 in 2 (55%) Dental services practitioners expect cosmetic concerns to emerge as the next biggest oral health issue facing Australians.

Tooth erosion (39%) is next, followed by tooth decay (36%), but significantly less of an issue than it is now (58%). Interestingly, oral cancer is also expected to emerge as an oral health related issue in 10 years' according to around 15% of Dental services practitioners.

CAUSES OF HEALTH RELATED ISSUES FACING AUSTRALIANS





Almost 2 in 3 GPs and Specialists identified poor diet (65%) and inactivity (62%) as the biggest causes of the health related issues facing Australians today. Almost half of them also pinpointed excessive alcohol consumption (44%), stress (41%) and smoking (40%) as key causes of poor health. Almost twice as many GPs and Specialists (24%) also highlighted socio-economic status as a factor.

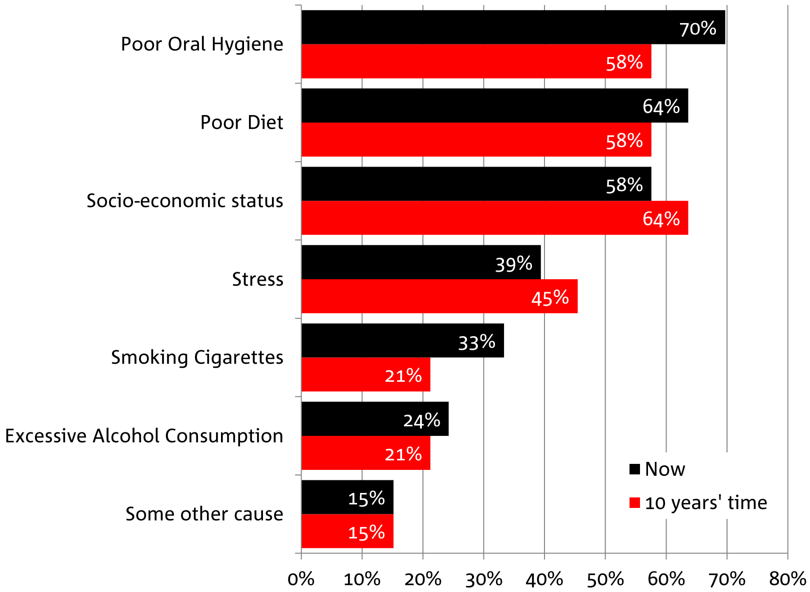
The perceptions of Allied health practitioners were somewhat different. Over 8 in 10 (82%) cited poor diet (82%) and as a key trigger and 2 in 3 (66%) said stress was a factor. In contrast, far fewer Allied health practitioners identified alcohol consumption (14%) and smoking (11%) as causes of poor health today. But they were in broad agreement when it came to inactivity (68%).

Looking ahead, inactivity (67%) will replace poor diet as the main cause of health-related issues according to GPs and Specialists. Poor diet (62%) is still expected to be a major contributor and they expect little progress in relation to stress (40%). The biggest improvement is expected from smoking, with only 17% of GPs and Specialists expecting it to be a major cause of poor health in 10 years' time (compared to 40% who think it is now). Genetic disorders are also expected to be problematic according to 1 in 10 GPs and Specialists.

In contrast, 7 in 10 (70%) Allied health practitioners expect stress to be the biggest cause of health related issues for Australians in 10 years' time. They do however expect some improvement in regards to poor diet as a contributor to poor health (61% vs. 82% now) and inactivity (61% vs. 68% now). Around 1 in 4 (25%) also expect socio-economic status to play a role, up from just 14% now.

CAUSES OF ORAL HEALTH RELATED ISSUES FACING AUSTRALIANS

TOP CAUSES OF ORAL HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES FACING AUSTRALIANS NOW & IN 10 YEARS' TIME



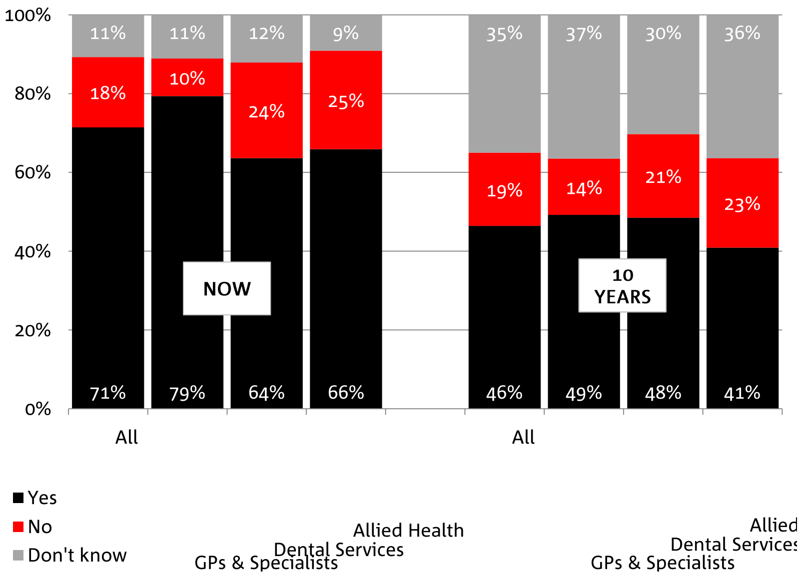
Poor oral hygiene was considered to be the main cause of oral related health issues facing Australians today by 7 in 10 Dental services practitioners. The next most common causes were poor diet (64%), socio-economic status (58%), stress (39%) and smoking (33%).

But when looking to the future, most Dental services practitioners said that socio-economic status (64%) will overtake poor oral hygiene (58%) and poor diet (58%) as the biggest cause of oral health issues in 10 years' time.

More Dental practitioners believe that stress (45%) will also play a bigger role than it does now, but smoking (21%) will contribute less.

PERCEPTIONS OF AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH SYSTEM

DOES AUSTRALIA HAVE A WORLD CLASS HEALTH SYSTEM? NOW & IN 10 YEARS' TIME



Health practitioners remain positive about our current health system. Overall, just over 7 in 10 (71%) said Australia currently has a world class health system (down from 80% in the 2017 survey).

GPs and Specialists were the most positive, with almost 8 in 10 (79%) rating our current health system world class (87% in 2017). Around 66% of Allied health services practitioners also said it was world class (69% in 2017).

But Dental services practitioners were noticeable less positive - only 64% said it was world class (down from 80% in 2017).

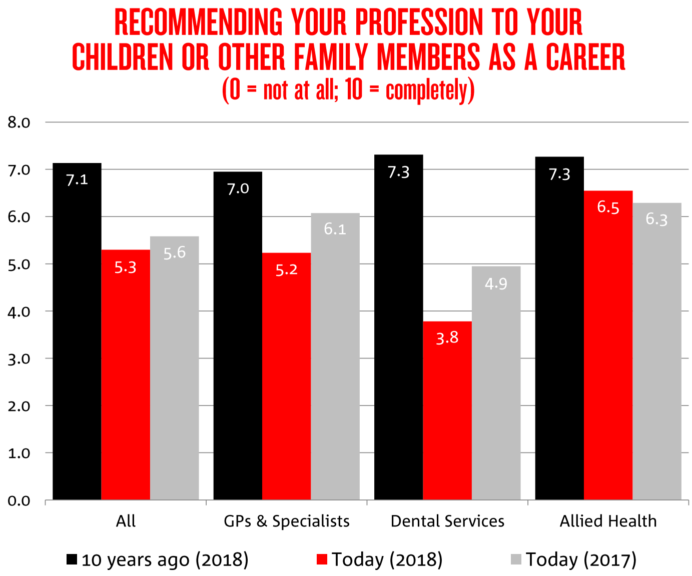
When asked whether Australia's health system will still be world class in 10 years' time, only 46% of all health practitioners said it would (47% in 2017).

By practitioner type, GPs and Specialists were noticeably more pessimistic - only 46% thought it would still be world class (down 58% in 2017).

In contrast, 48% of Dental services practitioners believe it will still be first class (45% in 2017), as did 41% of Allied health practitioners (35% in 2017).

But there is still considerable uncertainty about the future with around 1 in 3 practitioners indicating they 'don't know'.

PRACTITIONER HEALTH AS A CAREER CHOICE



Health practitioners are still far less likely to recommend their profession to their children or family than they were 10 years' ago. They are also less likely to recommend it today than they were last year.

On average, GPs and Specialists scored 5.2 points on a scale of 10 (where 10 is 'completely' likely) when asked the extent they would recommend their profession to their children or family members as a career choice today (down from 6.1 points in 2017). This was significantly lower than when asked how they would have recommended their profession 10 years' ago (7.0 points).

Dental services practitioners were even less positive about recommending their profession today, scoring just 3.8 points (4.9 points in 2017), and well below a score of 7.3 points 10 years' ago.

But Allied health providers were a little more positive in recommending their profession today, scoring 6.5 points (6.3 points in 2017). They were however, still far less positive than they were about recommending their profession 10 years' ago (7.3 points).

WHY YOU WOULD/WOULD NOT RECOMMEND YOUR PROFESSION…

"Doctors must work much harder for their money with increase in cost of running a business."

"Due to compliance and regulation taking more time and not allowing clinicians to remain clinical, or to employ staff to do this for you significantly increasing costs."

"Economic pressures of small business are more onerous now than ever."

"I don't think the market is as good as it was. Society is more litigious, and there is a plethora of options in new careers that would be worth exploring."

"Increased costs to provide service increases pressure on productivity reducing enjoyment of practice. Increased red tape and regulation with a blame culture. There are easier ways to make money and have a better quality of life."

"Increased specialisation has led to salary and lifestyle improvements."

"It is a great profession. I think I make difference in people's life."

"Just like any compassionate career, it can be very mentally draining."

"It's becoming an increasingly corporate industry with growth difficult and professional acceptance declining."

"Many more graduates and income isn't as high as it used to be."

"Over supply of dentists, corporatisation and increasing health fund interference."

"Physiotherapists are one of the worst paid medical professionals - despite having to complete at least 5 years of university medical education."

"Solid career choice. Can work and own a business or work for others."

"Standards have dropped, and patients are being over-serviced due to impact of health funds and participating preferred provider relationships."

"There are other careers that will give them a better work/life balance."

"Too much paperwork, increase litigation, low remuneration, patient abuse."

"Very high stress job with reduced income potential and increasing red tape. Increasing unrealistic expectations from all sectors. Increasing litigation-based drivers to therapeutic management."

"Very much harder to be profitable and dentists are becoming ruthless and unethical due to competition."

MAIN REPORT: PART 2

BUSINESS CONDITIONS & CONFIDENCE AMONG HEALTH PRACTITIONERS, CHALLENGES, GROWTH DRIVERS, ATTITUDES TO DIGITAL HEALTH AND PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Australian health practitioners reported positive business conditions (+19) in the last 6 months, led by strong trading conditions (+24). The impact from strong trading conditions on profitability (+14) and employment (+19) was also positive. Overall business conditions among health practitioners were also somewhat stronger than in the broad economy (+15) as measured by NAB's Quarterly Business Survey (QBS).

By practitioner type, business conditions were strongest for Allied health (+23) and Dental services practitioners (+20), with GPs and Specialists (+16) reporting similar conditions to the broad economy. Allied health and Dental services practitioners out-performed the broad economy for trading conditions, profitability and employment. GPs and Specialists under-performed on all measures except employment.

Capital expenditure in the past 6 months was positive across all practitioner groups (led by Dental services) with all groups significantly out-performing the broad economy. Overall sales margins for health practitioners in the last 6 months was also positive (+11) - in contrast to a negative sales margin index reported in the broad economy (-5). Sales margins were highest for GPs and Specialists (+19) and negative for Dental services practitioners (-3).

BUSINESS CONDITIONS (LAST 6 MONTHS)

	QBS* (Economy)	All Health Practitioners	GPs & Specialists	Dental Services	Allied Health
Business Conditions	**15**	**19**	**16**	**20**	**23**
- Trading	23	24	21	24	30
- Profitability	13	14	8	18	20
- Employment	9	19	21	18	18
Capital Expenditure	10	29	27	33	27
Sales Margins	-5	11	19	-3	11

**NAB Quarterly Business Survey (QBS) refers to last 3 months. Practitioners to last 6 months. Data not seasonally-adjusted*

Overall, business confidence for all health practitioners (+32) is somewhat stronger than the broad economy (+23). It is highest for Allied health practitioners (+45) and much higher than for GPs and Specialists (+27) and Dental services practitioners (+25). Allied health practitioners are also the most confident across all index sub-components - trading conditions (+52), profitability (+50) and employment (+32).

GPs and Specialists anticipate a significant improvement in profitability (+19) in the next 6 months compared to the last 6 months, but Dental services practitioners see much softer employment conditions (+6), and much weaker than in the broad economy.

Capital expenditure in all practitioner groups is also expected to soften, particularly for GPs and Specialists (+0), with confidence levels weaker than in the broad economy in all groups except Dental services (+27). The outlook for sales margins in the next 6 months is however much stronger in all groups, led by GPs and Specialists (+33).

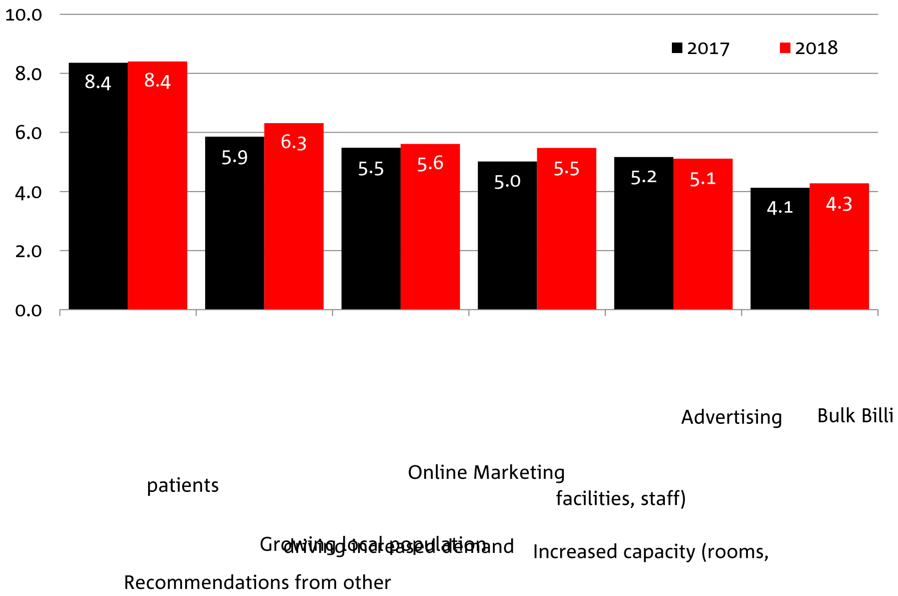
BUSINESS CONDITIONS (NEXT 6 MONTHS)

	QBS* (Economy)	All Health Practitioners	GPs & Specialists	Dental Services	Allied Health
Business Conditions	**23**	**32**	**27**	**25**	**45**
- Trading	30	42	33	45	52
- Profitability	23	30	19	24	50
- Employment	17	24	29	6	32
Capital Expenditure	21	10	0	27	11
Sales Margins	7	25	33	15	20

**NAB Quarterly Business Survey (QBS) refers to next 3 months. Practitioners to next 6 months. Data not seasonally-adjusted*

BUSINESS GROWTH DRIVERS & INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

KEY DRIVERS OF GROWTH OF YOUR MEDICAL PRACTICE
(0 = not at all; 10 = high)

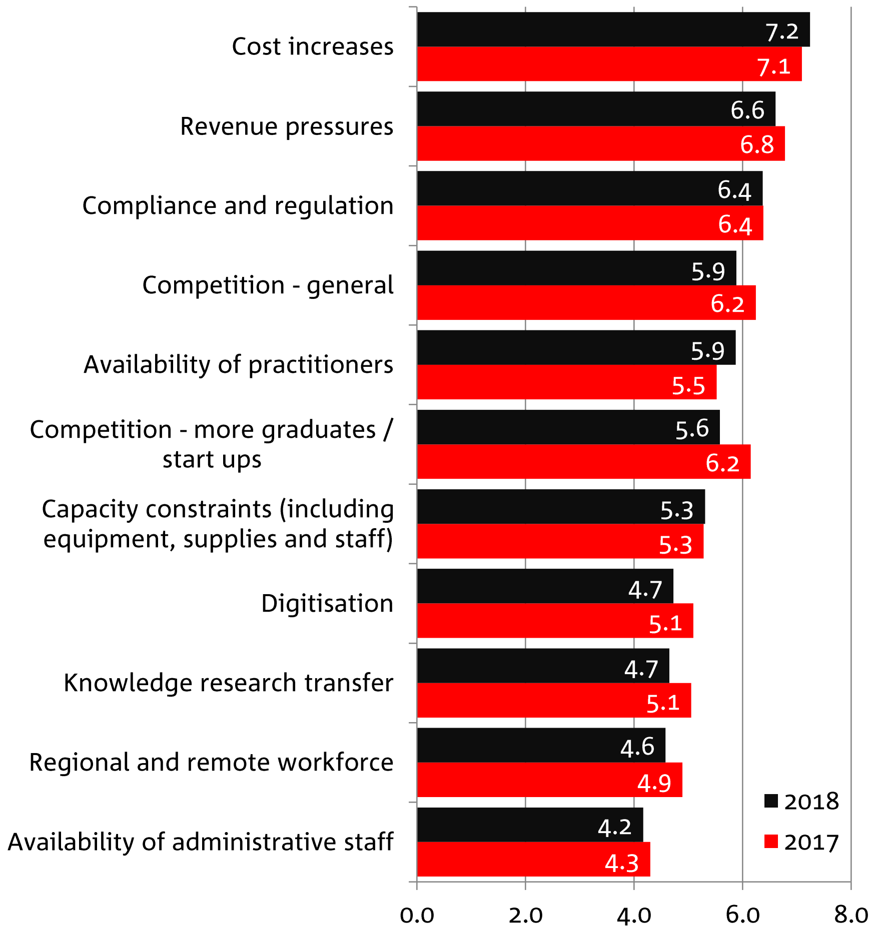


Health professionals continue to identify patient recommendations as the key growth driver of their medical practices. On average, they scored 8.4 points on a scale of 10 (where 10 is 'high').

Growing local population was the next biggest driver of practice growth and contributed slightly more than it did in 2017 (6.3 points vs. 5.9 points).

Online marketing (5.6 points) and increased capacity (5.5 points) were the next biggest drivers, while bulk billing (4.3 points) contributed the least to the growth of their medical practice.

CHALLENGES FACING YOUR INDUSTRY
(0 = not at all; 10 = extremely high)



Cost increases remain the biggest challenge facing the health industry. Health practitioners also believe this challenge is quite significant - rating 7.2 points on a scale of 10 (where 10 is 'significant' challenge).

Revenue pressures (6.6 points) and compliance and regulation (6.4 points) were identified as the next biggest challenges facing their industry.

Their level of concern around all other industry challenges was lower (or unchanged) when compared to the 2017, survey, except when it came to the availability of medical practitioners, which was seen as bigger challenge in the 2018 survey.

Around 1 in 5 health practitioners also identified "other" challenges facing their industry coming from things such as adverse media attention, bias against chiropractic practitioners, insurance company take-overs, health fund changes, unprofessional operators promoting rebates and the quality of graduates.

MAIN CHANGES MADE OR PLANNING TO MAKE TO YOUR PRACTICE?

"Carrying out renovations to improve patient comfort."

"Principal dentist now working there full time so increased turnover and profit."

"Cohabitation within an established medical practice."

"Downsizing due to difficulty in attracting staff willing to work at an acceptable standard for a realistic return."

"Employ extra doctors to reduce workload."

"Enlarged the car parking space and more practitioners working on weekends and after hours."

"Going completely digital."

"Increasing online work which reduces overheads and increases MBS returns due to 50% extra charge availability due to servicing remote areas."

"Patient feedback and incorporation into practice."

"Social media marketing."

"Make service more accessible for single parent families and/or those with financial hardship (e.g. bulk billing/mobile service, etc.)."

"Not take on any further NDIS patients due to legislative and financial restraints being put on."

"Provide a work space for other health professionals within the business. Therefore, attracting a wider range of patients to the office and giving them exposure to the other health professionals."

"Rebrand, new logo."

"Planning to adapt to the new hospital opening nearby with expected increased involvement within the hospital and with follow up of discharged patients."

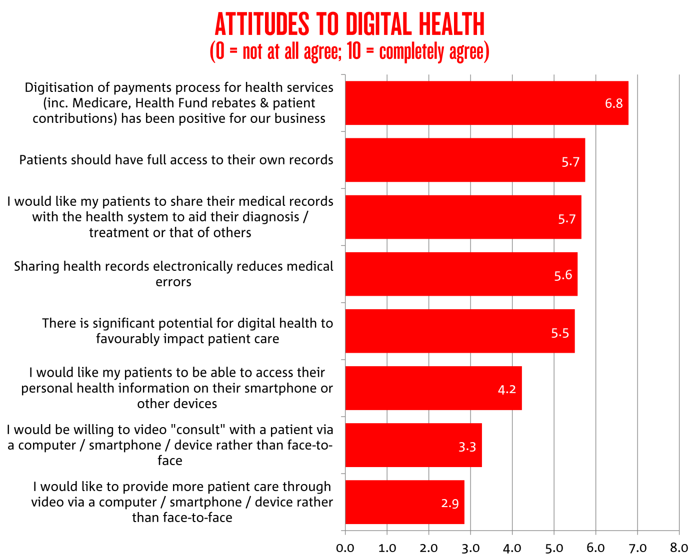
"Starting a paediatric physiotherapy service to families in our rural and remote area where they would normally have to drive 1-2 hours for."

"Switching from ownership by a corporation to privately owned practice."

"To privately bill more patients as bulk-billing is no longer sustainable."

"Trying to improve our culture to make staff feel more valued and hopefully translate to staff retention."

ATTITUDES TO DIGITAL HEALTH



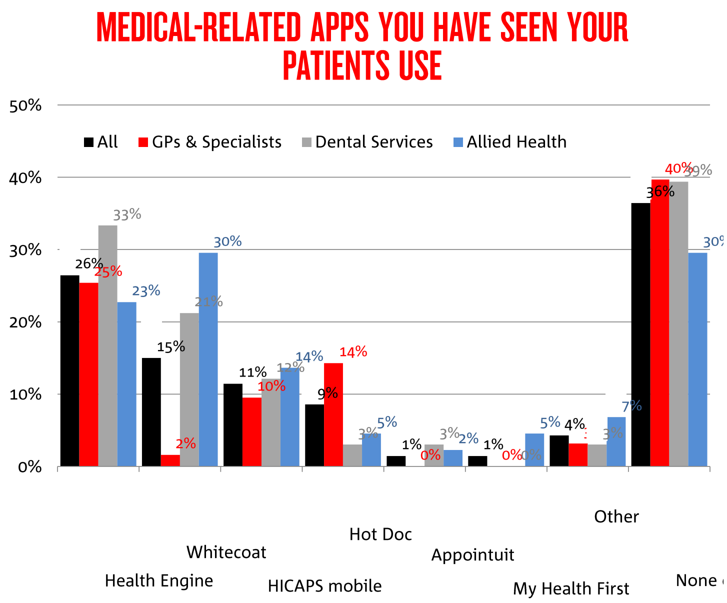
Health practitioners were asked to share views relating to some aspects of digital health and their patients' medical records.

They agreed most with the statement that 'digitisation of payments process for health services has been positive for their business'. On average, health practitioners scored 6.8 points on a scale of 10 (where 10 is 'completely' agree).

The level of agreement among health practitioners was next highest around the statement that 'patients should have full access to their own records' and 'I would like my patients to share their medical records with the health system to aid their diagnosis and the treatment of others' - albeit scoring a much lower 5.7 points.

Other statements where there was moderate agreement included 'sharing health records electronically reduces medical errors' (5.6points) and 'there is significant potential for digital health to favourably impact patient care' (5.7 points). There was least agreement when it came to providing patient care via electronic channels rather than face-to-face (2.9 points).

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

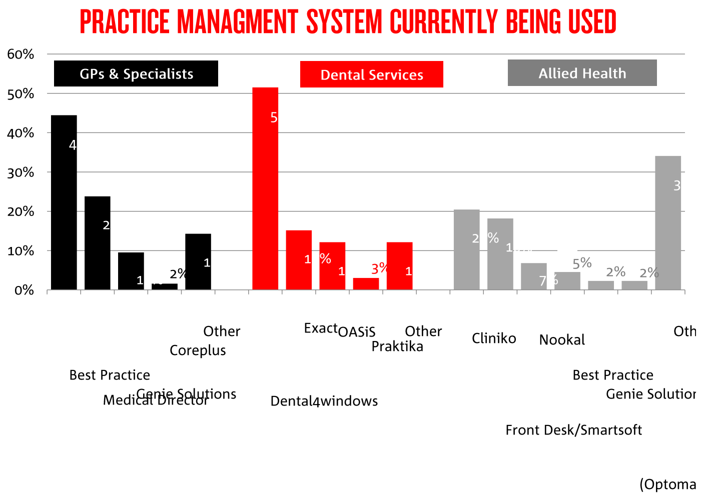


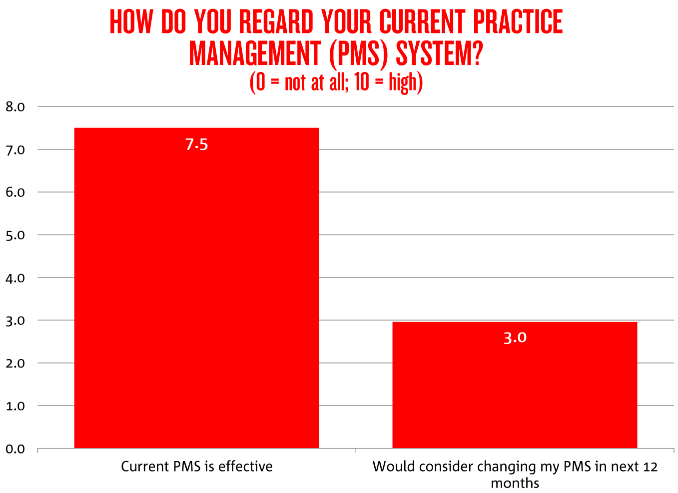
Health Engine (a booking app) was the most frequently used app that health practitioners had seen their patients use according to around 1 in 4 (26%) of all practitioners. It was also the most frequently used app seen by Dental services practitioners (33%) and GPs and Specialists (25%).

Whitecoat (an online healthcare provider directory) was the next most popular according to (15%) of all practitioners and the most common app seen by 30% of Allied health practitioners (30%).

HICAPS mobile (which allows patients to book appointments, claim and pay from their mobile phone) and Hot Doc (an appointment booking app) were the next most commonly used app according to 11% and 9% of all health practitioners respectively.

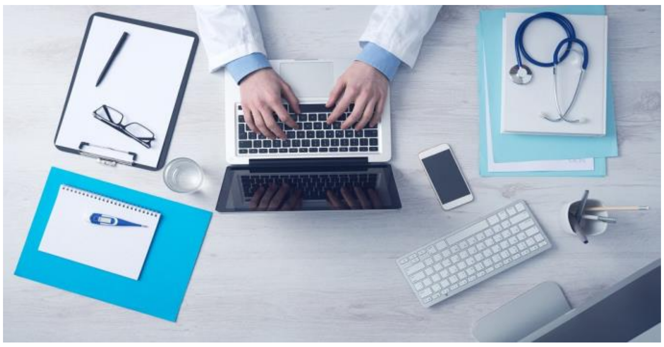
Around 4 in 10 GPs, Specialists and Dental services practitioners and 3 in 10 Allied health practitioners said they had not seen their patients use any of these apps.





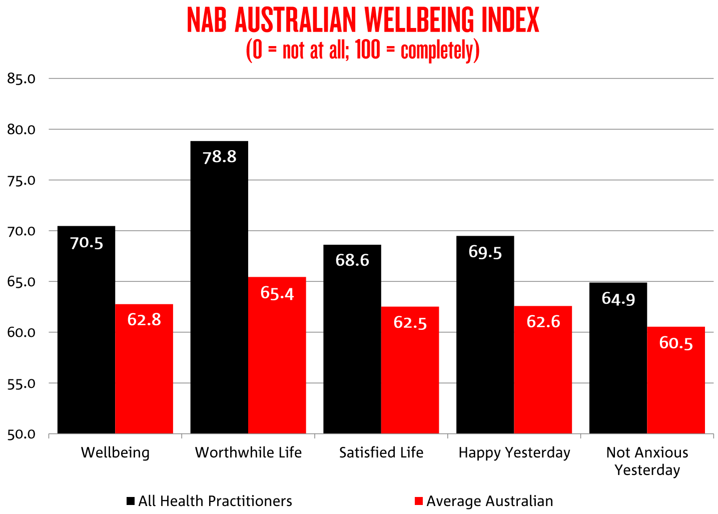
Around 44% of GPs and Specialists currently use BestPractice as their main practice management system (PMS) and 24% Medical Director. Over 1 in 2 (52%) Dental services practitioners use Dental4windows, 15% Exact and 12% OASiS. Around 1 in 5 (20%) of Allied services practitioners use Clinko and 18% FrontDesk/Smartsoft.

On average, health practitioners regard effectiveness of the PMS they are currently using in their practice quite ‘highly’, rating 7.5 points out of 10 (where 10 is ‘high’). They also said they were ‘highly’ unlikely to consider changing their PMS in the next 12 months, scoring just 3.5 points.



MAIN REPORT: PART 3

PRACTITIONER WELLBEING



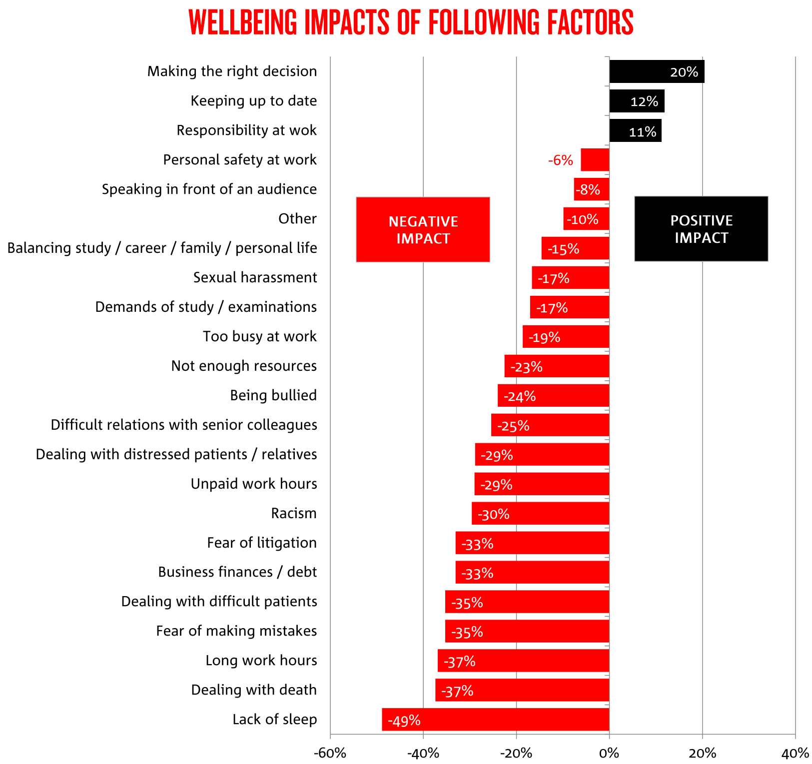
Since 2013, NAB has been regularly monitoring the wellbeing of everyday Australians.

The NAB Australian Wellbeing Index is based on survey participants' responses to four questions related to how people "think and feel about their own lives" - how satisfied are you with your life nowadays; to what extent do you feel the things that you do in your life are worthwhile; how happy did you feel yesterday; and, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

In this survey, health practitioners were also asked to assess their own personal wellbeing based on this methodology. This was compared against the broad Australian population.

The results show that health practitioners have significantly higher levels of wellbeing than the average Australian (70.5 points vs. 62.8 points). Their wellbeing was also higher than for any demographic group in NAB's Wellbeing Survey (where men over 50 currently rate highest for wellbeing at 68.4 points).

Higher wellbeing among health practitioners was supported mainly by a much higher sense of life worth (78.8 points vs. 65.4 points). Health practitioners also had higher wellbeing in regards to life satisfaction and happiness. They also reported lower levels of personal anxiety.



Wellbeing can be influenced by a number of factors. When we asked health practitioners to what extent (either positive or negative) a number of factors influenced their wellbeing, the biggest positive impact came from making the right decision.

In net terms, +20% more practitioners said the impact of making the right decision had a positive impact than those who said it had a negative impact.

Other factors that had a net positive impact on their wellbeing also included keeping up to date (+12%) and responsibility at work (+11%).

On the negative side, the biggest detractor from the wellbeing of health practitioners came from lack of sleep, where a net -49% said it contributed negatively.

Other factors that also had a negative impact for a significant number of health practitioners were dealing with death (-37%), long work hours (-37%), fear of making mistakes (-35%), dealing with difficult patients (-35%), business finances/debt (-33%), fear of litigation (-33%), racism (-30%), unpaid work hours (-29%) and dealing with distressed patients or their relatives (-29%).

CONTACT THE AUTHORS

Alan Oster
Group Chief Economist
Alan.Oster@nab.com.au
+613 8634 2927

Dean Pearson
Head of Behavioural & Industry Economics
Dean.Pearson@nab.com.au
+613 8634 2331

Robert De Iure
Senior Economist - Behavioural & Industry Economics
Robert.De.Iure@nab.com.au
+613 8634 4611

Brien McDonald
Senior Economist - Behavioural & Industry Economics
Brien.McDonald@nab.com.au
+613 8634 3837

Steven Wu
Economist - Behavioural & Industry Economics
Steven.A.Wu@nab.com.au
+(613) 9208 2929