

Dental Council

Executive Summary of the Workforce Analysis 2023-2025

Reporting periods:

Dentists and dental specialists
1st October 2022 – 30th September 2025

Oral health therapists, dental therapists,
dental hygienists, and technicians
1st April 2022 – 31st March 2025

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Introduction

The workforce report for 2023 to 2025 provides an overview of the oral health workforce based on data from the Dental Council (the Council) registration system, workforce survey data collected from oral health practitioners and dentist graduate data from the University of Otago.

The report is focussed on the statistical analysis of the data and can be used for oral health workforce planning and policy settings.

Handling of data

Oral health practitioners can be registered in multiple scopes of practice and have different practising statuses. Analysis includes all registered scopes for a practitioner and the associated information. This is particularly relevant for the dentist/dental specialist and the dental technology/clinical dental technology sections.

The determination of whether a practitioner was “practising” is based on the longest practising status held on the Council records during the reporting year, rather than the status at the end of the APC cycle which mostly reflects the intention for the next practising year. This is considered a more accurate record of practising resource availability for the reported year.

General

To provide a high-level overview of salient facts, a visual dashboard that summarises key information is provided for the oral health workforce overall and for each profession in their particular sections.

An executive summary in each section highlights the key changes, movements, and critical observations. The report compares changes from 2023 to 2025 but also provides relative observations from previous years to allow comparison over longer periods.

The quality and validity of the specific information is dependent on the information practitioners provide. Detailed responses are not always provided which may reduce the confidence for some aspects where the number of responses is lower, even with a high overall workforce survey response rate.

Survey response rates remain very high ranging between 89 to 95% of registered practitioners, for 2025. While some information is mandated by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act, most information is offered voluntarily, and the ongoing high level of participation is greatly appreciated.

Section 1:

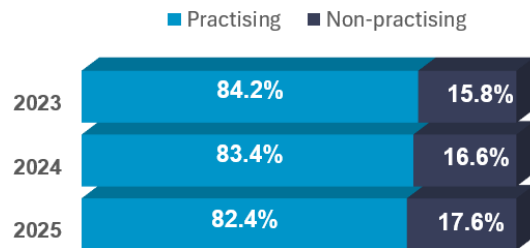
The oral health workforce overview

Oral Health Workforce All Practitioners

Registered practitioners

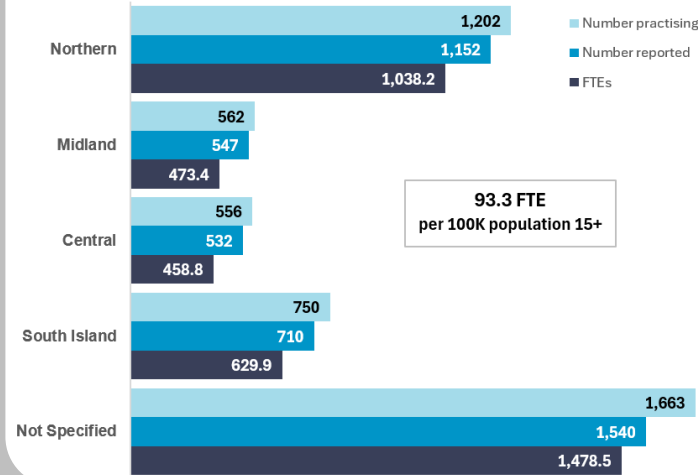


Practising status

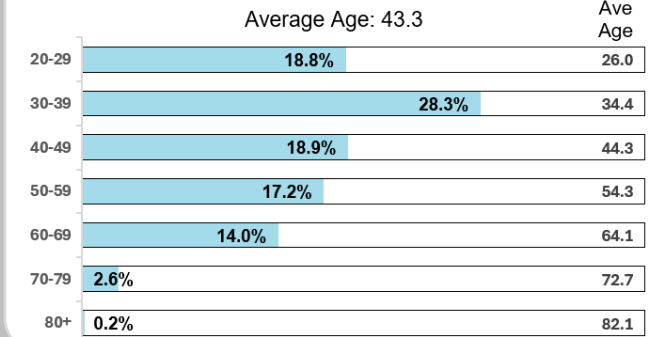


Intend to practise in NZ next 5 years: **91.7%**

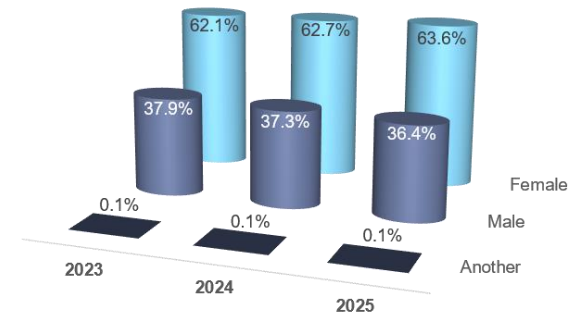
Practitioners by public health region 2025



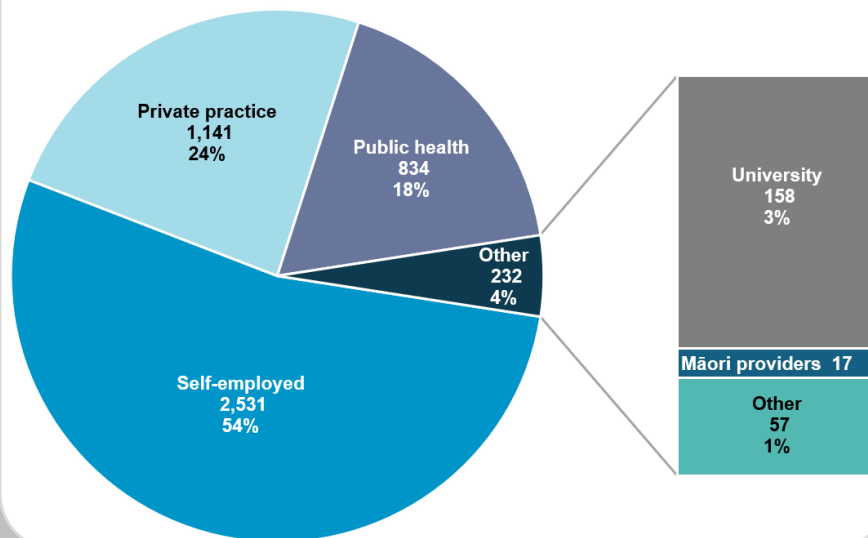
Age distribution practising practitioners 2025



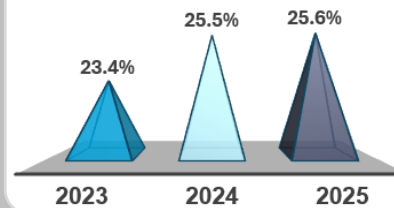
Gender for practising practitioners



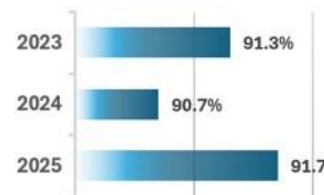
Employment type practising practitioners 2025



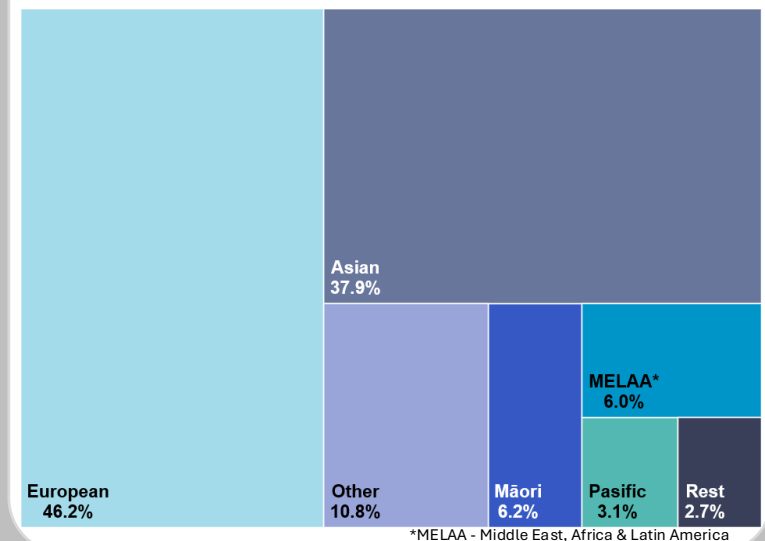
Overseas qualifications



Survey response rates



Ethnicity total count for practising practitioners 2025



Retention of overseas qualified practitioners registered between 2020 - 2025

With an increasing focus on understanding the movement patterns of workforce behaviour, an analysis of overseas qualified practitioners has been included in this report.

Newly registered overseas qualified practitioners in 2020 to 2025 were tracked in subsequent years to determine if they were still registered and whether they were practising. This provides information about their collective movements annually: how many remain on the register and are still practising. More detailed analysis of attrition rates may also identify common patterns of behaviour that could help inform future modelling and policy decisions.

Similar to the rest of the oral health profession, some transitions occur where practitioners remove themselves from the register, return at a later stage and change practising status annually adding further discontinuity. For new overseas registrants, early practising intentions may be influenced by immigration and employment factors. More recently, the practising status is reconfirmed when an overseas practitioner's registration is approved, especially if the registration application was submitted some time ago due to changing circumstances.

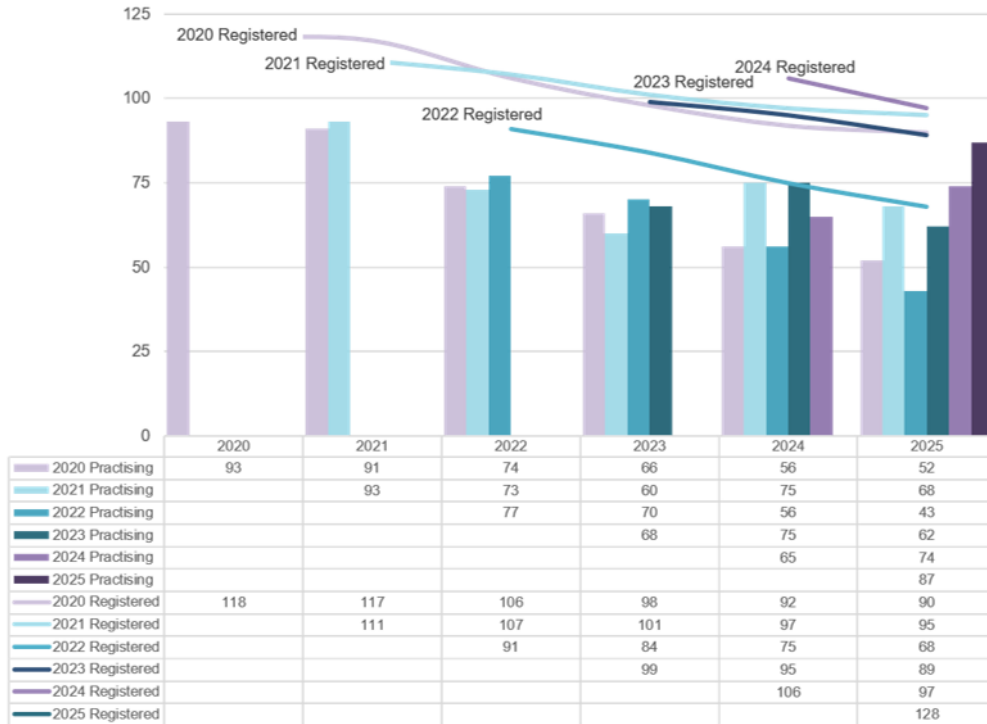
The following two pages of graphics provides a summary view of the observations for each base year (initial year of registration) and movements in following years. The first page covers changes in the registration and practising retention rates (volume and percentage change), cumulative rates of registration attrition for subsequent years and the annual (year-on-year) changes.

The following page provides the relative volumes for existing and new overseas qualified practitioners; the registration and practising statuses of dentists & dental specialists as one group and the rest of the professions (labelled as "Other") as another. Statistics are provided for individual base years and collectively by rebasing the data for all years to year 0 and subsequent years 1 to 5 (to cover 2020-25).

Caution is needed in the interpretation of the 2021 and 2022 data with other years due to the impact of COVID-19 travel restrictions on international workforce movements and the associated behavioural impact.

Patterns of overseas qualified practitioners registered 2020 to 2025

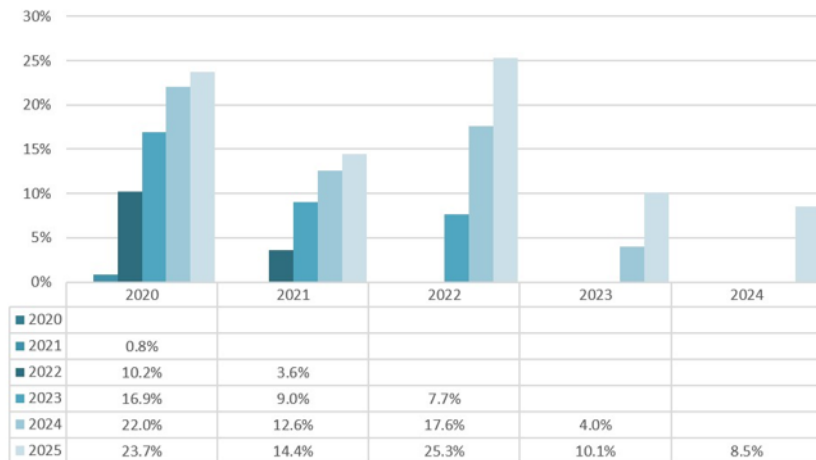
Registration & practising trends
new overseas registrants 2020 to 2025



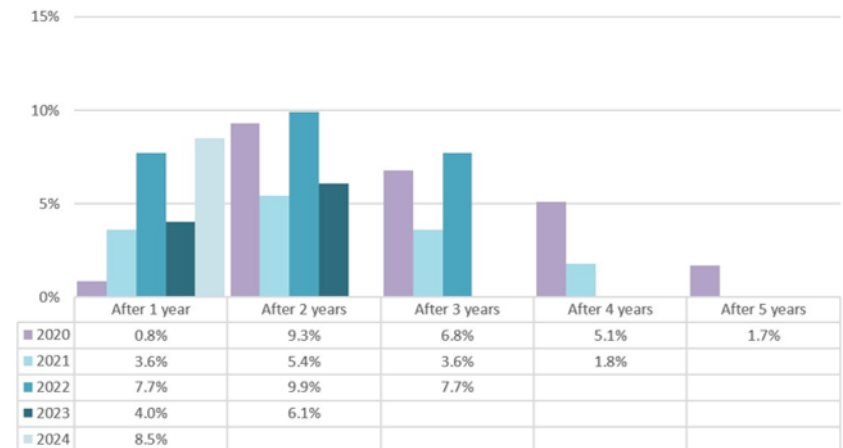
Registration & practising volumes
new overseas registrants 2020 to 2025



Cumulative annual registration attrition rate for base year 2020 to 2024

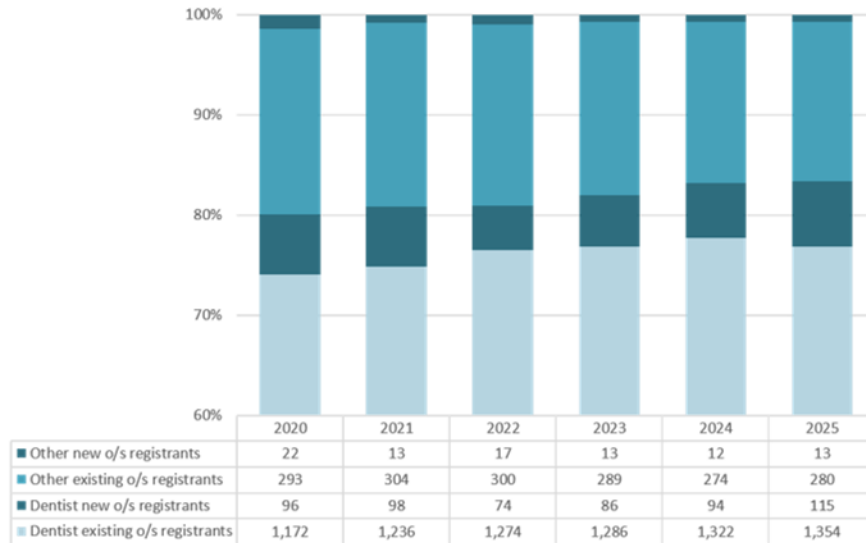


Year-on-year registration attrition rate 2020 to 2024

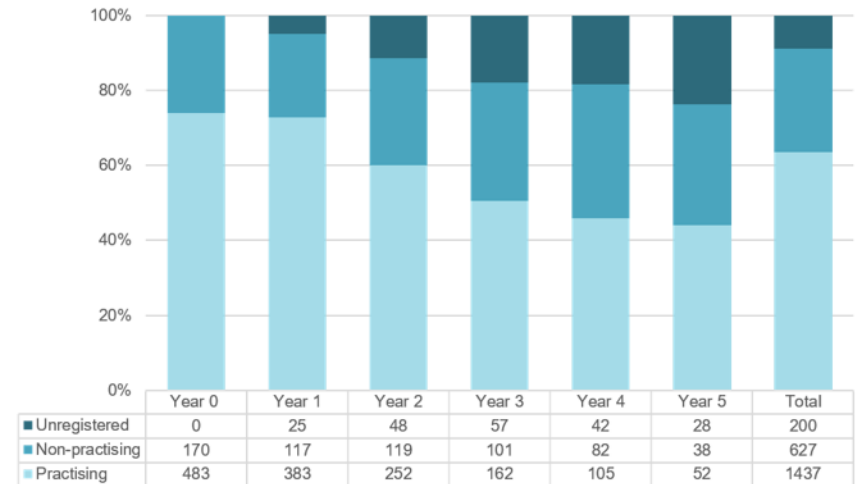


Patterns of overseas qualified practitioners registered 2020 to 2025

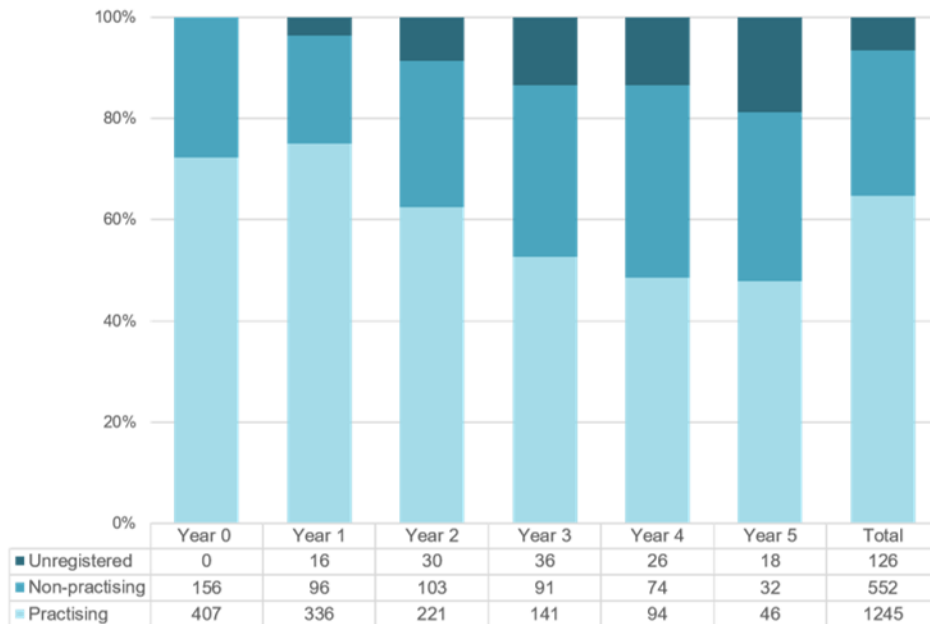
Overseas qualified practitioners – existing vs new registrants



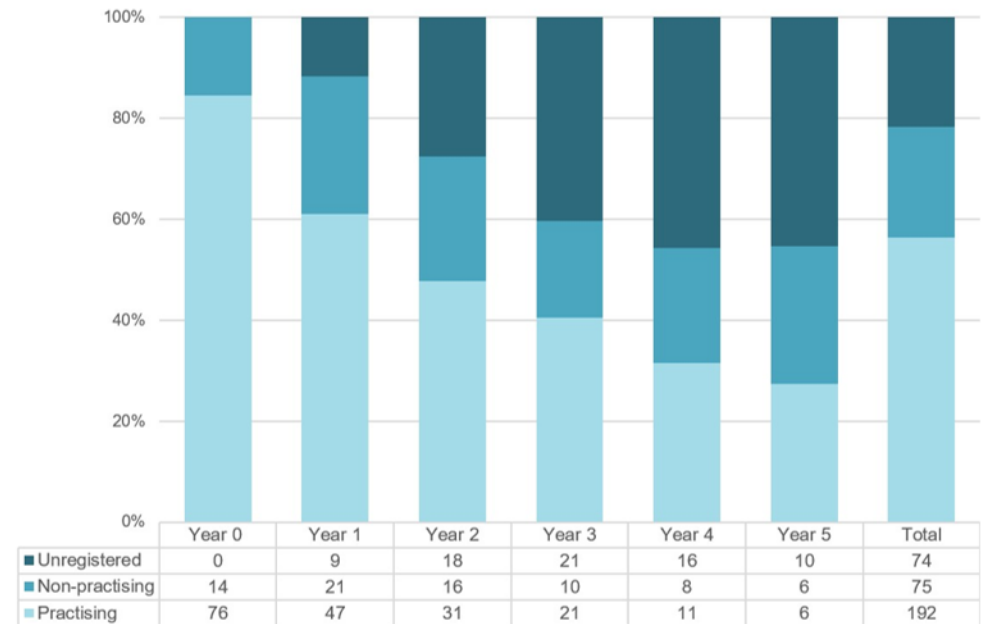
Registration and practising volumes from base year



Registration and practising volumes from base year Dentists & dental specialists



Registration and practising volumes from base year Other Professions*



* Excludes dentists & dental specialists

Analysis of overseas qualified practitioners registered during 2020 - 2025

Table 1-1 provides the key statistics for each of the “base” registration years between 2020 to 2025, with tracking of subsequent years presented from left to right. The 2-line entry lists the registration count with the practising count in brackets followed by the relative percentages which is based *on the initial base year registration count*.

Table 1-1. Registration and practising status of overseas qualified practitioners registered between 2020 - 2025

Base Years	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
2020	118 (93)	117 (91)	106 (74)	98 (66)	92 (56)	90 (52)
	100.0% [78.8%]	99.2% [77.1%]	89.8% [62.7%]	83.1% [55.9%]	78.0% [47.5%]	76.3% [44.1%]
2021		111 (93)	107 (73)	101 (60)	97 (75)	95 (68)
		100.0% [83.8%]	96.4% [65.8%]	91.0% [54.1%]	87.4% [67.6%]	85.6% [61.3%]
2022			91 (77)	84 (70)	75 (56)	68 (43)
			100.0% [84.6%]	92.3% [76.9%]	82.4% [61.5%]	74.7% [47.3%]
2023				99 (68)	95 (75)	89 (62)
				100.0% [68.7%]	96.0% [75.8%]	89.9% [62.6%]
2024					106 (65)	97 (74)
					100.0% [61.3%]	91.5% [69.8%]
2025						128 (87)
						100.0% [68.0%]

Legend: registration count (practising count)

registration % [practising %] (both based on the base year registration count)

Figure 1-1 shows the attrition rates per year (year-on-year) for base years 2020 to 2022 for registration and practising, rebased to year 0 to enable relative comparison.

Figure 1-1. Year-on-year registration and practising attrition rates of overseas qualified practitioners registered during base years 2020-2022

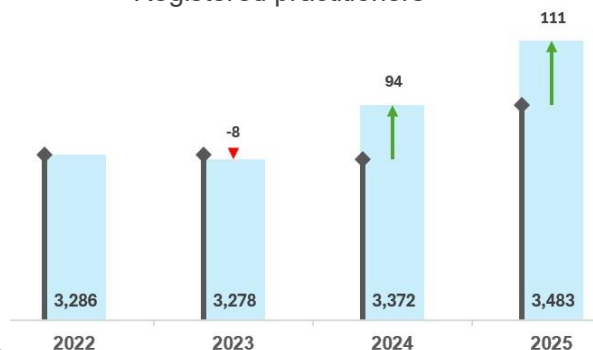


Key observations

- Base years 2021 and 2022 were likely the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Considering the registration attrition patterns, the higher yearly attrition occurs in years 2 and 3, with an annual attrition range of 3.8% – 9.9% during those periods. For all three years, the peak registration attrition rate was in the 2nd year. This may indicate a pattern but needs further statistical confirmation.
- For practising attrition patterns the highest APC attrition occurs during the first 3 years, with the maximum annual drop in APCs between 14.2% - 18.0% per year. In three instances, the level of APCs increased from the previous year. Two of those increased APCs occurred in year 1 - likely attributed to immigration and employment changes.
- For those registered in 2020, after 5 years 23.7% are no longer registered in New Zealand and 55.9% no longer held an APC.
- During the period of observation (2020 - 2025), dentists and dental specialists made up the major portion (80%) of new overseas registrations. Dentists and dental specialists had a higher retention registration and practising rate.

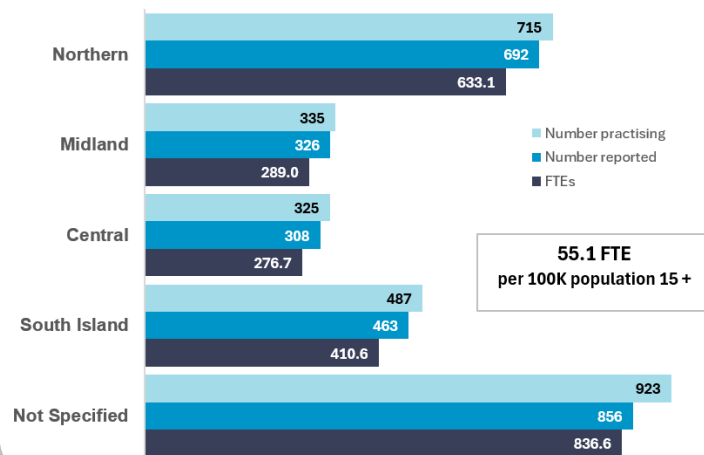
Section 2: The dentist and dental specialist workforce

Registered practitioners

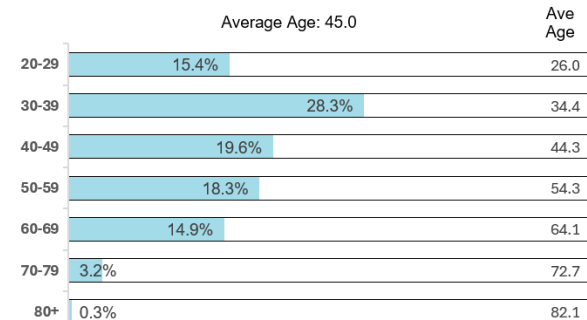


Dentists & dental specialists

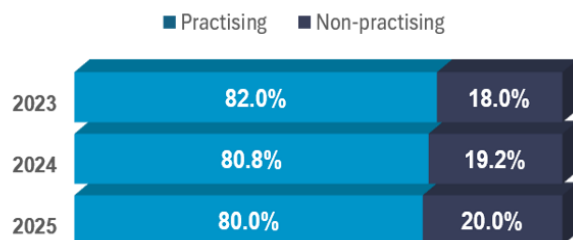
Practitioners by public health region 2025



Age distribution for practising practitioners 2025

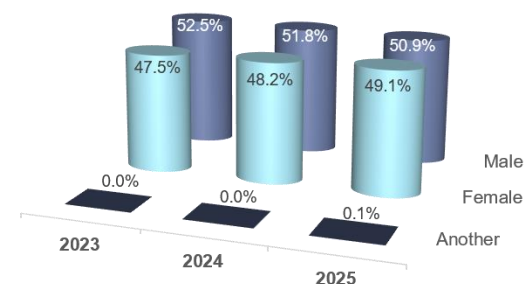


Practising status

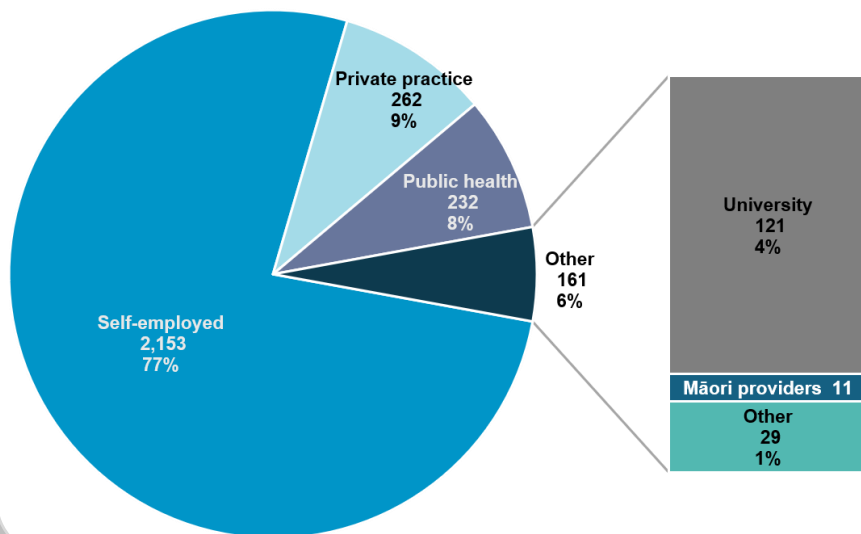


Intend to practise in NZ next 5 years: **91.6%**

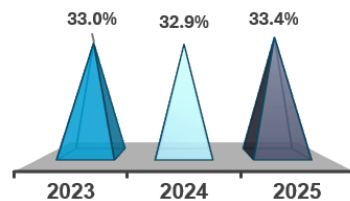
Gender for practising practitioners



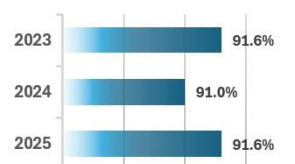
Employment type practising practitioners 2025



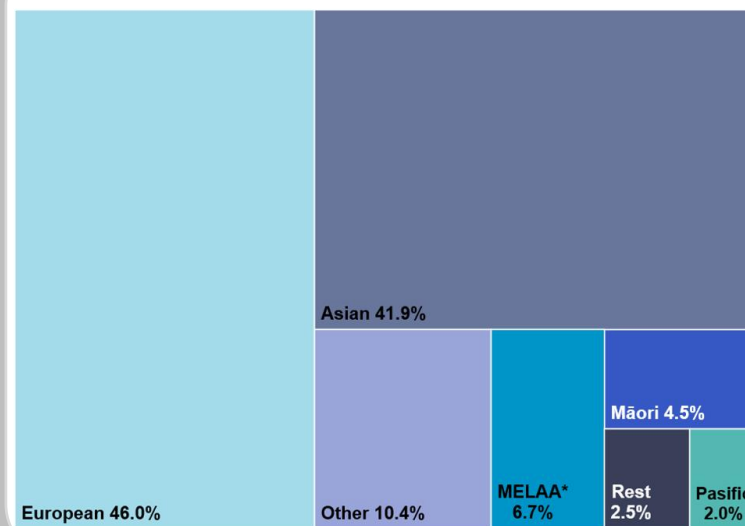
Overseas qualifications



Survey response rates



Ethnicity total count for practising practitioners 2025



*MELAA - Middle East, Africa & Latin America

Executive summary dentists and dental specialists

Number of dentists and dental specialists

In 2025 there was a total of 3,483 dentists and dental specialists on the register: an increase of 6.0% from 2022. A total of 2,785 (80.0%) practitioners held practising certificates for most of the 2025 year, and 732 practitioners were non-practising for 2025 in one or more of their scopes of practice.

Table 2-1. Registered dentists and dental specialists

	2023	% YoY	2024	% YoY	2025
Registered dentists with practising certificates	2,522	1.7%	2,564	1.9%	2,613
Registered dental specialists with practising certificates	345	0.6%	347	4.0%	361
Registered dentists with no practising certificates	559	8.2%	605	7.6%	651
Registered dental specialists with no practising certificates	109	14.7%	125	-4.0%	120
Unique practitioner count	3,278	2.9%	3,372	3.3%	3,483

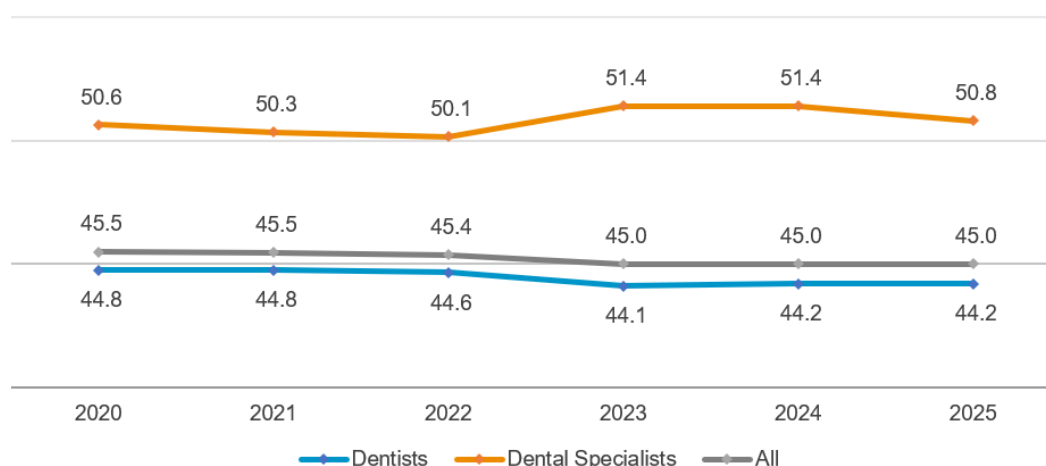
Practitioners could be registered as a dentist and/or dental specialists, with different practising intentions

Demographics

The overall mean age of practising dentists remained flat with a slight decrease for dental specialists.

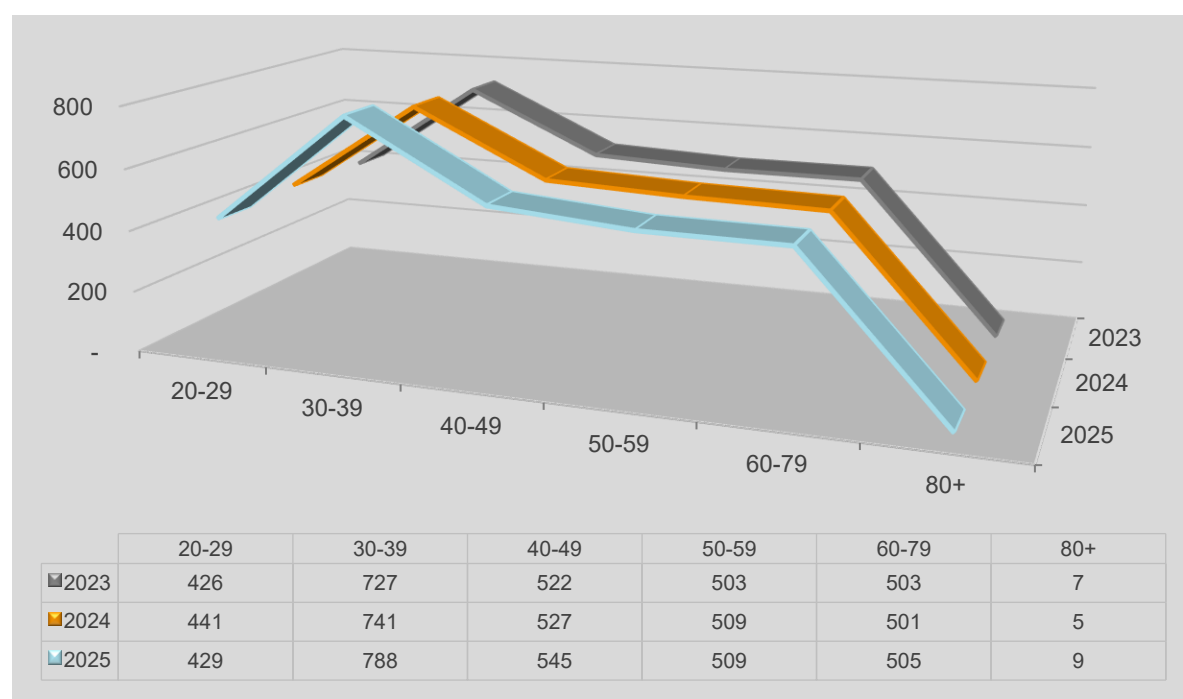
The mean age for practising dentists was 44.2, for dental specialists 50.8, and for the total group 45.0 in 2025.

Figure 2-1. Mean age of practising dentists and dental specialists



The age group distribution indicates that there were gradual increases in the earlier age groups with a peak in the 30-39 age group, with a sustained but steep decline in numbers after 70+ years of age. A total of 99 dentists and dental specialists aged 70 years and older had practising certificates in 2025; with 9 of those over 80.

Figure 2-2. Age band distribution of dentists and dental specialists



Females continued to increase in numbers from 35.1% of practising dentists and dental specialists in 2012, to 45.9% in 2022, and 49.0% in 2025. Error! Reference source not found.

The ethnicity reported reflects the diversity of the profession, but not the make-up of the population of New Zealand¹. European remains the largest self-reported ethnicity at 46.0% total count, with Māori 4.5% and Pacific peoples 2.0% of practising dentists and dental specialists in 2025. The second largest group (41.9%) identified as Asian. Total counts referenced

Registration

The proportion of overseas qualifications by practising dentists and dental specialists was 33.4% in 2025, similar to the 33.7% recorded at the end of 2017.

The greatest number of overseas qualifications in 2025 were from Australia (262, 7.7%), United Kingdom (229, 6.7%), India (201, 5.9%) and South Africa (98, 2.8%).

Over recent years there has been a downward trend in the number of dentists registering with overseas qualifications with APCs at the end of the workforce reporting year. In 2017 a total of 60 overseas qualified dentists registered and held APCs, decreasing to 49 in 2019, and 30 in 2022. This slightly increased during the 2023 – 2025 reporting years, with 45 overseas registrants holding APCs during 2025.

At the end of the 2025 reporting year, of the total overseas qualified dentists on the register that held practising certificates, 45.5% had prescribed overseas qualifications, 30.7% passed the New Zealand Dentist Registration Examination, 7.0% of overseas qualified dentists were registered by having their overseas qualifications and experience individually assessed, while 16.8% registered via TTMR.

¹ 2025 Stats NZ [Māori population estimates](#)

Figure 2-3. Types of registration pathways for dentists with overseas qualifications, practising at 30 September 2025

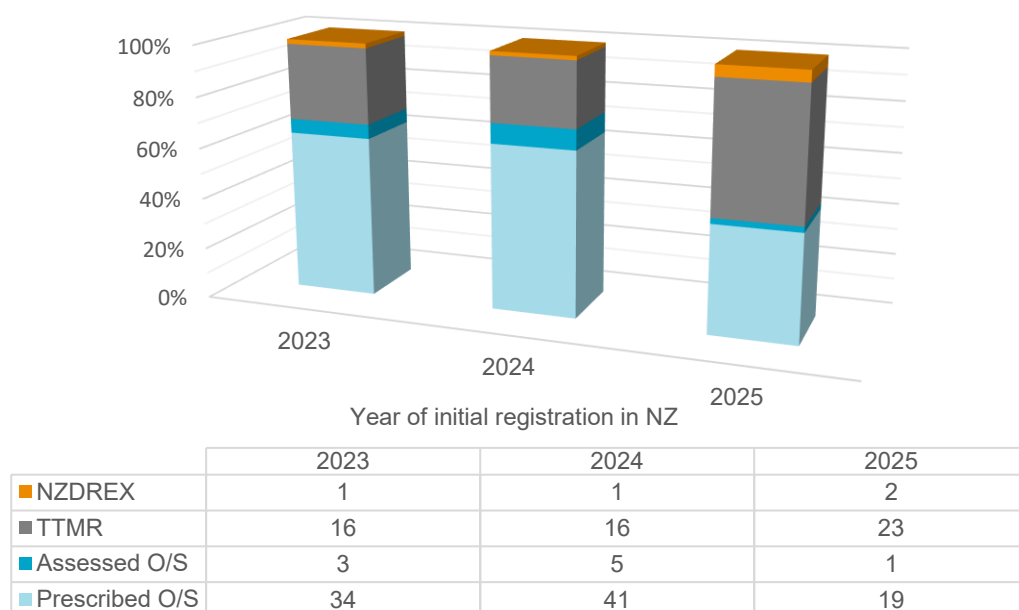
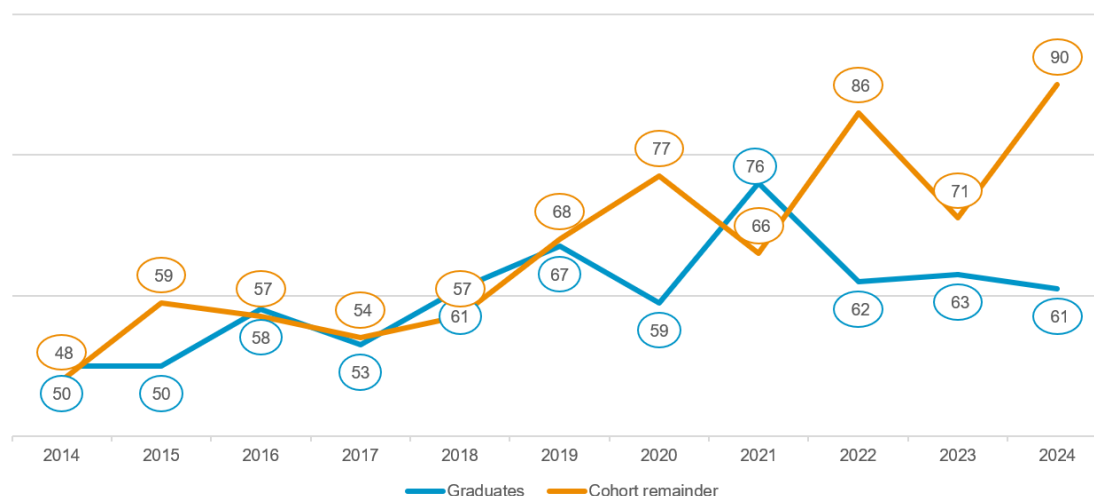


Figure 2-4. Longitudinal cohort remainder rate of University of Otago dental graduates for 2025 reporting year



From the 2012 University of Otago dentist graduate cohorts onwards (except for the 2021 cohort), over 90% remain registered with APCs at the end of the 2025 reporting year. The peak is the 2024 cohort at 147.5%. Retention of locally trained dentists remains very high.

Practising characteristics

The dentists and dental specialists reported as self-employed has increased from 67.5% in 2015 to 76.7% in 2025. Those reporting as employees have increased from 16.5% in 2015 to 22.3% in 2025.

Using a 40-hour work week as a norm, 71.2% of dentists reported working 40 hours or less per week in 2025, which is slightly more than the 69.8% reported in 2022. Similarly, more dental specialists reported working 40 hours or less, increasing to 52.7% in 2025 from 50.0% in 2022. This means that 28.8% of dentists and 47.3% of dental specialists reported working longer than 40 hours per week.

In 2025, 6.3% of dental specialists and 2.0% of dentists reported working 61+ hours per week. For dental specialists this remains similar to 2022, while for dentists this decreased from 2.6% in 2022.

For activities related to general dental practice, an average of 25.7 hours per week (sd 12.6) were reported for 2025, with those working in public health settings reporting the highest number at 29.1 hours per week (sd 17.1), followed closely by those working in private practice and Māori health providers (27.4 and 26.3 hours per week, respectively).

For dental specialists, care provided is often reported as a combination against the specialist discipline and general dental practice. Oral surgery reported the highest total with an average of 26.2 hours per week (sd 16.2), closely followed by endodontic specialists at 26.1 hours per week (sd 10.4). Four other specialist disciplines reported between 20 – 24 hours per week (oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, periodontics and oral pathology).

Teaching, research, and other activities were reported at 2.9 – 3.2 hours per week (sd 3.3 – 3.7), with an average of 4.5 hours per week spent on administration (sd 4.0).

Personal choice (52.1%), parental responsibilities (23.1%), semi-retirement (11.1%) and studying (3.9%) were the main reasons reported by dentists and dental specialists working part-time.

In 2025, of those not practising in New Zealand, 86.4% reported that they were practising overseas, with only 3.7% in New Zealand while not practising. A total of 91.6% of dentists and dental specialists indicated that they expect to practise in New Zealand over the next five years.

Geographical distribution

Similar to 2019, in 2025 seven territorial authorities (TAs) did not have practising dentists or dental specialists, while 42 TAs (63%) had no dental specialists recorded. The seven TAs without any dentists or dental specialists were: Kaipara, Buller, Westland, Hurunui, MacKenzie, Waimate and Chatham Island.

Based on the health regions analysis, the dentists and dental specialists per 100,000 NZ population over 15 years of age was 62.7 in 2025. This is similar to the 62.3 reported in 2015. This means that the profession has not kept pace with the population growth of roughly 726,000 residents since March 2015.²

Overall, a 55.1 FTE per 100,000 NZ population over 15 years of age was reported for 2025. This is slightly down from 2022 with a reported 57.9 FTE, but up from the 44.5 FTE reported in 2015. This represents an increase of 10.6 FTE per 100,000 NZ population over 15 years of age since 2015.

Across the health districts, the highest reported FTE per 100,000 NZ population over 15 years of age were in the following Health Districts: Auckland (54.4), Southern (51.5) and Capital, Coast and Hutt (41.7). The lowest were in the West Coast (17.3), followed by Tairāwhiti (21.6) and South Canterbury (22.9).

Postgraduate studies

Postgraduate studies reported by dentists and dental specialists showed variation over the years, with a high in 2013 (143) down to 68 in 2025. The most common areas of study self-reported in 2025 were orthodontics (18), periodontics (12), endodontics and oral and maxillofacial surgery (7 each), followed by paediatric dentistry (6) and oral surgery (5).

² <https://www.stats.govt.nz/topics/population/>

Workforce survey response rate

The survey response rate fluctuates year on year for dentists and dental specialists. In 2017 the response rate was 75.0%, with a very high response rate of 91.6% in 2025.

Table 2-2. Dentist and dental specialist survey responses

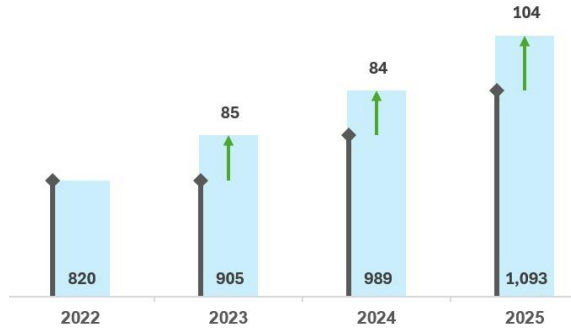
Year	Response rate (%)
2023	91.6
2024	91.0
2025	91.6

(Data source: Workforce survey)

Section 3:

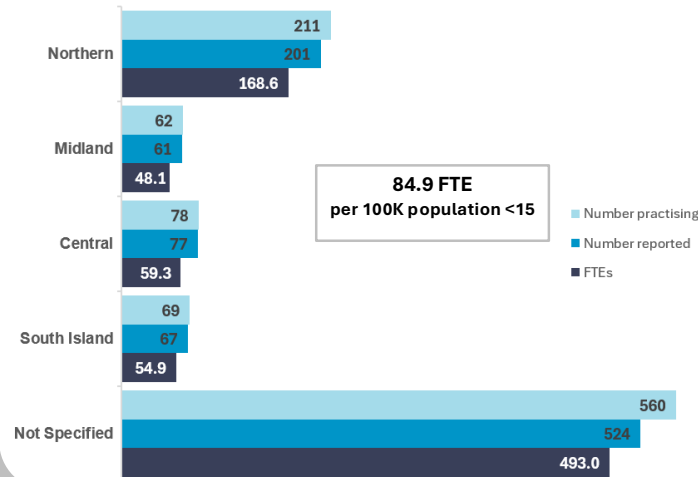
The oral health therapy workforce

Registered practitioners

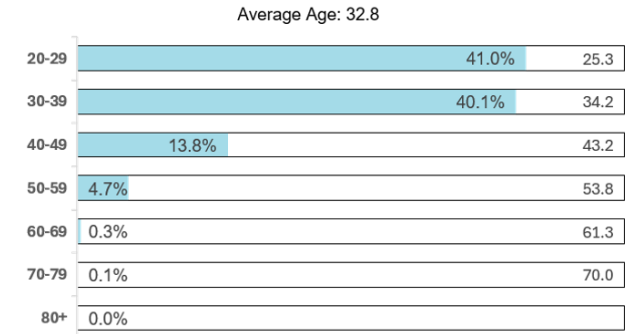


Oral health therapists

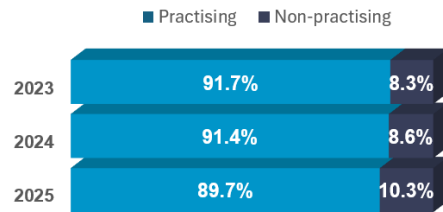
Practitioners by public health region 2025



Age distribution for practising practitioners 2025

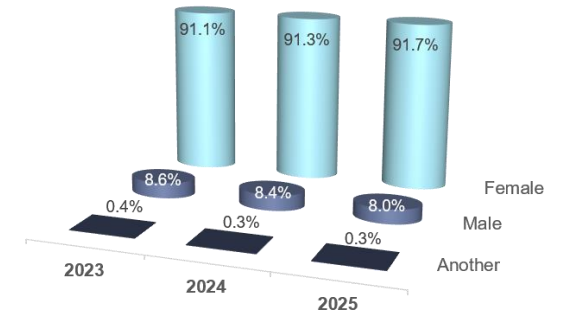


Practising status

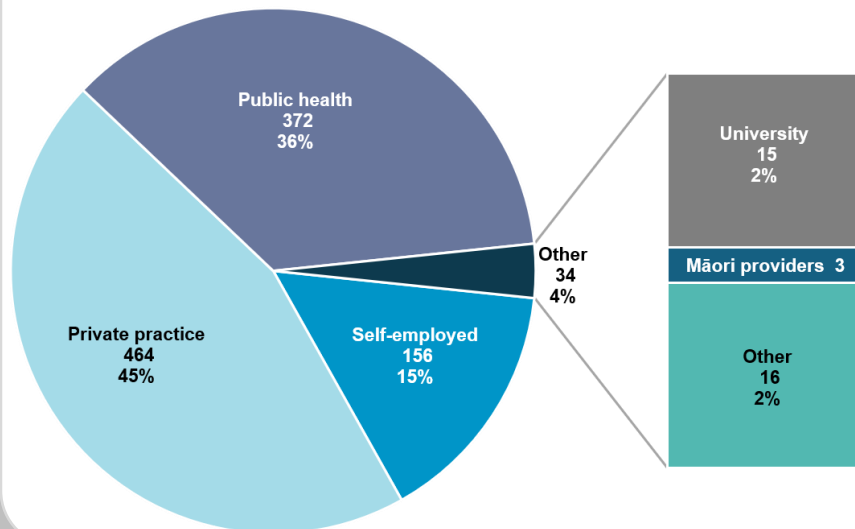


Intend to practise in NZ next 5 years: **94.8%**

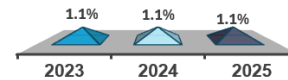
Gender for practising practitioners



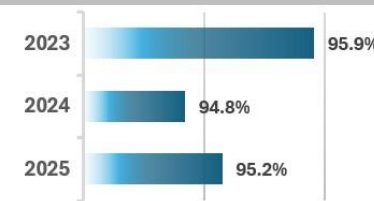
Employment type practising practitioners 2025



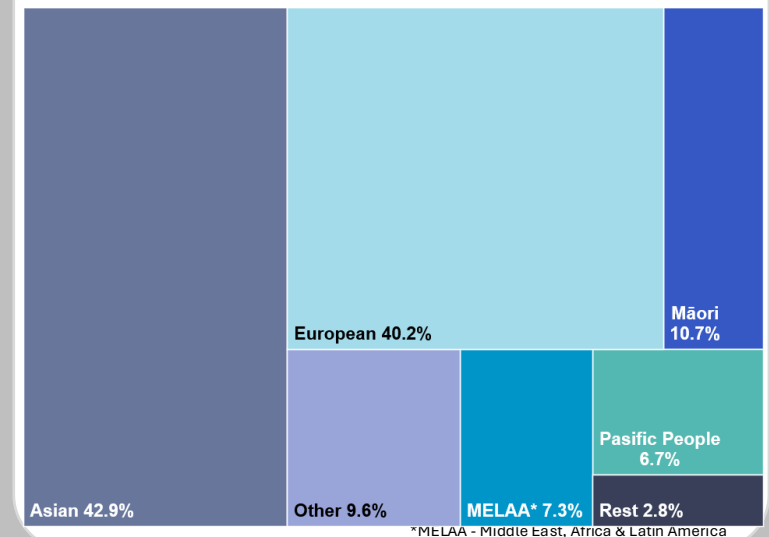
Overseas qualifications



Survey response rates



Ethnicity total count for practising practitioners 2025



Executive summary oral health therapists

Number of oral health therapists

Oral health therapists have increased by about 10% year-on-year between 2023 and 2025. Of the 1,093 oral health therapists on the register in 2025, 980 (89.7%) held practising certificates.

Table 3-1. Registered oral health therapists

	2023	% YoY	2024	% YoY	2025
Oral health therapists with practising certificates	830	8.9	904	8.4	980
Oral health therapists without practising certificates	75	13.3	85	32.9	113
Total	905	9.3	989	10.5	1,093

Demographics

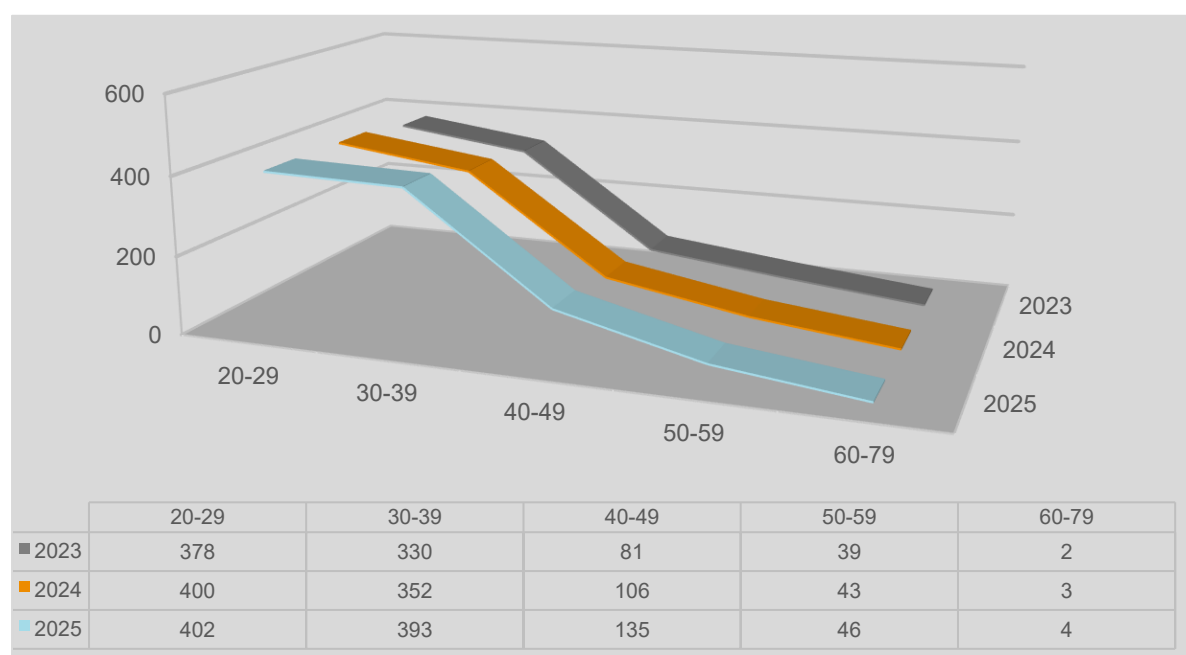
The average age for this group was 32.7 in 2025 (31.5 in 2022) reflecting a relatively young profile. Of those practising, 81.1% were under 40 in 2025.

Figure 3-1. Mean age of practising oral health therapists



The age group distribution of practising oral health therapists is significantly skewed towards a younger age compared with other oral health professions. The group is expected to age over an extended period given the current population age, with new registrants being mostly new graduates.

Figure 3-2. Age band distribution of practising oral health therapists



Females dominate the oral health therapy workforce, with males only 8.0% of the practising profession in 2025.

The ethnicity reported by practising oral health therapists reflects diversity, with the second largest Māori representation of the oral health professions (10.7%) - but still below the estimated Māori population in Aotearoa New Zealand of 17.4%³. Asian is the largest ethnic group reported (420, 42.9%) followed by European (394, 40.2%). Pacific peoples are represented at 66 (6.7%). Total counts referenced

Practising characteristics

Of the 854 (83.2%) who reported being employees for 2025, the majority worked in private practice (464, 45.2%) and public health districts (339, 33.0%). Only 156 (15.2%) reported as being self-employed.

Using a 40-hour work week as a norm, in 2025 84.0% of practising oral health therapists reported working 40 hours or less on average per week.

The highest reported mean hours of work in oral health therapy were those provided in the public health sector, reporting 33.4 (sd 10.9) hours per week for 2025. Private practice and self-employed reported 24.2 (sd 11.4) and 22.9 (sd 12.3) average hours per week, respectively. Practitioners may have multiple and varying employment types. For 2025, the average hours worked on oral health therapy activities across the various employment types was 27.0 hours per week (sd 12.3).

There has been a significant increase of oral health therapists reporting to work part-time, up from 10 in 2018 to 269 in 2023, and 351 in 2025. The primary reasons reported were parental responsibilities (38.2%) and personal choice (36.5%) in 2025.

Of those not currently practising in New Zealand, 52% reported that they were practising overseas.

³ 2025 Stats NZ [Māori population estimates](#)

On future practising expectations, 94.8% of oral health therapists indicated that they planned to practise in Aotearoa New Zealand over the next five years – the highest across all oral health professions.

Geographical distribution

The analysis of territorial authorities (TAs) in 2025 showed 26 TAs without practising oral health therapists, similar to the 2019 and 2022 reports but with minor shifts between TAs. The regions with no reported oral health therapists with more than 5,000 population aged below 15 years of age are: Selwyn district, Waimakariri district, Southland, South Taranaki, South Waikato district. From those Southland also has no dental therapists reported, while the others have one dental therapist reported.

Comparing the health region distributions, the West Coast continues to report no oral health therapists.

For the population below 15 years of age: In 2025, there were 101.0 practising oral health therapists per 100k population in 2025 (84.9 FTE), compared to 77.8 (68.4 FTE) in 2022. This has increased from 53.4 (20.4 FTE) oral health therapists per 100k population reported in 2018, the first workforce reporting year for this profession.

For the population over 15 years of age: There were 22.1 practising oral health therapists per 100k population and 18.5 FTE for this population group in 2025. This compares to 12.8 (+ 9.3) and 4.9 FTE (+ 13.6 FTE) reported in 2018.

In 2025, the three health districts with the highest number of FTE oral health therapists per 100K population were Auckland and Waitemata (50+ FTEs for population < 15 years of age). The lowest FTE oral health therapists per 100K population < 15 years of age were reported by South Canterbury (14.2), Hawke’s Bay (15.9) and Lakes (17.8).

Postgraduate studies

An increase in oral health therapists (41) undertaking postgraduate studies in the 2025 workforce survey, compared with 13 reported in 2022. More than half of those was completing an adult restorative care course.

Workforce survey response rates

Oral health therapists had an overall survey response rate of 95.2% for 2025 similar to earlier survey cycles. Of those that responded 98.3% held practising certificates.

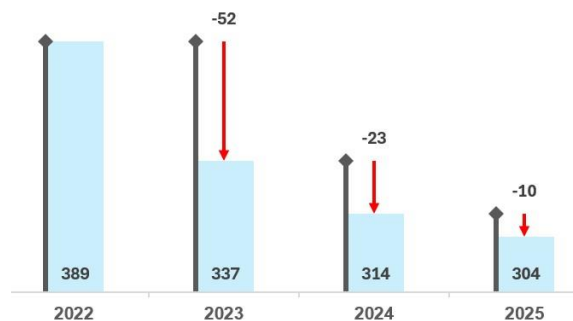
Table 3-2. Oral health therapists survey responses

Year	Response rate (%)
2023	95.9
2024	94.8
2025	95.2

Section 4:

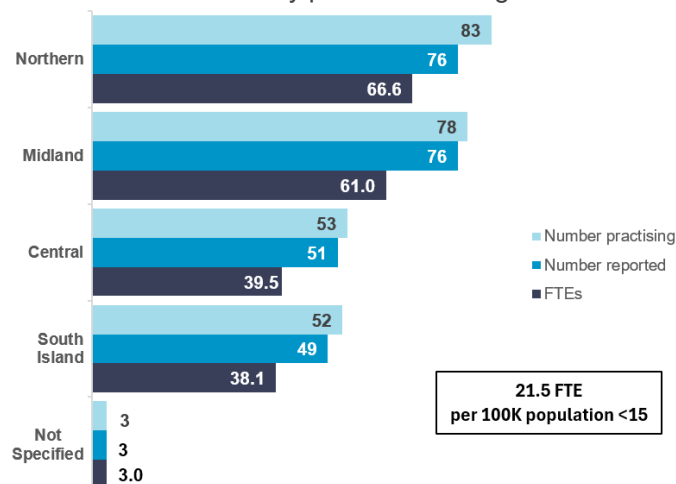
The dental therapy workforce

Registered practitioners



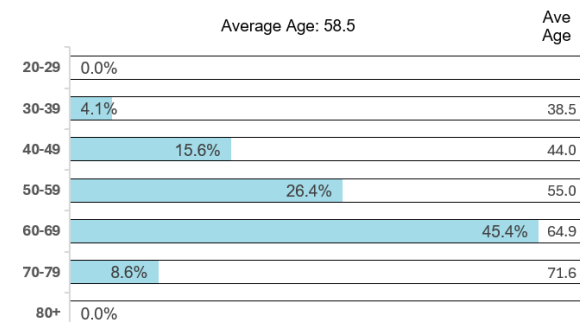
Dental therapists

Practitioners by public health region 2025



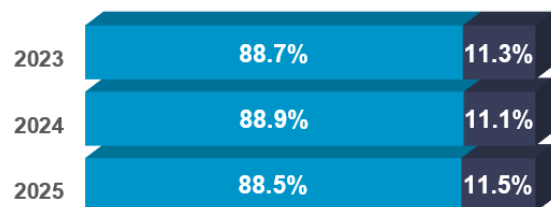
21.5 FTE
per 100K population <15

Age distribution for practising practitioners 2025



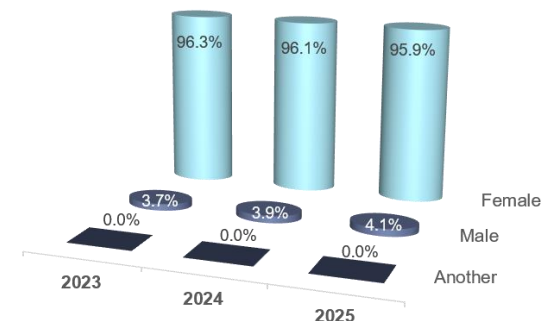
Practising status

■ Practising ■ Non-practising

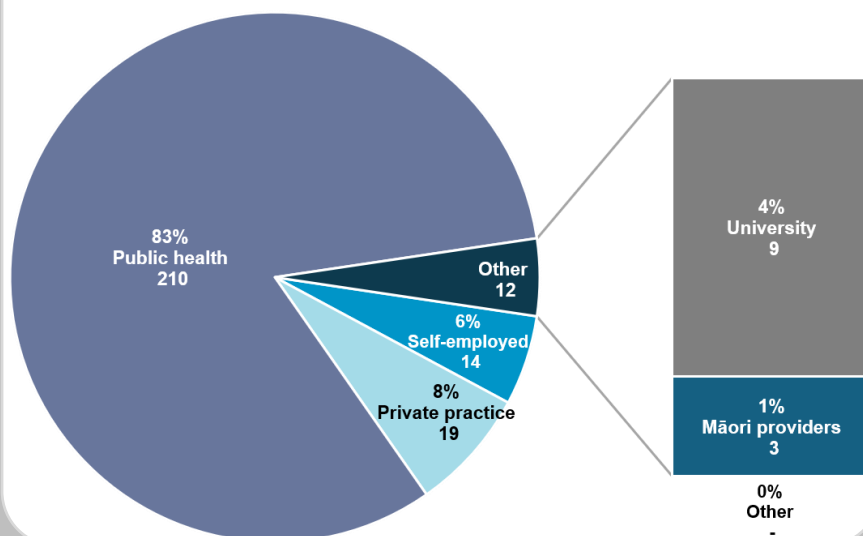


Intend to practise in NZ next 5 years: **91.1%**

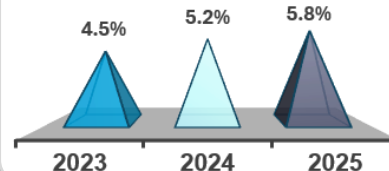
Gender for practising practitioners



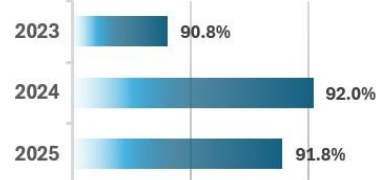
Employment type practising practitioners 2025



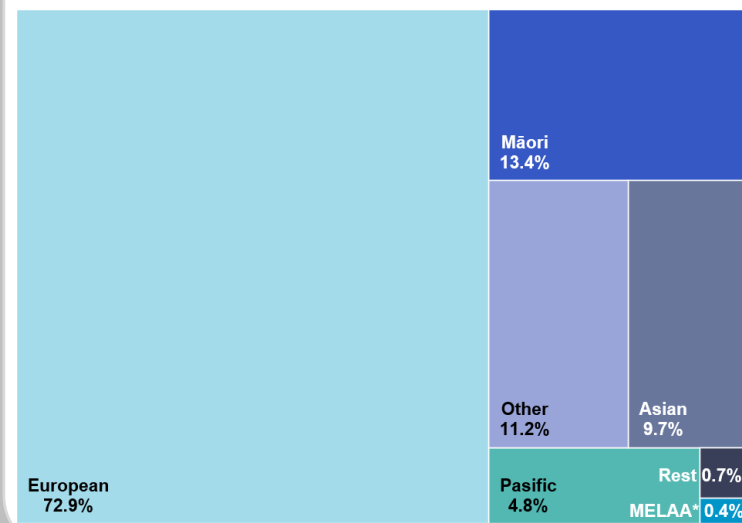
Overseas qualifications



Survey response rates



Ethnicity total count for practising practitioners 2025



*MELAA - Middle East, Africa & Latin America

Executive summary dental therapists

Number of dental therapists

With no dental therapy qualification available in New Zealand, and almost no overseas dental therapists entering the profession, the number of dental therapists continue to decline at an increasing rate. The decline rate from 2018 is at an average of 4.8% per year. Oral health graduates continue to register as oral health therapists in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In 2025, a total of 304 dental therapists remained on the register with 269 (88.5%) holding annual practising certificates.

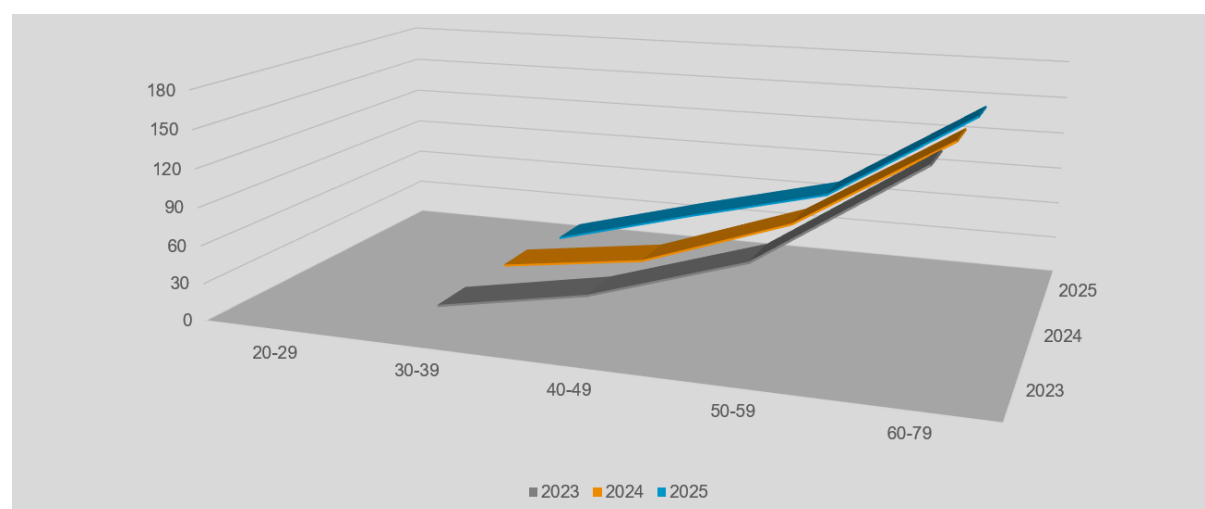
Table 4-1. Registered dental therapists

	2023	% YoY	2024	% YoY	2025
Dental therapists with practising certificates	299	-6.7	279	-3.6	269
Dental therapists without practising certificates	38	-7.9	35	—	35
Total	337	-6.8	314	-3.2	304

Demographics

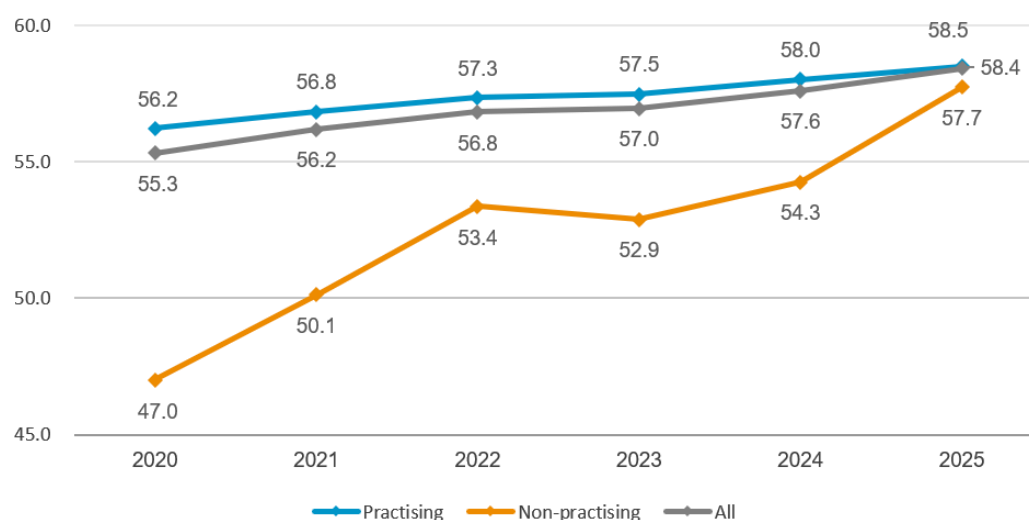
The mean age continued to steadily increase to 58.4 in 2025 (from 55.5 in 2019). This trend will continue as there are no new registrants to the profession.

Figure 4-1. Mean age of practising dental therapists



The continued absence of young dental therapists in the profession is demonstrated in the age band trends.

Figure 4-2. Age band trends of practising dental therapists



Females continue to dominate the dental therapy workforce, with males only 4.1% of the practising profession in 2025 (a slight increase from 2.7% in 2019).

The ethnicity reported by dental therapists reflected the diverse nature of the New Zealand population. Māori represented 13.4% of practising dental therapists, the highest of the oral health professions but still slightly lower than the national projection of 17.4% Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand ⁴. European remains the largest group at 72.9%. Pacific peoples were represented at 4.8% practising dental therapists. Total count represented

Registration

The proportion of overseas dental therapist qualifications was 5.8%, and New Zealand qualifications at 94.2% in 2025.

Practising characteristics

Of those dental therapists that reported being employees in 2025 (241, 95.6%), the majority remained employed in the public health districts (192, 76.2%) followed by private practice (19, 7.5%). Only 5.6% (14) were self-employed.

Using a 40-hour work week as a norm, almost all (93.6% in 2025) of dental therapists worked 40 hours or less per week, with only 16 reporting over 40 hours per week. Error! Reference source not found.

Dental therapists employed within the public health sector reported performing dental therapy activities on average 29.0 hours per week (sd 10.2), with the average across all employment types of 27.2 hours per week (sd 11.5).

The majority (88, 71.5%) of dental therapists who worked part-time reported personal choice as the reason.

Of those not currently practising in New Zealand, 39% reported practising overseas.

⁴ 2025 Stats NZ [Māori population estimates](#)

Of those currently registered in dental therapy, 91.1% indicated they would still practise in Aotearoa New Zealand over the next five years.

Geographical distribution

The analysis of territorial authorities (TAs) shows there were 16 TAs without any practising dental therapist reported. This is slightly higher than the 11TAs without any practising dental therapist reported in 2022. Southland also had no oral health therapist reported.

For 2025, practising dental therapists were reported across all public health districts, with 27.7 dental therapists per 100k population < 15 years of age, down from the 34.8 in 2022. The FTE per 100k population < 15 years of age for 2025 was 21.5 FTE, down from 26.0 FTE in 2022. This decline will continue with the decrease in dental therapist numbers. Oral health therapists continue to practise in these areas, and both should be considered to determine workforce access for children and adolescents.

Postgraduate studies

Ten dental therapists indicated they were undertaking postgraduate studies in the 2025 workforce survey, eight of those doing an adult restorative course.

Workforce survey response rates

The survey response rate for dental therapists was 91.8%, up from 85.9% in 2022.

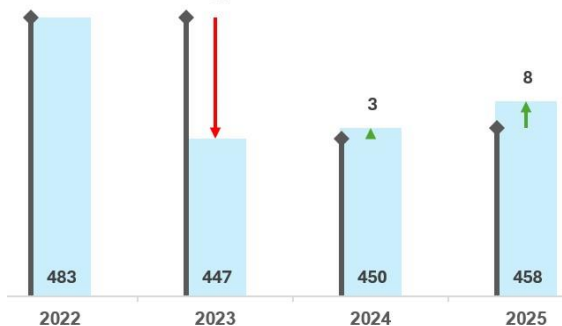
Table 4-2. Dental therapist survey responses

Year	Response rate (%)
2023	90.8
2024	92.0
2025	91.8

Section 5:

The dental hygiene and orthodontic auxiliary workforce

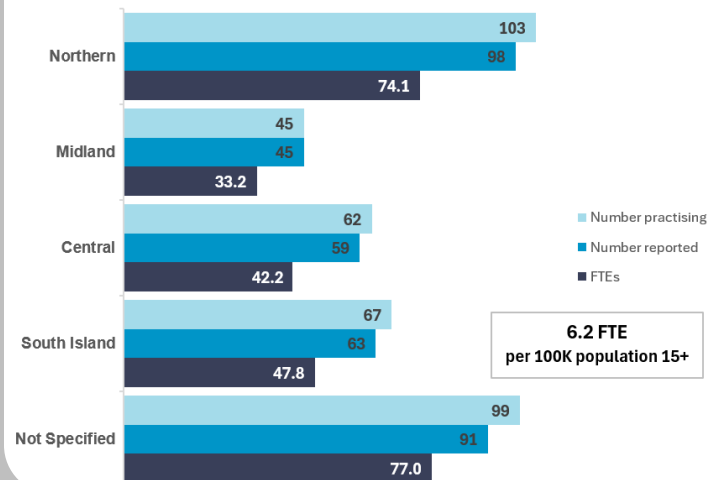
Registered practitioners



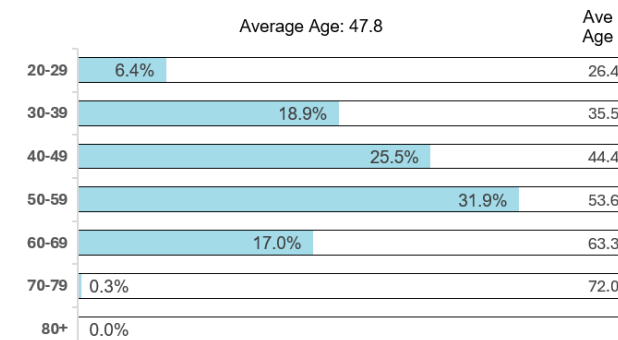
Dental hygienists

Including orthodontic auxiliaries

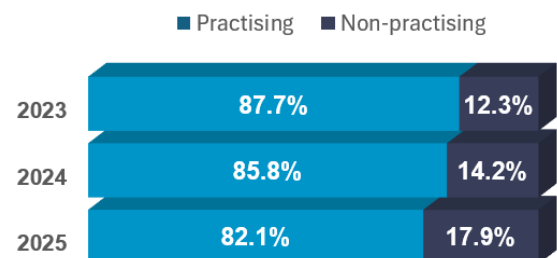
Practitioners by public health region 2025



Age distribution for practising practitioners 2025

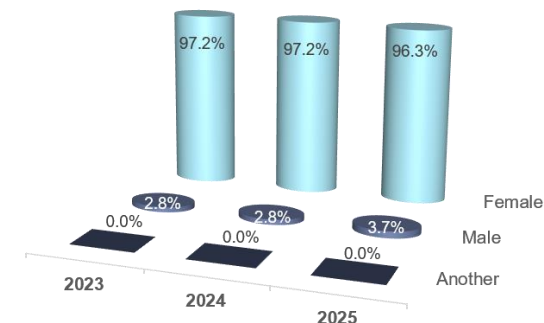


Practising status

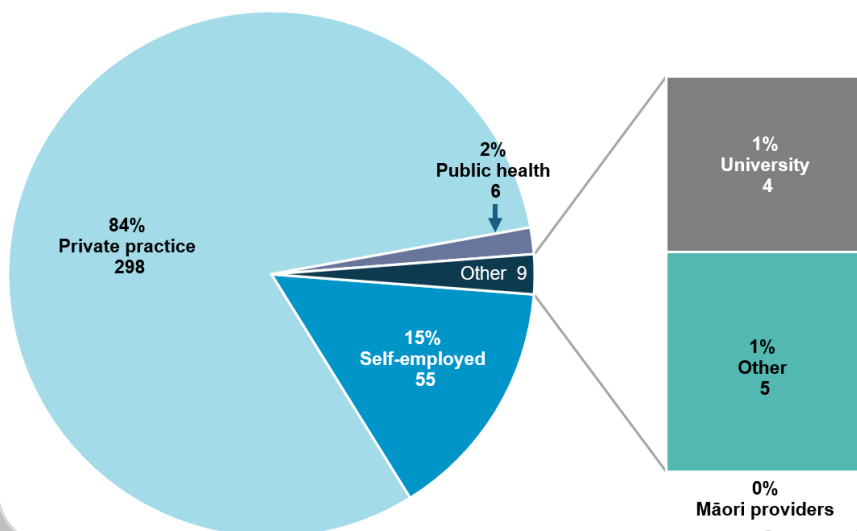


Intend to practise in NZ next 5 years: **90.0%**

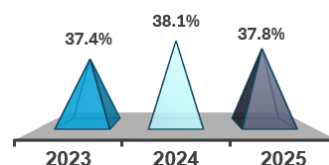
Gender for practising practitioners



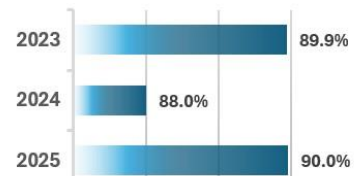
Employment type practising practitioners 2025



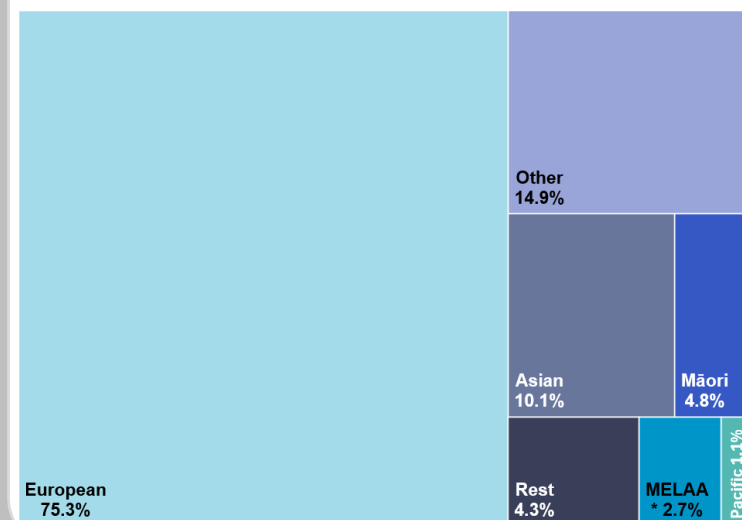
Overseas qualifications



Survey response rates



Ethnicity total count for practising practitioners 2025



*MELAA - Middle East, Africa & Latin America

Executive summary dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries

Number of dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries

With no dental hygiene qualification available in New Zealand, and low numbers of overseas dental hygienists entering the profession, the number of dental hygienists will continue to remain stagnant or decline. Oral health graduates continue to register in oral health therapy in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In 2025 there was a total of 458 dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries on the register. Of those 376 (82.1%) held annual practising certificates.

Table 5-1. Registered hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries

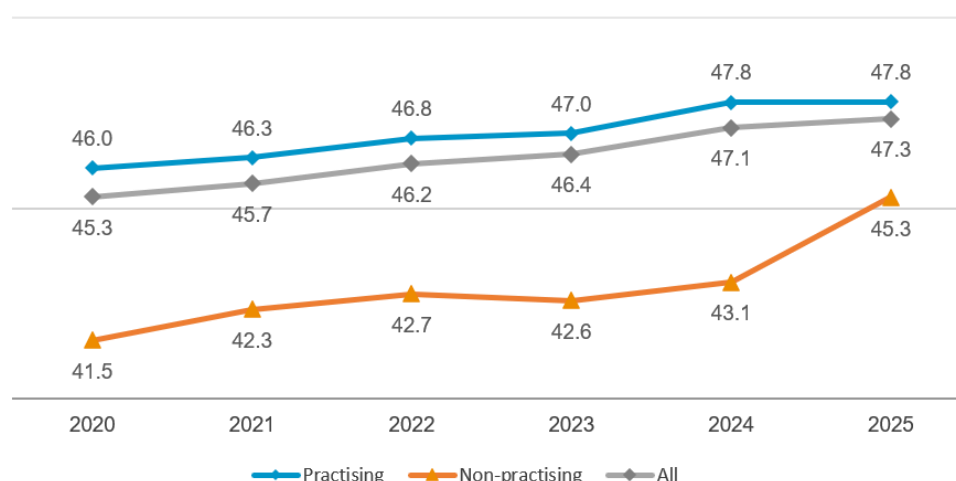
	2023	% YoY	2024	% YoY	2025
Dental hygienists with practising certificates	276	-3.6%	266	-3.8%	256
Orthodontic auxiliaries with practising certificates	125	1.6%	127	-0.8%	126
Dental hygienists without practising certificates	40	15.0%	46	19.6%	55
Orthodontic auxiliaries without practising certificates	16	18.8%	19	47.4%	28
Unique practitioner count	447	0.7%	450	1.8%	458

Practitioners could be registered as a dental hygienist and/or orthodontic auxiliary, with different practising intentions

Demographics

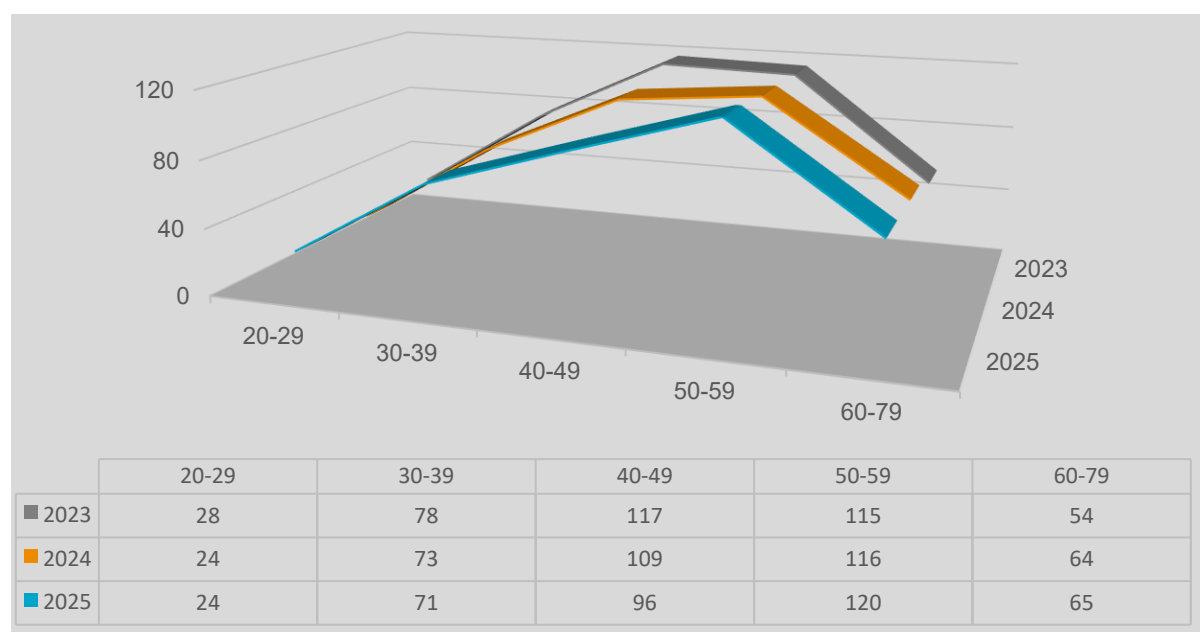
With the move of the oral health graduates from dental hygiene the mean age increased, from 37.5 in 2017 to 47.8 for those practising in 2025. The non-practising group of dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries has a 2.5 year lower mean age than the practising group.

Figure 5-1. Mean age of practising dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries



The majority of practising dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries are in the 40 to 59 age bands, with a sharp decline after 60 years of age; only 1 practising in the 70-79 band.

Figure 5-2. Age band distribution of practising dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries



Males practising in this practitioner group remain low (3.7%) in proportion to females in 2025.

The ethnicity reported by dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries did not reflect the population ratios in New Zealand ⁵. In 2025, the largest practising groups were European (75.3%), other ethnicity (14.9%), with Māori 4.8% and Pacific peoples 1.1%. Total count represented

Registration

Overseas qualifications accounted for 37.8% of the dental hygiene and orthodontic auxiliary qualifications (62.2% New Zealand qualifications).

For dental hygienists, most overseas qualifications were from the UK (15.6%), USA (11.2%), and Canada (10.3%). For orthodontic auxiliaries, the USA qualifications (6.6%) relate to the USA-based online component of the New Zealand Association of Orthodontists' orthodontic auxiliary training programme.

Of those with overseas qualifications and holding an APC in 2025, 68.0% had prescribed qualifications, and 24.6% had their qualifications considered equivalent to the New Zealand prescribed qualifications. Entering based on registration in Australia (TTMR) made up 5.7% of overseas registrations, with only 1.6% through the New Zealand hygiene registration examination pathway.

Practising characteristics

The shift to employees as an employment type continued (66.2% in 2018) to 86.3% in 2025. Self-employment made up 15.4% in 2025 (19.5% in 2018). During 2025, most employees (308) continued to work in private practice (83.5%), with other employee groups in single digits.

⁵ 2025 Stats NZ [Māori population estimates](#)

Using a 40 hour work week as a norm, 90.6% of dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries reported working 40 hours or less per week, down from 97% in 2018 but comparable to 91.3 in 2022. In 2025, the average number of hours of work per week reported was 30.1 (sd 10.4), the same as in 2022.

In 2025, dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries reported 22.9 (sd 10.2) and 29.3 (sd 11.0) mean hours of work in their respective areas of practice. This is similar to the hours reported in 2022.

Of the 222 dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries who reported working part-time in 2025, the key reasons reported were personal choice (118, 53.2%) and parental responsibilities (63, 28.4%) – similar to other professions.

Of those not currently practising in New Zealand, there was an even split (39%) between those practising overseas and those overseas but not practising (the latter being at a higher level than the other professions).

On future practising expectations, 90.0% of dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries reported in 2025 that they would still practise in Aotearoa New Zealand over the next five years.

Geographical distribution

There were 26 of the 67 TAs where no dental hygiene and orthodontic auxiliary practice was reported in 2025, one more than reported in 2022.

Analysing public health districts in 2025 showed all districts had dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries reported. The highest ratio of FTEs per 100K population over 15 years of age were in West Coast (6.5), followed by MidCentral (6.2) and Auckland (6.1), with the lowest in Tairāwhiti (1.5). The number of dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries per 100k population over 15 years of age are slightly down at 8.5 (9.8 in 2022), as well as the FTE per 100k population over 15 years of age at 6.2 FTE (6.7 FTE in 2022).

Postgraduate studies

There were 3 dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries who reported undertaking postgraduate studies from 2025 – one each in orthodontics, health sciences and the third area unknown.

Workforce survey response rates

The survey response rates for dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries are at 90.0%, slightly higher than the 86.7% in 2022.

Table 5-2. Dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries survey responses

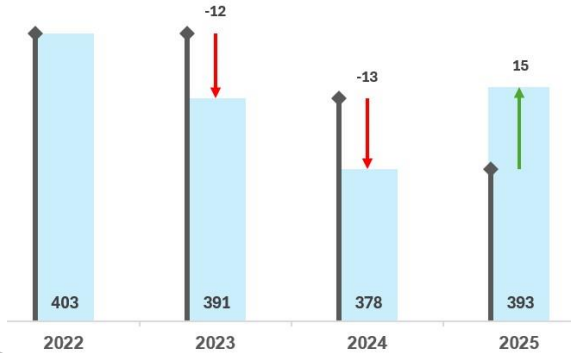
Year	Response rate (%)
2023	89.9
024	88.0
2025	90.0

Section 6:

The dental technology and clinical dental technology workforce

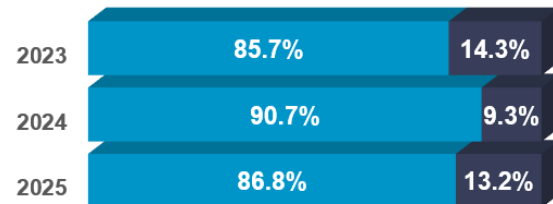
Clinical and dental technicians

Registered practitioners



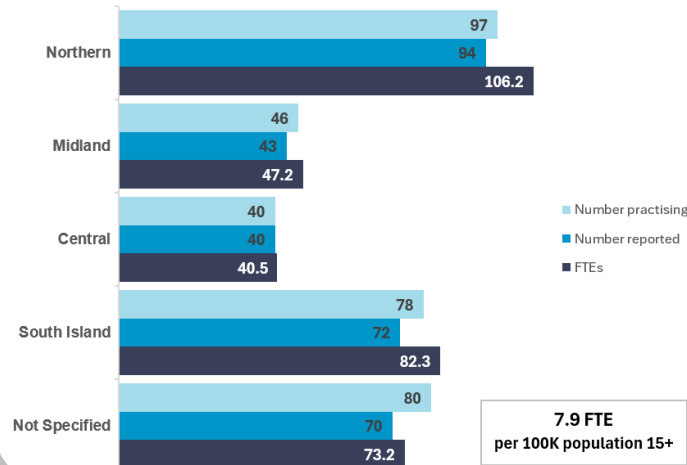
Practising status

■ Practising ■ Non-practising



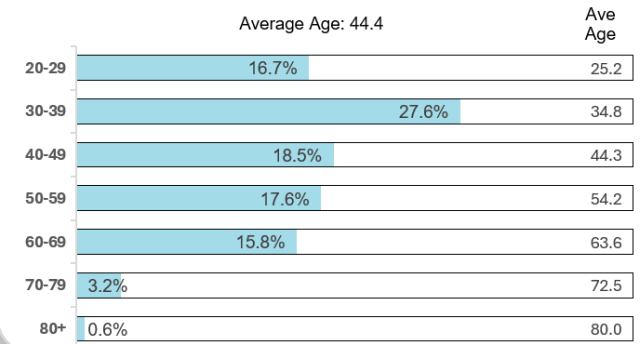
Intend to practise in NZ next 5 years: **91.1%**

Practitioners by public health region 2025

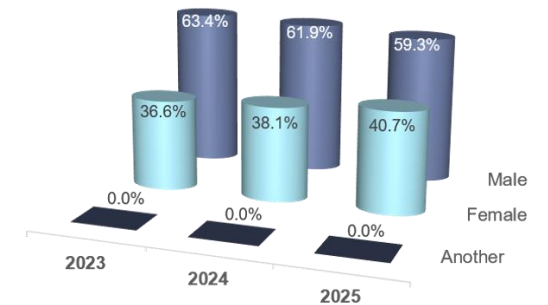


7.9 FTE
per 100K population 15+

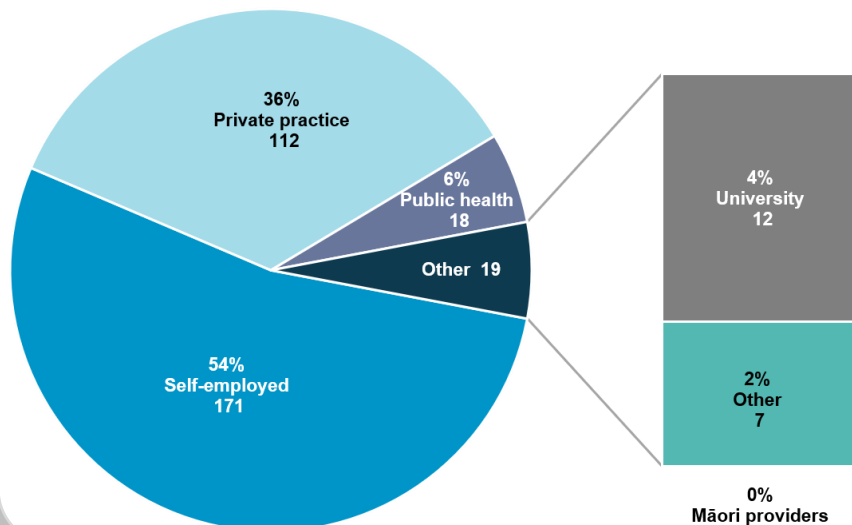
Age distribution for practising practitioners 2025



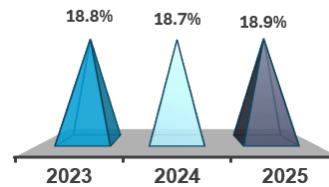
Gender for practising practitioners



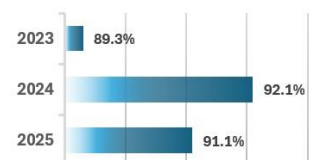
Employment type practising practitioners 2025



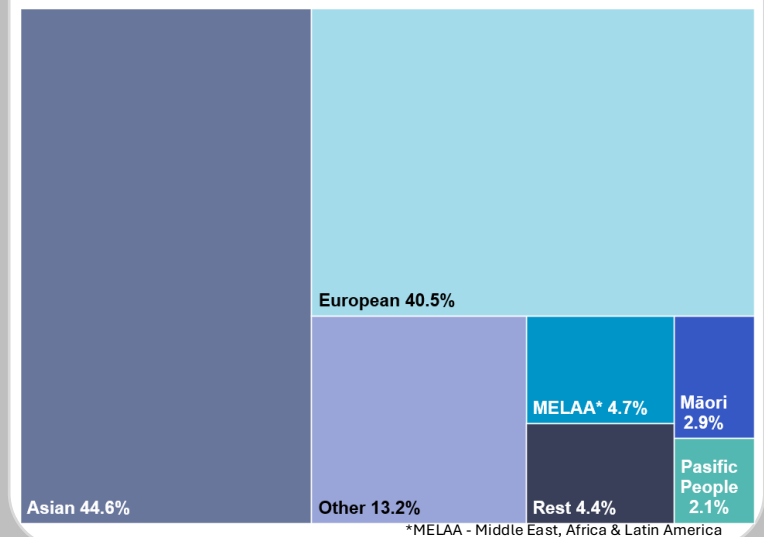
Overseas qualifications



Survey response rates



Ethnicity total count for practising practitioners 2025



*MELAA - Middle East, Africa & Latin America

Executive summary dental technicians and clinical dental technicians

Number of dental technicians and clinical dental technicians

The number of dental and clinical dental technicians remain similar between 2023 and 2025 and decreased by 2.5% since 2022 (403).

In 2025 a total of 85.8% of dental technicians held annual practising certificates, and 91.6% of clinical dental technicians.

Table 6-1. Registered dental technicians and clinical dental technicians

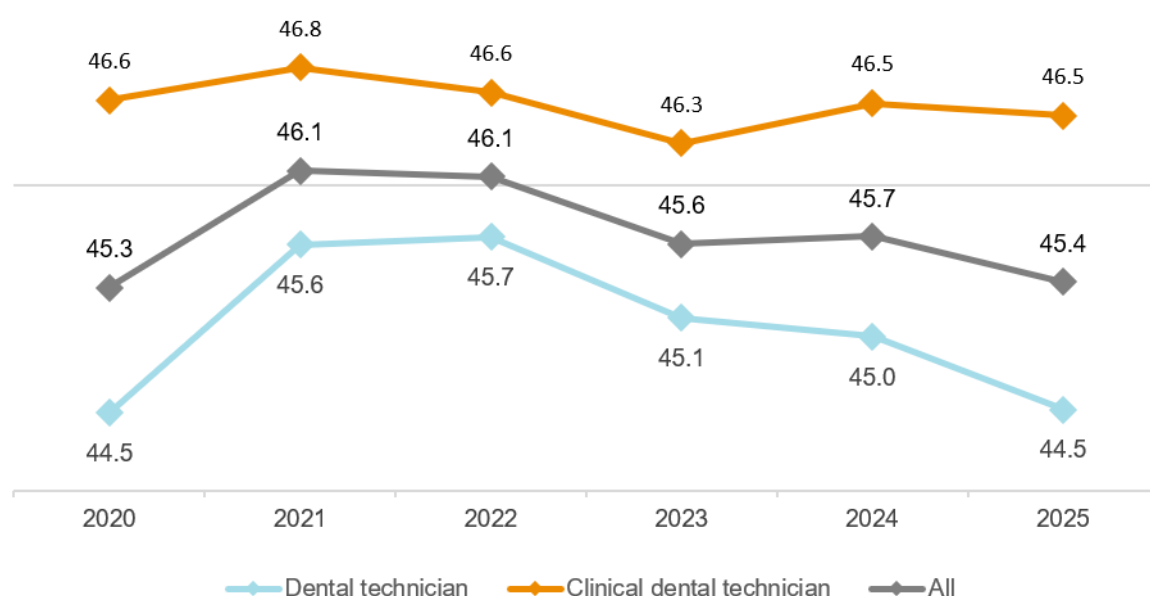
	2023	% YoY	2024	% YoY	2025
Dental technicians with practising certificates	327	3.1%	337	-1.5%	332
Clinical dental technicians with practising certificates	227	5.7%	240	0.4%	241
Dental technicians without practising certificates	60	-40.0%	36	52.8%	55
Clinical dental technicians without practising certificates	23	8.7%	25	-12.0%	22
Unique practitioner count	391	-3.43%	378	4.0%	393

Practitioners could be registered as a dental technician and/or clinical dental technician, with different practising intentions

Demographics

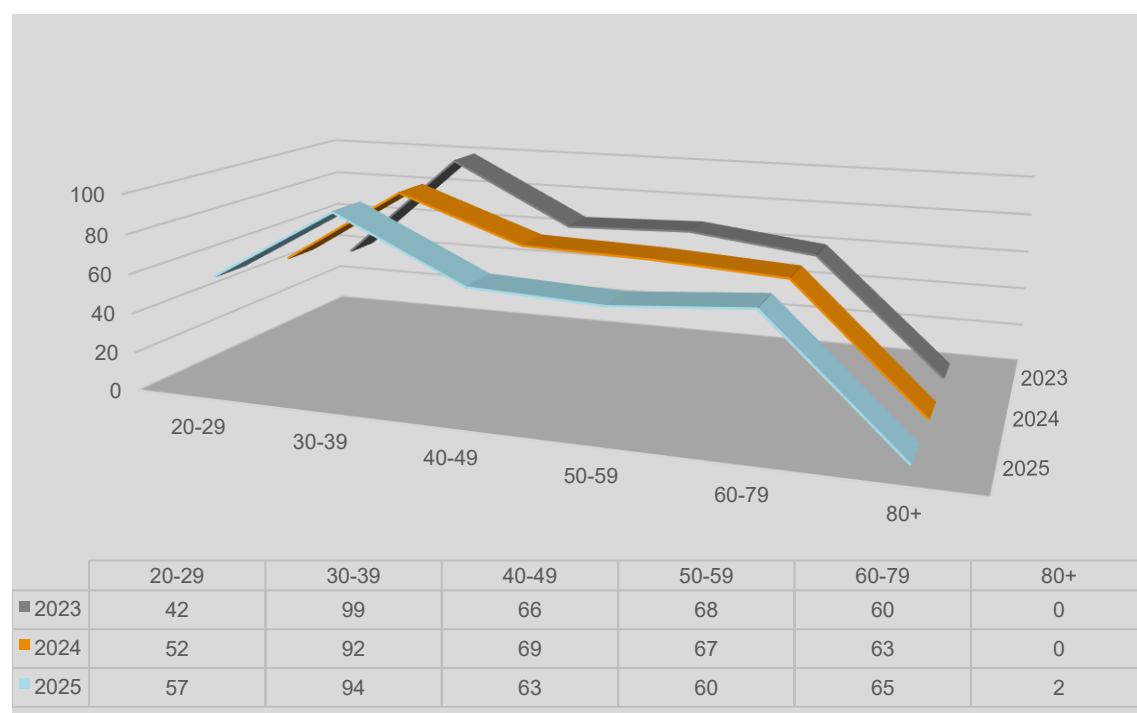
The mean age of the practising technicians as a group remained similar during the 2023 – 2025 period, at 45.4 years in 2025.

Figure 6-1. Mean age of practising dental technicians and clinical dental technicians



The 30-to-39-year age band represents the biggest group of practising technicians (27.6%), with 62.8% of practising technicians younger than 50 years of age. In 2025, there were 13 practising technicians over 70 years of age, with two over 80 years of age.

Figure 6-2. Age band distribution of practising dental technicians and clinical dental technicians



Females made up 39.3% of the practising dental technician and clinical technician workforce in 2025, a continued increase.

The ethnicity reported by dental technicians and clinical dental technicians did not reflect the current ethnic ratios in New Zealand. Māori made up 2.9% (similar to 2019) and Pacific peoples 2.1%. Asian is the biggest ethnic group at 44.6% followed by European on 40.5%. Total counted represented

Practising characteristics

Self-employment in solo practice continued to be the largest reported employment type with 54.5% in 2025, of which 42.7% worked in solo practice. Employees represented 45.2% of practising technicians, with most working in private practice (35.7%) and 5.7% in the public sector.

For 2025, a total of 46.8% of technicians reported working 40 hours or less on average per week, with a further 34.1% reporting working between 41 – 50 hours per week. An average of 43.4 hours per week (sd 12.5) were reported.

For 2025 an average of 23.3 hours per week (sd 12.7) were reported on dental technology related activities across all employment types, with 24.1 hours per week (sd 12.9) reported by those who are self-employed. This was mirrored by those working in the University setting. Clinical dental technology activities across employment types were reported at an average of 18.4 hours per week (sd 10.0). Clinical dental technicians reported activities across both scopes of practice.

The main reasons reported for part-time practice was personal choice (11, 34.3%).

Of those not currently practising in New Zealand, 48.6% reported that they were in New Zealand but not practising, the highest across the professions.

In 2025, 91.1% reported that they expect to practise in Aotearoa New Zealand over the next five years.

Geographical distribution

The analysis of territorial authorities (TAs) showed that 28 TAs had no dental technicians or clinical dental technicians, one more than in 2022.

Of the public health districts, the highest ratio of technicians per 100K population over 15 years of age was in Southern (9.1), followed by Nelson Marlborough (8.3), Tairāwhiti (7.6) and Waitematā (7.5). The West Coast still has no reported technician workforce in 2025.

The average technicians per 100K population over 15 years of age is 7.7 (down from 8.1 in 2022), with the average FTE per 100K population over 15 years of age at 7.9.

Postgraduate studies

In 2025, five indicated postgraduate studies (9 in 2022).

Workforce survey response rates

The survey response rates for dental technicians and clinical dental technicians have remained above 90% with 91.1% in 2025, the same as 2022.

Table 6-2. Survey responses

Year	Response rate (%)
2023	89.3
2024	92.1
2025	91.1

Section 7: The Māori oral health practitioners' workforce

Executive summary Māori oral health practitioners

Māori representation

Māori made up 6.4% (304) of the total practising oral health workforce in 2025, up from 4.3% in 2017 (207) – a growth of 46.9%. The largest proportional profession representation continued to be in dental therapy (13.8%) for 2025. In absolute terms, the largest group was in the dentist and dentist specialist group (128, 4.6%) now closely followed by oral health therapists (111, 11.3%).

The Māori representation of 6.4% of practising oral health practitioners in 2025 remains well below Aotearoa New Zealand's estimated Māori representation of 17.4% of the national population ⁶.

Table 7-1. Māori ethnicity, self-identified by practising oral health practitioners

	2023				2024				2025			
	% YoY	Māori	Total	% Total	% YoY	Māori	Total	% Total	% YoY	Māori	Total	% Total
Dentists and dental specialists	4.5	116	2,688	4.3	6.0	123	2,724	4.5	4.1	128	2,785	4.6
Oral health therapists	5.3	80	830	9.6	17.5	94	904	10.4	18.1	111	980	11.3
Dental therapists	- 7.1	39	299	13.0	-7.7	36	279	12.9	2.8	37	269	13.8
Dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries	- 11.8	15	392	3.8	26.7	19	386	4.9	—	19	376	5.1
Dental technicians and clinical dental technicians	10.0	11	335	3.3	-9.1	10	343	2.9	—	10	341	2.9
Total^a	2.0	261	4,544	5.7	8.0	282	4,636	6.1	7.8	304	4,751	6.4

^a Multiple ethnicities can apply. Unique counts.

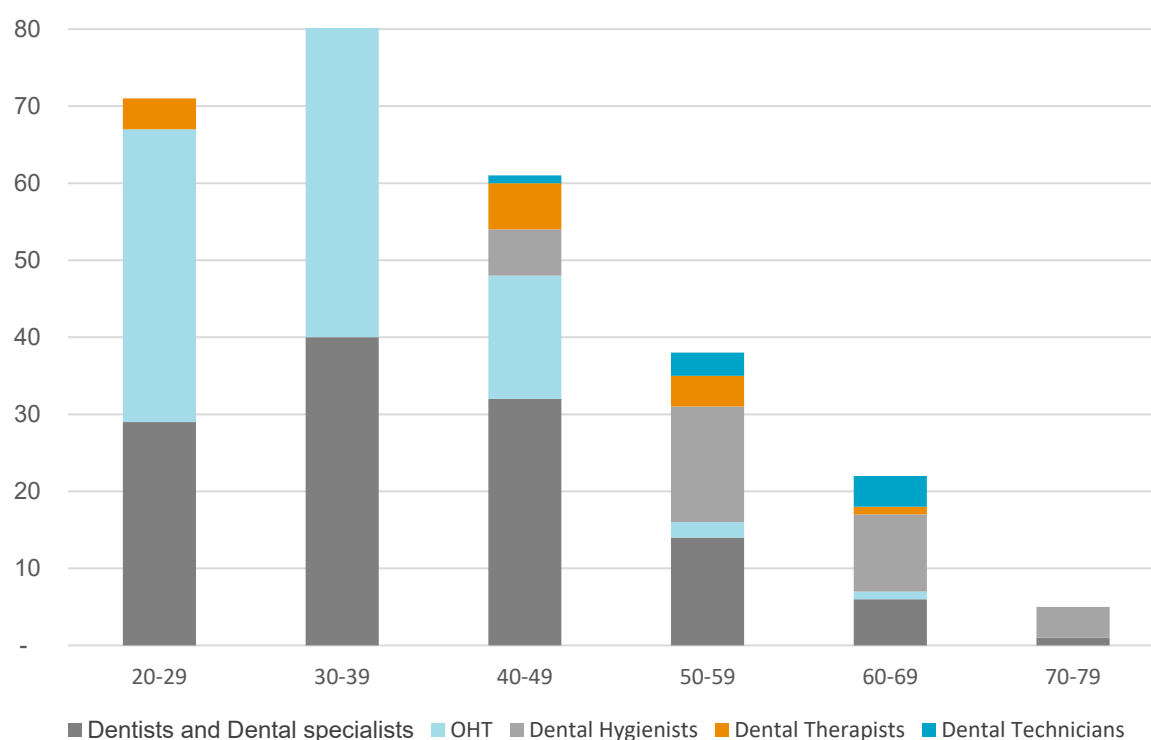
Demographics

The age group distribution for Māori is skewed towards the younger age groups, with 30 - 39 being the largest group (32.6%), followed by 20 – 29 (24.3%). Oral health therapists (91, 52.6%) made up the greatest proportion of these age bands followed by dentists.

The profile reflected a younger growing population which looks promising for the future but needs to accelerate to match the New Zealand population profile.

⁶ 2025 Stats NZ Māori [population estimates](#)

Figure 7-1. Age band distribution of practitioners self-identified as Māori



Wāhine (females) made up three quarters of the practising Māori workforce (233, 76.6%) in 2025, a similar proportion to 2022 (196, 76.6%).

Cohort remainder rates

The cohort remainder rates for Māori dentist graduates were calculated with data kindly provided by the Faculty of Dentistry, University of Otago. Limitations for these analyses include small numbers, and Māori identification for the analysis relies on self-identification both during their studies and with the Council.

The university records showed that during this reporting period a total of 24 dentist graduates identified as Māori. The Dental Council records showed a cohort retention range of 80% – 144.4%. The variances may be different ethnicity reported, or graduates not yet practising.

Practising characteristics

Most Māori practitioners reported being employees: 191 (8.7%) vs 117 (4.6%) self-employed in 2025. Most employees worked for the public health regions (84, 11.1%) followed by private practice (78, 6.7%). Eight employees were recorded working for Māori health organisations.

Geographical distribution

Geographical distribution of Māori oral health practitioners by region for 2025 showed high variation in distribution between the different professions with many areas without Māori representation. This is expected due to the low overall numbers.

The West Coast had no reported Māori oral health practitioners. Tairāwhiti had only a dentist reported and in Whanganui no dentist was reported.

Looking at the distribution across the health regions for 2025, Māori dentists were mostly centred in Auckland, Waitemata, Waikato, Capital, Coast and Hutt Valley and Canterbury (7 or more), with the highest concentration in the North Island.

The highest number of Māori dental therapists and oral health therapists were reported in the Northern and Midland/Te Manawa Taki health regions.

Section 8: Geographical distributions

Table 8-1. Geographic distribution of practising oral health practitioners by Territorial Authority for 2025 reporting year

TA area	Dentists and dental specialists (%)	Oral health therapists (%)	Dental therapists (%)	Dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries (%)	Dental technicians and clinical dental technicians (%)
Far North District	13 (0.5)	6 (0.6)	7 (2.6)	4 (1.1)	1 (0.3)
Whangarei District	38 (1.4)	5 (0.5)	6 (2.2)	6 (1.6)	7 (2.1)
Kaipara district	—	2 (0.2)	1 (0.4)	—	1 (0.3)
Auckland	664 (23.8)	198 (20.2)	69 (25.7)	93 (24.7)	88 (25.8)
Thames-Coromandel District	9 (0.3)	—	2 (0.7)	2 (0.5)	1 (0.3)
Hauraki District	3 (0.1)	—	—	—	—
Waikato District	9 (0.3)	2 (0.2)	3 (1.1)	2 (0.5)	—
Matamata-Piako District	11 (0.4)	1 (0.1)	4 (1.5)	—	1 (0.3)
Hamilton City	92 (3.3)	21 (2.1)	10 (3.7)	8 (2.1)	15 (4.4)
Waipa District	15 (0.5)	3 (0.3)	3 (1.1)	6 (1.6)	3 (0.9)
Ōtorohanga district	4 (0.1)	—	—	—	—
South Waikato District	4 (0.1)	—	1 (0.4)	1 (0.3)	—
Waitomo District	1 (0.0)	—	—	—	—
Taupo District	12 (0.4)	2 (0.2)	3 (1.1)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.6)
Western Bay of Plenty District	5 (0.2)	2 (0.2)	1 (0.4)	4 (1.1)	—
Tauranga City	64 (2.3)	11 (1.1)	21 (7.8)	8 (2.1)	5 (1.5)
Rotorua District	20 (0.7)	3 (0.3)	12 (4.5)	2 (0.5)	3 (0.9)
Whakatane District	11 (0.4)	3 (0.3)	2 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	3 (0.9)
Kawerau District	1 (0.0)	—	—	—	1 (0.3)
Ōpōtiki district	1 (0.0)	—	1 (0.4)	—	—
Gisborne District	12 (0.4)	5 (0.5)	2 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	3 (0.9)
Wairoa District	2 (0.1)	—	2 (0.7)	—	—
Hastings District	27 (1.0)	5 (0.5)	7 (2.6)	8 (2.1)	1 (0.3)
Napier City	29 (1.0)	2 (0.2)	3 (1.1)	1 (0.3)	8 (2.3)
Central Hawke's Bay District	3 (0.1)	—	—	—	—
New Plymouth District	24 (0.9)	7 (0.7)	4 (1.5)	7 (1.9)	3 (0.9)
Stratford District	2 (0.1)	2 (0.2)	—	—	—
South Taranaki District	3 (0.1)	—	1 (0.4)	—	—
Ruapehu District	1 (0.0)	—	2 (0.7)	—	—
Whanganui District	15 (0.5)	5 (0.5)	7 (2.6)	4 (1.1)	1 (0.3)
Rangitikei District	1 (0.0)	—	2 (0.7)	—	—

TA area	Dentists and dental specialists (%)	Oral health therapists (%)	Dental therapists (%)	Dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries (%)	Dental technicians and clinical dental technicians (%)
Manawatu District	6 (0.2)	3 (0.3)	1 (0.4)	—	—
Palmerston North City	43 (1.5)	7 (0.7)	10 (3.7)	12 (3.2)	6 (1.8)
Tararua District	1 (0.0)	—	2 (0.7)	—	—
Horowhenua District	9 (0.3)	1 (0.1)	1 (0.4)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)
Kapiti Coast District	16 (0.6)	2 (0.2)	3 (1.1)	2 (0.5)	3 (0.9)
Porirua City	7 (0.3)	2 (0.2)	3 (1.1)	3 (0.8)	3 (0.9)
Upper Hutt City	15 (0.5)	5 (0.5)	1 (0.4)	4 (1.1)	4 (1.2)
Lower Hutt City	44 (1.6)	11 (1.1)	10 (3.7)	4 (1.1)	4 (1.2)
Wellington City	122 (4.4)	32 (3.3)	5 (1.9)	22 (5.9)	14 (4.1)
Masterton District	12 (0.4)	3 (0.3)	1 (0.4)	2 (0.5)	1 (0.3)
Carterton District	2 (0.1)	—	1 (0.4)	1 (0.3)	—
South Wairarapa District	2 (0.1)	—	—	—	—
Tasman District	14 (0.5)	2 (0.2)	3 (1.1)	2 (0.5)	1 (0.3)
Nelson City	35 (1.3)	4 (0.4)	1 (0.4)	3 (0.8)	5 (1.5)
Marlborough District	13 (0.5)	1 (0.1)	3 (1.1)	1 (0.3)	3 (0.9)
Kaikoura District	1 (0.0)	—	—	—	—
Buller District	—	—	—	—	—
Grey District	5 (0.2)	—	1 (0.4)	2 (0.5)	—
Westland district	—	—	—	—	—
Hurunui district	—	—	—	—	—
Waimakariri District	8 (0.3)	—	1 (0.4)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.6)
Christchurch City	191 (6.9)	26 (2.7)	21 (7.8)	30 (8.0)	30 (8.8)
Selwyn District	11 (0.4)	—	1 (0.4)	4 (1.1)	2 (0.6)
Ashburton District	6 (0.2)	2 (0.2)	1 (0.4)	—	1 (0.3)
Timaru District	14 (0.5)	1 (0.1)	2 (0.7)	2 (0.5)	3 (0.9)
Mackenzie district	—	—	—	—	—
Waimate district	—	1 (0.1)	—	—	—
Chatham Islands territory	—	—	—	—	—
Waitaki District	9 (0.3)	—	1 (0.4)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.6)
Central Otago District	7 (0.3)	2 (0.2)	1 (0.4)	2 (0.5)	1 (0.3)
Queenstown-Lakes District	14 (0.5)	2 (0.2)	2 (0.7)	5 (1.3)	3 (0.9)
Dunedin City	129 (4.6)	18 (1.8)	11 (4.1)	11 (2.9)	23 (6.7)
Clutha District	1 (0.0)	3 (0.3)	1 (0.4)	1 (0.3)	—

TA area	Dentists and dental specialists (%)	Oral health therapists (%)	Dental therapists (%)	Dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries (%)	Dental technicians and clinical dental technicians (%)
Southland District	1 (0.0)	—	—	—	—
Gore District	3 (0.1)	2 (0.2)	—	—	—
Invercargill City	25 (0.9)	5 (0.5%)	2 (0.7)	2 (0.5)	2 (0.6)
Unknown	880 (31.6)	556 (56.7)	—	95 (25.3)	79 (23.2)
Area Outside Territorial Authority	43 (1.5)	4 (0.4)	3 (1.1)	4 (1.1)	1 (0.3)
Total	2,785	980	269	376	341

(Data sources: Dental register, workforce survey & Statistics New Zealand)

Table 8-2. Population to oral health practitioners by district health board for 2025 reporting year

	Dentists and dental specialists		Oral health therapists			Dental therapists		Dental hygienists and orthodontic auxiliaries		Dental technicians and clinical dental technicians	
	Number with practising certificates	Number per 100,000 population aged 15+ years	Number with practising certificates	Number per 100,000 population aged <15 years	Number per 100,000 population aged 15+ years	Number with practising certificates	Number per 100,000 population aged <15 years	Number with practising certificates	Number per 100,000 population aged 15+ years	Number with practising certificates	Number per 100,000 population aged 15+ years
Northern region	715	42.5	211	55.3	12.6	83	21.8	103	6.1	97	5.8
Northland	51	30.3	13	32.8	7.7	14	35.3	10	5.9	9	5.3
Waitemata	247	44.1	84	66.7	15.0	21	16.7	33	5.9	38	6.8
Auckland	272	61.6	58	76.1	13.1	17	22.3	40	9.1	30	6.8
Counties Manukau	145	28.4	56	40.0	10.9	31	22.2	20	3.9	20	3.9
Midland/Te Manawa Taki	335	36.8	62	28.4	6.8	78	35.7	45	4.9	46	5.1
Waikato	148	38.3	27	28.8	7.0	24	25.6	19	4.9	20	5.2
Lakes	32	32.6	5	20.7	5.1	15	62.2	3	3.1	5	5.1
Bay of Plenty	82	35.3	16	29.6	6.9	25	46.3	13	5.6	9	3.9
Tairāwhiti	12	28.2	5	43.1	11.8	2	17.2	1	2.4	3	7.1
Taranaki	61	40.2	9	25.6	5.9	12	34.1	9	5.9	9	5.9
Central/Te Ikaroa	325	41.6	78	47.6	10.0	53	32.3	62	7.9	40	5.1
Hawke's Bay	29	27.2	7	27.4	6.6	5	19.6	7	6.6	3	2.8
Midcentral	62	38.6	11	30.4	6.9	14	38.7	13	8.1	7	4.4
Whanganui	17	29.6	5	37.7	8.7	10	75.4	4	7.0	1	1.7
Capital, Coast and Hutt Valley	201	48.6	52	65.2	12.6	22	27.6	35	8.5	28	6.8
Wairarapa	16	37.1	3	32.9	6.9	2	21.9	3	6.9	1	2.3
South Island/Te Waipounamu	487	45.5	69	33.4	6.4	52	25.2	67	6.3	78	7.3
Nelson Marlborough	62	43.4	7	26.8	4.9	7	26.8	6	4.2	9	6.3
West Coast	5	17.0	—	—	—	1	18.3	2	6.8	—	—
Canterbury	217	40.9	28	26.4	5.3	24	22.6	35	6.6	35	6.6
South Canterbury	14	25.6	2	18.6	3.7	2	18.6	2	3.7	3	5.5
Southern	189	60.4	32	55.0	10.2	18	30.9	22	7.0	31	9.9
Unknown, with hours reported	923	—	560	—	—	3	—	99	—	80	—
Total	2,785	62.7	980	101.0	22.1	269	27.7	376	8.5	341	7.7

(Data sources: Workforce survey and Statistics New Zealand)