



People’s care needs in aged care

How are needs met?

In Australia, aged care services are tailored so that each person receives the type of help they need. Care is generally provided through residential and community-based approaches. People in permanent residential care need help with most activities and their needs are assessed through the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) on three different areas of care—*activities of daily living*, *cognition and behaviour*, and *complex health care*.

What is the ACFI?

The ACFI is a tool used to assess and provide basic information on a person’s needs in permanent residential care. Questions are asked across the three areas of care (known as ‘care domains’). The ratings—high, medium, low or nil—are used to allocate government funds to the resident’s facility.

The ACFI showed that among people in permanent residential aged care on 30 June 2017:

- 85% had at least one diagnosed mental health or behavioural condition
- 52% had dementia
- 47% had a diagnosis of depression.

What area of care has the highest level of need?

In 2017, the greatest proportion of ‘high’ ratings was in *cognition and behaviour* (63%), followed by *activities of daily living* (57%) and *complex health care* (55%) (Figure 1).

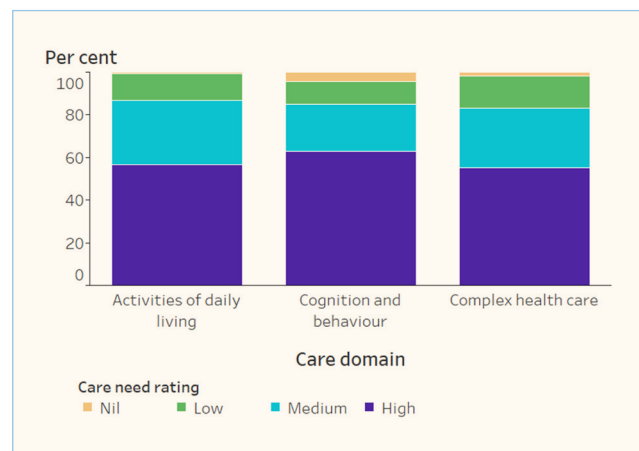


Figure 1: Care need ratings of people in permanent residential care, by care domain, 30 June 2017

How have care needs changed over time?

Since 2009, the proportion of people with high care needs has generally increased in each care domain. The biggest overall change was in the *complex health care* domain where high care need ratings increased from 13% in 2009 to 61% in 2016 before dropping to 55% in 2017 (Figure 2). This drop reflects changes to the rating method for complex health care in January 2017.

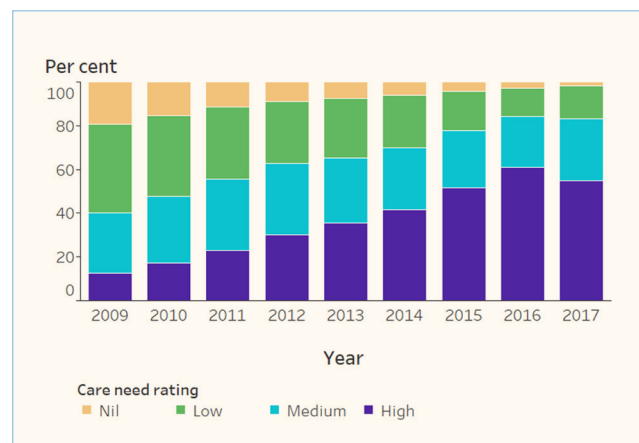


Figure 2: Care need ratings of people in permanent residential care for complex health care, 30 June 2009–2017

Who has high care needs?

Around 1 in 3 people (31%) in residential aged care had a high care need rating for all three of the care domains.

Older people

Generally, the proportion of people with high care needs increases with age, but this isn't always the case—high care needs decreased with age on the *cognition and behaviour* care domain (Figure 3).

Women

A higher proportion of women were assessed with a high care rating on the *complex health care* domain (57% compared with 52% of men), and *activities of daily living* domain (58% compared with 53% of men). Men and women had the same high care need rating on the *cognition and behaviour* domain (63% each). However, at each age group, a higher proportion of women than men were rated with a high care need (Figure 3). This was the same for the other care domains.

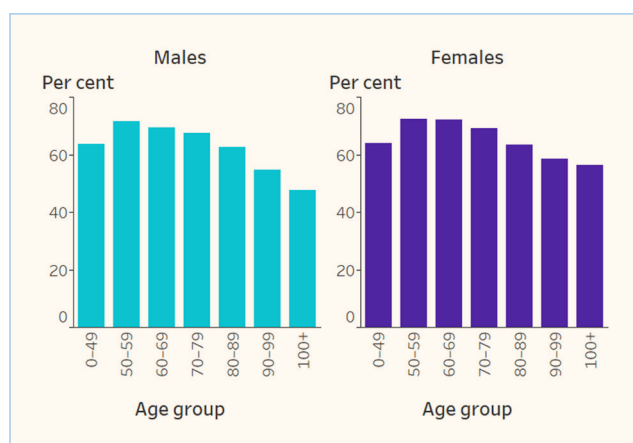


Figure 3: Proportion of people with high care need ratings for cognition and behaviour, by age and sex, 30 June 2017

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Culturally and linguistically diverse people

On each care domain, a larger proportion of people born in non-English speaking countries and those who preferred speaking a language other than English were rated with high care needs than those who were born in English-speaking countries and those who preferred to speak English.

People with dementia

A higher proportion of people with dementia had a high care need rating than people without dementia in the *cognition and behaviour* and *activities of daily living* care domains. The proportion of people who had a high care need rating for *complex health care* was similar for those with and without dementia. As could be expected, the biggest difference was on the *cognition and behaviour* domain, where the rate of high care needs was nearly double that for people with dementia (80%) compared with those without dementia (44%).

Where can I find out more?

Department of Health:

Basic subsidy amounts (ACFI)

<<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/aged-care-funding/residential-care-subsidy/basic-subsidy-amount-aged-care-funding-instrument>>

ACFI user guide

<<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/funding/aged-care-subsidies-and-supplements/residential-care-subsidy/basic-subsidy-amount-aged-care-funding-instrument/aged-care-funding-instrument-acfi-user-guide>>

ACFI reports

<<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/tools-and-resources/aged-care-funding-instrument-acfi-reports>>

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