

How much allied health is enough-using clinical care ratios for workforce planning and workload monitoring for allied health professionals

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Background

It is essential for health service managers to be able to quantify workloads of allied health professionals to effectively manage service demand and capacity. One such measure is the Clinical Care Ratio (CCR), a tool that measures the time spent on direct clinical activities compared with the time spent on non-direct clinical activities expressed as a percentage of total time worked.

This project was undertaken by the Australasian Allied Health Benchmarking Consortium a group of 15 tertiary teaching hospitals. This study sought to determine:

- 1) Can we quantify and recommend clinical care ratios according to seniority level and role type?
- 2) Is this amount consistent both within and across the major allied health professions

Methods

AAHBC has:

- 1) Agreed on a hierarchy and levels according to seniority and management/clinical responsibilities
- 2) Agreed on standards of clinical care ratios that are consistent across all disciplines
- 3) Collected one month data snapshots annually from 2006-2012
- 4) Performed statistical analysis via mean and median and two way anova test in 2014/2015

Results and Discussion

The mean clinical care ratios were calculated by level and profession. The study found consistency across facilities and professions for clinical or clinical team leader roles. There was no consistency with clinical educator or management roles due to differences between the expected clinical and non-clinical components/models of these positions. There were also significant differences between entry level clinical roles and more experienced clinicians indicating higher non-clinical requirements of their roles.

Conclusions

Clinical care ratios are a useful tool in workload management and determining staffing levels for allied health professional services. These results will be published as a guideline for allied health professionals to use in planning, monitoring workloads and benchmarking services.