

# Medical specialists

## Introduction

A medical specialist, as defined in this report, is a doctor who specialises in a branch of medicine other than general practice. Medical specialists include general physicians, general surgeons, paediatricians, cardiologists, dermatologists, geriatricians, obstetric and gynaecology specialists, neurologists, urologists, ear nose and throat surgeons, rheumatologists, ophthalmologists, orthopaedic surgeons, and many more types of doctors. Medical specialists can see patients in public hospitals or in private clinics.

### What were the survey questions?

In the 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey, adult participants and the parents of child participants were asked how many times they/their child had seen a medical specialist (most common types were listed on a show card) in the previous 12 months. If they had seen a specialist they were asked where the last visit took place.

Participants were asked to exclude medical specialists they had seen as an inpatient at a hospital.

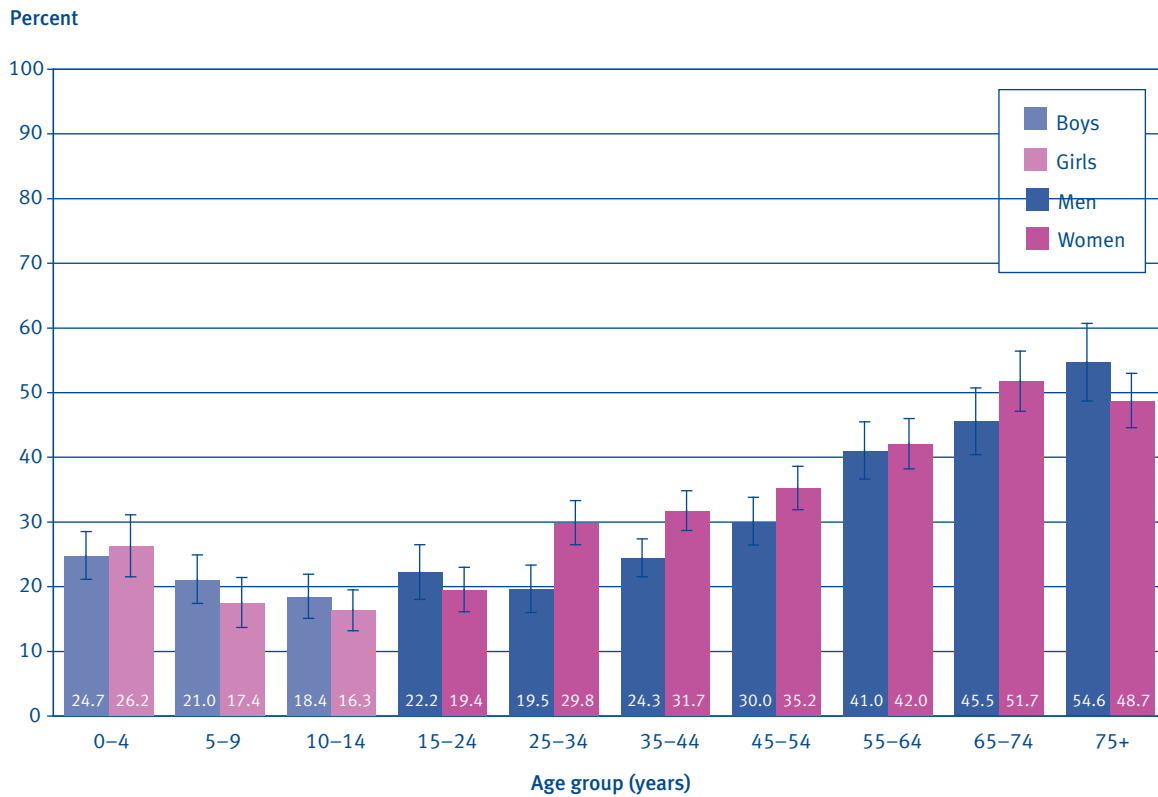
## Seen a medical specialist in the previous 12 months

Overall, one in five children (20.6%, 19.2–22.0) and one in three adults (32.2%, 31.2–33.3) had seen a medical specialist in the previous 12 months. Women (32.3%, 31.0–33.6) were significantly more likely than men (28.3%, 26.7–30.0) to have seen a medical specialist in the previous 12 months, while boys and girls were equally likely, adjusted for age. For those who saw a medical specialist in the previous 12 months, the median number of visits for children was one and for adults it was two.

## Seen a medical specialist, by age group

For children the proportion who had seen a medical specialist in the previous 12 months decreased with age, while for adults the proportion who had seen a specialist increased with age (Figure 6.42). Women aged 25–44 years were significantly more likely to have seen a medical specialist in the previous 12 months than men of the same age.

Figure 6.42: Children and adults who saw a medical specialist in the previous 12 months, by age group and gender (unadjusted prevalence)

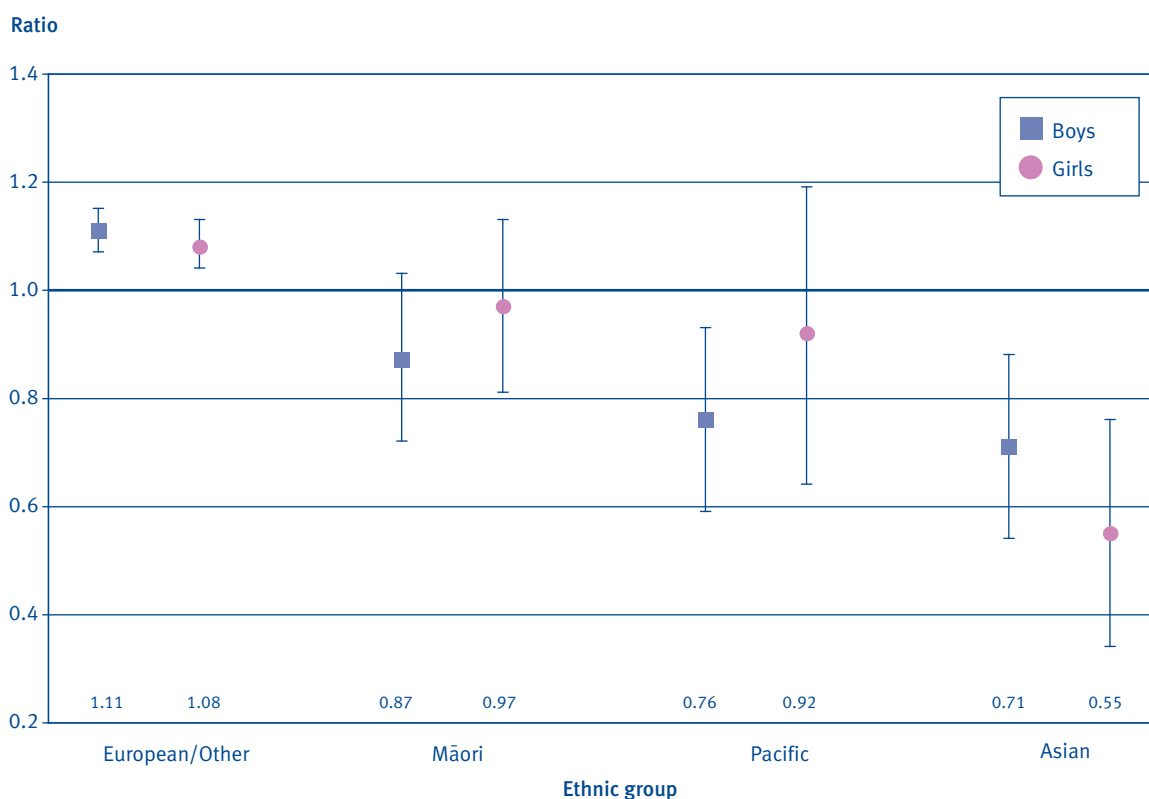


Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

## Seen a medical specialist, by ethnic group

European/Other boys and girls were significantly more likely than boys and girls in the total population to have seen a medical specialist in the previous 12 months. Pacific boys and Asian boys and girls were significantly less likely (Figure 6.43).

Figure 6.43: Children who saw a medical specialist in the previous 12 months, by ethnic group and gender (age standardised rate ratio)

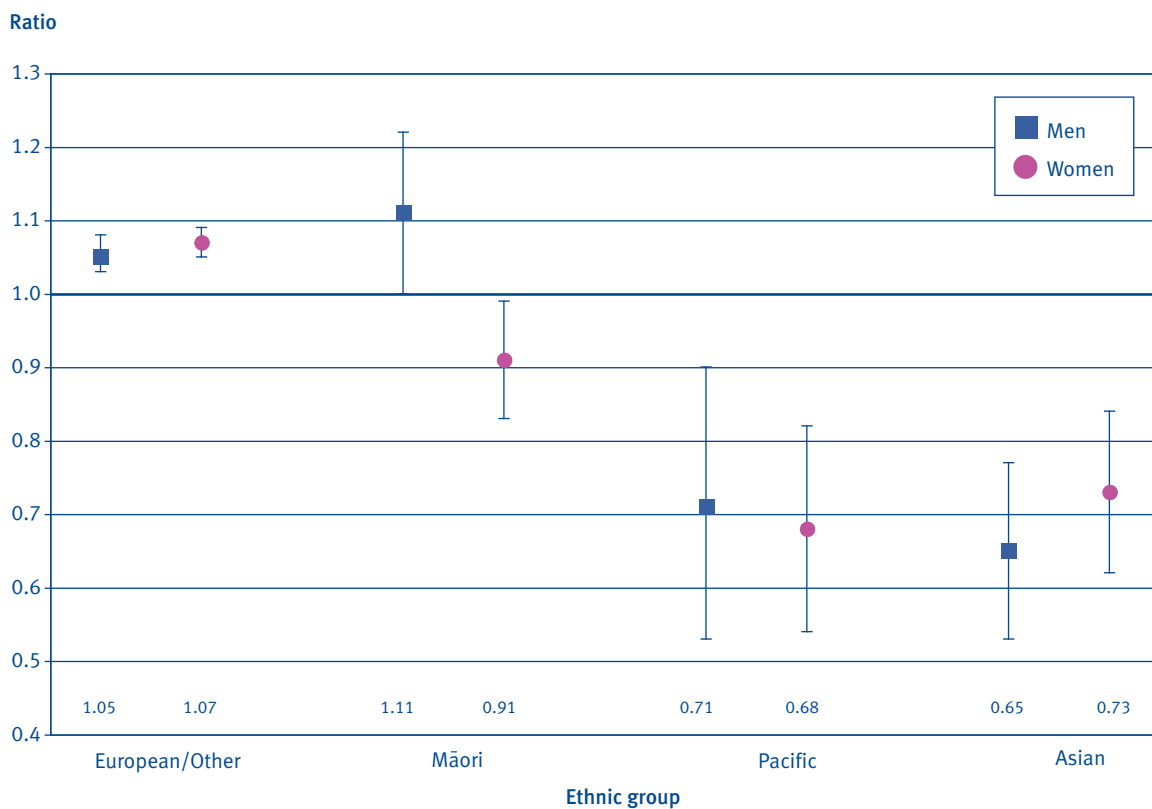


Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

Notes: Age standardised to the WHO world population. Reference group, with a rate ratio of 1.0 (indicated by the bold line), is the total male or female population aged birth to 14 years. Total response standard output for ethnic groups has been used.

European/Other men and women were significantly more likely than men and women in the total adult population to have seen a medical specialist in the previous 12 months. Pacific and Asian men and women were significantly less likely. Māori women were significantly less likely than women in the total population to have seen a medical specialist in the previous 12 months (Figure 6.44).

Figure 6.44: Adults who saw a medical specialist in the previous 12 months, by ethnic group and gender (age standardised rate ratio)



Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

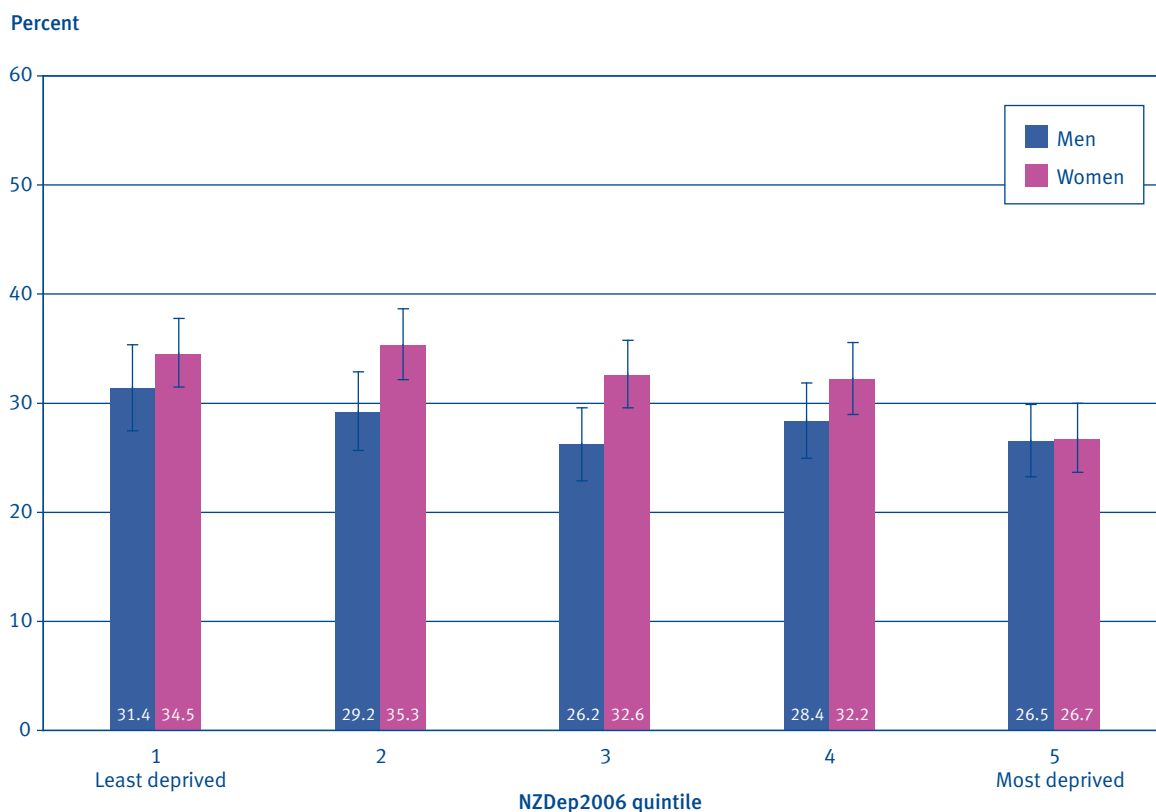
Notes: Age standardised to the WHO world population. Reference group, with a rate ratio of 1.0 (indicated by the bold line), is the total male or female population aged 15 years and over. Total response standard output for ethnic groups has been used.

## Seen a medical specialist, by neighbourhood deprivation

There were no significant differences for children who saw a medical specialist in the previous 12 months by neighbourhood deprivation.

Women in NZDep2006 quintile 5 (most deprived) were less likely than those in quintiles 1 (least deprived) or 2 to have seen a medical specialist in the previous 12 months (Figure 6.45). There were no significant differences for men who saw a medical specialist in the previous 12 months by neighbourhood deprivation.

Figure 6.45: Adults who saw a medical specialist in the previous 12 months, by NZDep2006 quintile and gender (age standardised prevalence)



Source: 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey

## Location of visit to medical specialist

Questions on medical specialists in the New Zealand Health Survey specifically excluded visits as an inpatient at a public hospital.

Almost three out of five (60.6%, 56.6–64.5) children who saw a medical specialist in the previous 12 months had their last visit as an outpatient at a public hospital, with one-third (35.7%, 32.0–39.3) visiting the medical specialist at private consulting rooms.

For adults, equal proportions had their last visit to a medical specialist as a public hospital outpatient (44.6%, 42.5–46.7) as at the specialist's private rooms (46.6%, 44.5–48.7). A further 8.1% (6.9–9.3) of adults saw a medical specialist at a private hospital.