

## **SAND abstract No. 11 from the BEACH program 1999–2000**

### **Subject: Patient employment status and occupation**

**Organisation supporting this study:** General Practice Statistics and Classification Unit

**Issues:** Employment status, occupation, problems managed for retirees, unemployed and occupational groups

**Sample:** 4,385 encounters from 110 GPs; data collection period: 30/3/1999 – 30/4/1999

**Method:** Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method' on this website (<http://www.fmrc.org.au/beach.htm>).

### **Summary of results**

The age and sex distribution of the respondents was similar to the expected distribution of general practice patients, with the majority (58.1%) being female.

Of the 4,385 respondents, 59.8% were not in the labour force. Those not in the work force were mainly retirees (22.9%) and students (19.7%).

The main industries that the respondents in the work force were currently employed in were retail trade (15.4%), manufacturing (11.8%) and health and community services (11.7%).

Current occupation was analysed using the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) major groups, subgroups and individual occupations. Current occupation by major group showed most patients describing themselves as 'intermediate clerical/sales/service' workers (20.0%), followed by 'professionals' (17.3%). The most common current occupations at the ASCO 6 digit level were 'sales assistant' (8.0%), 'general clerk' (6.7%) and 'school teacher' (2.8%).

Problems managed at the consultation were analysed in relation to the occupation group and employment status of the patient and compared with problems managed at all patient encounters from the same period

For all respondents, the most common problems managed were immunisation, upper respiratory tract infection and hypertension. Hypertension was managed at a lower rate for employed patients than for all respondents but managed at a significantly greater rate for retirees (17.0 per 100 encounters, CI: 13.0–20.9) than for all respondents (6.9 per 100, CI: 5.4–8.4). Back complaints were managed at an apparently higher rate amongst labourers (5.4 per 100 encounters) than amongst all respondents (2.2) but number of encounters with labourers were too small to test for significance. Likewise, depression (4.1) was managed at an apparently higher rate for professionals than for all respondents (2.9).

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