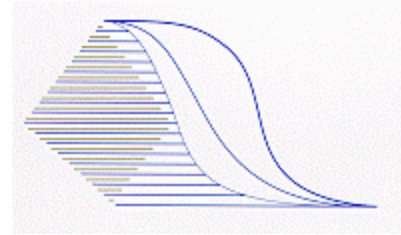


**Centre for Health Services  
and Policy Research**



**MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE**

**General Analysis**

Sherin Rahim-Jamal

HHRU 01:2W

January 2001

***Health Human Resources Unit  
Research Reports***



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



# MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

## General Analysis

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Health Human Resources Unit  
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The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, British Columbia V6T 1Z3

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## Mental Health Workforce - General Analysis

### Methodology

#### I. Identification of Professions Working in Mental Health

**Definition:** We assumed several professional sub-groups would be working in the mental health field including LPNs, RNs, RPNs, Psychologists, OTs, Social Workers (SWs), and Physicians. An operationalized definition of mental health was developed pertaining to those employed in:

- Psychiatric Hospital
- General Hospital Psychiatry
- Adolescent/Child Psychiatry
- Mentally Handicapped Hospital/School (includes centre for mentally handicapped, and institutions for developmentally/mentally challenged)
- Boarding Home/Group Home/Specialized Residential Care
- Mental Health (includes mental health centre, mental health clinic, community mental health team)
- Corrections
- Forensics
- Substance Abuse/Detox
- Sexual Abuse Recovery
- Crisis Intervention/Suicide Prevention

For each of the professions identified above (with the exception of SWs where we examined individual level data gathered by survey for ROLLCALL 95), we examined the ROLLCALL 99 data and identified the number of individuals in each profession who had indicated that they worked in the employment areas outlined above.

**Limitation:** The above information is limited as only published aggregate data (i.e. ROLLCALL 99) are used; we did not examine individual records except for SWs. Thus, we may have missed some people (e.g. some professionals who provide mental health services in long term care facilities or in community health agencies or in private practices will not have been picked up using the above definition). Further verification of area of service requires access to disaggregated unpublished data.

It is also important to note that with regard to physicians, we included both general practitioners (GPs) and those who indicated Psychiatry as their specialty. However, we cannot determine from the published data alone the number of GPs who actually work in mental health and/or who have mental health patients. In order to determine this, we would have to examine MSP payment data.

The number of GPs and Psychiatrists was determined using both the Medical Services Commission of British Columbia (MSC) specialty codes and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) specialty codes. However, there was no significant difference in the number of physicians identified using the MSC codes and the number identified using the RCPSC specialty codes. As a result, we decided to use the Royal College data for further

analyses since the RCPSC specialty codes reflect the actual training of physicians rather than current practice patterns.

## **II. Age Distribution**

As we did not use individual level data, (except for SWs), to determine the age distribution of the professions identified in (I) above as working in mental health, we assumed that the age distribution for the subset of mental health staff was the same as the whole membership of a particular profession. The age distribution of the membership was then applied to the subset working in mental health. For example, the subset of RNs working in mental health in 1999 equalled 350 individuals. Using the proportionate age distribution of the total RN membership, we estimated the age distribution of the subset of RNs working in mental health: 6 of the 350 RNs working in mental health were aged < 25 years, 59 were 25-34 years, 106 were 35-44 years, etc.

The limitation here is that the assumption made above about the age profile of the membership being the same as the age profile of those individuals working in mental health may not be correct.

## **III. Ageing of the Mental Health Workforce**

Once the age profile of each profession working in mental health was determined, each profession was aged 10 years in order to determine the profile 10 years later. Note that the ageing of each profession was based on the date of record of information provided for ROLLCALL 99. OTs had a date of record of April 2000. As a result, they were aged 10 years from 2000 to 2010, while the LPNs, RNs, and RPNs, had a date of record of 1999 and they were aged from 1999 to 2009. The date of record for SWs is 1996, therefore, the SWs were first aged 3 years to 1999 and then were aged 10 years from 1999 to 2009.

The limitation here is that since published data are in 10-year age groups, we could only age the individuals in 10-year segment intervals.

## **IV. Remarks**

Given the methodological constraints due to the limitation of published data, it is likely that we have underestimated the total number of health professionals employed in mental health.

**Mental Health Workforce - General Analysis - ROLLCALL 99**

**Table 1: Regulated Professions in British Columbia by Place of Employment**

Profession	Practising Professionals Employed in their Respective Areas of Work	Place of Employment											Total by Place of Employment	
		Psychiatric Hospital	General Hospital Psychiatry	Adolescent/ Child Psychiatry	Mentally Handicapped Hospital/School <sup>1</sup>	Boarding Home/ Group Home/ Specialized Residential Care	Mental Health <sup>2</sup>	Corrections	Forensics	Substance Abuse/Detox <sup>3</sup>	Sexual Abuse Recovery	Crisis Intervention/ Suicide Prevention		
LPNs	4,216	8												8
RNs	27,992					350								350
RPNs	2,179	448	318	58	28	210	294	45	164	48				1,613
OTs	854	17			1									18
SWs <sup>4</sup>	982				151		270			90	3	29		543
Psychologists	828	28					62	27		6				123
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37,051</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>976</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>29</b>		<b>2,655</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes Centre for Mentally Handicapped and institutions for Developmentally/Mentally Challenged.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Mental Health Centre, Mental Health Clinic, and Community Mental Health Team.

<sup>3</sup> Includes Alcohol and Drug and Addiction Treatment Centre.

<sup>4</sup> Social Work data obtained from ROLLCALL 95. Date of record April 1996.

### Mental Health Workforce - General Analysis - ROLLCALL 99

**Table 2: Directory Active Physicians in British Columbia by MSC and RCPSC Specialty**

Profession	Directory Active Non-Postgraduate Physicians	<u>MSC Specialty Group</u>		<u>RCPSC Specialty Group</u>	
		GP <sup>1</sup>	Psychiatry	GP <sup>1</sup>	Psychiatry
Physicians	8,106	4,483	524	4,481	525

<sup>1</sup> Includes General Practice and Family Practice - not able to determine the proportion of GPs that work with the mentally ill population.



### Mental Health Workforce - General Analysis - ROLLCALL 99

**Table 3: Age Distribution<sup>1</sup> of Regulated Health Professionals Working in Mental Health in B.C.**

Profession	< 25	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 +	Age Unknown	Total <sup>2</sup>
LPNs <sup>3</sup>		1	2	3	1			7
RNs	6	59	106	117	56	5		349
RPNs	17	250	411	582	298	19	36	1,613
OTs <sup>4,5</sup>		3	5	4	1		5	18
Social Workers <sup>6,7</sup>		48	132	204	92	4	63	543
Psychologists <sup>8</sup>		4	25	54	34	7		124
Physicians (RCPSC) <sup>9</sup>	5	812	1,561	1,447	786	386	10	5,007

<sup>1</sup> The age distribution of respective professions working in Mental Health has been extrapolated using the age distribution of those professions in British Columbia as per ROLLCALL 99.

<sup>2</sup> The total number of individuals in each profession may vary slightly from Table 1 due to extrapolation and rounding.

<sup>3</sup> The age distribution of LPNs working in Mental Health is very crude due to the small number of LPNs identified as working in Mental Health (total of 8). There are no LPNs working in Mental Health under the age of 25 or over the age of 65.

<sup>4</sup> There are no OTs working in Mental Health under the age of 25 or over the age of 65.

<sup>5</sup> The number of OTs whose age is unknown has increased substantially since 1995, as the British Columbia Society of Occupational Therapists (BCSOT) no longer collects birthdate information from its members.

<sup>6</sup> Social Work data were obtained from survey data collected for ROLLCALL 95. Date of record, April 1996. The age distribution of SWs has been extrapolated to 1999 using the age distribution for SWs identified as working in Mental Health and aging each individual by 3 years from 1996 to 1999. New registrants since 1996 are not incorporated in these data.

<sup>7</sup> There are no SWs working in Mental Health under the age of 25. New registrants since 1996 are not incorporated in these data.

<sup>8</sup> There are no psychologists working in Mental Health under the age of 25.

<sup>9</sup> Includes both GP and Psychiatry specialties as per the RCPSC specialty codes.

### Mental Health Workforce - General Analysis - ROLLCALL 99

**Table 4: Regulated Health Professions Working in Mental Health in British Columbia, 1999  
Age at 2009<sup>1</sup>(Aged 10 years from 1999 - 2009)**

Profession	< 25	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 +	Total
LPNs			1	2	3	1	7
RNs		6	59	106	117	61	349
RPNs		17	250	411	582	317	1577
OTs <sup>2,3</sup>			3	5	4	1	13
Social Workers <sup>4</sup>			48	132	204	96	480
Psychologists			4	25	54	41	124
Physicians (RCPSC) <sup>5</sup>		5	812	1561	1447	1172	4997

<sup>1</sup> Only the cohort working in Mental Health in 1999 was aged. The numbers provided above do not take into account new registrants, attritions or reactivations.

<sup>2</sup> OT information in ROLLCALL 99 had a date of record of April 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Note the high number of OTs working in Mental Health whose age is unknown (28%).

<sup>4</sup> The date of record for Social Workers is 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Includes both GPs and Psychiatry specialties as per the RCPSC specialty codes.

