

Availability and characteristics of publicly available health workforce data sources in Australia

Many data sources are used in Australia to inform health workforce planning, but their characteristics in terms of relevance, accessibility and accuracy are uncertain. Availability of high-quality data is critical for addressing urban-rural health workforce maldistribution.

**12 data sources
were reviewed**

8 primary data sources

4 secondary data sources

Primary data sources

- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)
- National Health Workforce Data Set (NHWDS)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey
- Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life survey (MABEL)
- Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health project (BEACH)
- Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia survey (HILDA)
- Rural Workforce Agencies (RWA)

Secondary data sources (collated from primary data sources)

- Australasian Medical Publishing Company (AMPCo)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- World Bank database

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Most data sources use a survey method to collect data, with frequency of data collection ranging from monthly to every five years, with most sources collecting data annually.



Data sources tended to score well on:

- **Relevance**
 - Coverage of disciplines
 - Number of variables of interest
 - Recency of data
 - Frequency of data collection
- **Geographic coverage**



Data sources tended to score poorly on:

- Reference period (i.e. ability to provide data for a period specified by the user)
- Accessibility (including access to data sets and data)
- Representativeness
- Information on completeness of data



No single primary data source scored well across all domains of the appraisal tool.

Establishment of a high quality, longitudinal, linked database that can inform all aspects of health workforce development is urgently needed, particularly for rural health workforce and services planning.