



People’s care needs in permanent residential aged care

Australia has a range of aged care programs, many of which are tailored to an individual’s needs. Care is generally provided through residential and community-based approaches—in general lower levels of care are delivered within the community, while higher care is usually delivered in residential care facilities. People in permanent residential aged care generally need help with most day-to-day activities. This factsheet presents highlights from the GEN topic People’s care needs in aged care. At 30 June 2019, there were almost 300,000 people using home care, transitional care, and residential care. Over 182,000 of those people were using permanent residential care.

How are care needs assessed?

Once in permanent residential aged care, the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) is used to assess and provide basic information on a person’s care needs across three care domains—activities of daily living, cognition and behaviour, and complex health care. The resulting ratings—high, medium, low or nil—are used to allocate government funds to the residential aged care service. Information on any health conditions that affect a resident’s care is also recorded.

Based on the ACFI as at 30 June 2019, among people living in permanent residential aged care:

- the majority (87%) had at least one diagnosed mental health or behavioural condition
- almost half (49%) had a diagnosis of depression
- just over half (53%) had a diagnosis of dementia.

What area of care has the highest level of need?

In 2019, more residents needed a high level of care for *cognition and behaviour* (64%) than *activities of daily living* (60%) or *complex health care* (52%) (Figure 1).

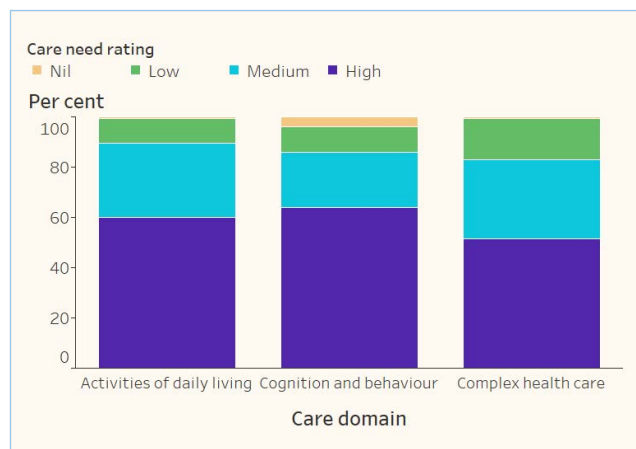


Figure 1: Care need ratings of people in permanent residential care, by care domain, 30 June 2019

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 *complex health care*, rising from 13% in 2009 to 61% in 2016, before falling to 52% in 2019 (Figure 2). This fall reflects changes to the rating method for complex health care that were introduced in January 2017.

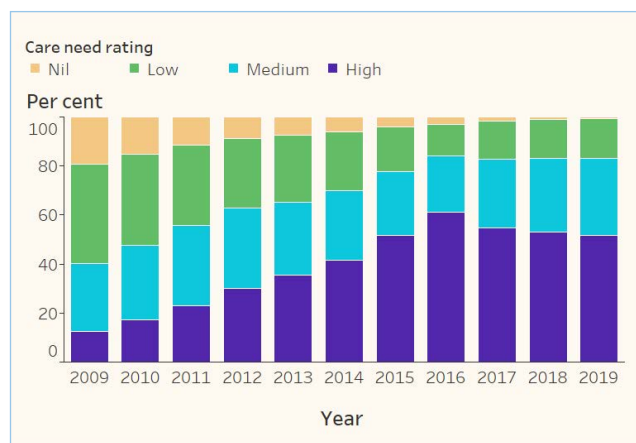


Figure 2: Care need ratings of people in permanent residential care for complex health care, 30 June 2009–2019

Who is most likely to have high care needs?

Nearly 1 in 3 (31%) residents had a high care need rating across all 3 care domains. Individually, older people, women, people from non-English speaking countries, and people with dementia were more likely than other residents to have high care needs.

Older people

From ages 60 and over people are more likely to need higher levels of care in the care domains of *activities of daily living*, and *complex health care*.

Women

At 30 June 2019, overall, women had a slightly higher proportion of high care need ratings than men for *activities of daily living* (62% compared with 56%) and *complex health care* (53% compared with 48%), while *cognition and behaviour* was the same for men and women (64%) (Figure 3).

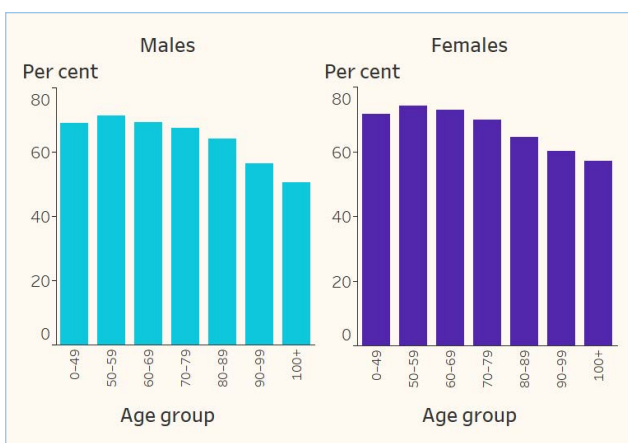


Figure 3: Proportion of people with high care need ratings for cognition and behaviour, by age and sex, 30 June 2019

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Culturally and linguistically diverse people

In each care domain, a higher 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

People with dementia were more likely than those without dementia to have high care needs in the *cognition and behaviour care domain* (80% and 46%, respectively) and *activities of daily living* (65% and 55%, respectively). The proportion of people who had a high care need rating for *complex health care* was similar for those with and without dementia (50% and 53%, respectively).

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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Information and data on aged care in Australia

GEN-agedcaredata.gov.au

Contact

GPO Box 570, Canberra, ACT 2601
(02) 6244 1000 | GEN@aihw.gov.au

