



## Mental health care

*What is the perceived patient need and how are physicians responding?*

### Perceived need


The 2004 National Physician Survey (NPS) asked FPs about what they perceived the patient need for mental health care services to be.

- Eighteen percent of FPs across Canada indicated that at least 10% of their patient population was composed of patients with chronic mental illness. Provincial and Territorial results can be found in **Figure 1**.
- Sixty-six percent of FPs rated accessibility for their patients to psychiatrists as fair or poor on a 5-point scale (excellent, very good, good, fair, poor).
- Fifty-two percent of FPs rated accessibility for their patients to psychosocial support services (eg, psychologists, social workers) as fair or poor; 34% of all other specialists also rated accessibility for their patients to psychosocial support services as fair or poor.

### Response

The 2004 NPS asked FPs to indicate if they provided psychotherapy or counseling as part of their practice.

- Forty-one percent of FPs indicated that psychotherapy or counseling was part of their practice. Provincial and Territorial results can be found in **Figure 1**.
- Fifty-one percent of female FPs compared with 35% of male FPs ( $P < .0001$ ) provided psychotherapy or counseling.
- The proportion of FPs providing psychotherapy or counseling also differed by physician age: 37% among FPs younger than 35, 42% of FPs aged 35 to 44, 46% of FPs aged 45 to 54, 38% of FPs aged 55 to 64, and 32% of FPs older than 65.

The NPS is a collaborative project of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Medical Association, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Additional results are available from [www.nationalphysiciansurvey.ca](http://www.nationalphysiciansurvey.ca). If you would like the opportunity to develop and write a future Fast Fact using the NPS results, please contact **Sarah Scott**, National Physician Survey & Janus Project Coordinator, at 800 387-6197, extension 289, or [sks@cfpc.ca](mailto:sks@cfpc.ca). 

**Figure 1.** Proportion of family physicians with at least 10% of their patient population consisting of patients with chronic mental illness and proportion of family physicians providing psychotherapy or counseling by province and Territory

