

Gastroenterology

Table 1.1 outlines the current number and ratio of consultant gastroenterologists per 100,000 of the population in Ireland. Included in this table are the projected numbers of specialists per 100,000 of the population in 2024, should the current ratio remain static at the 2014 level. Table 1.1 also includes the research informed range of specialists per head of population as per expert stakeholder perspectives, the Hanly (2003) recommendations and the ratios in place, projected and/or recommended in comparable healthcare jurisdictions.

Table 1.1 Gastroenterology Consultant Posts (Private and Public) 2014-2024

2014		2024*		Research informed range of specialists per head of population to 2024 **	
N	Ratio per 100,000 pop	N	Ratio per 100,000 pop	N	Ratio per 100,000 pop
42 (36 WTE)	.9	45 (39 WTE)	.9	79 - 162 (68 - 139 WTE)	1.7 - 3.25

* Accounting for population growth and an unchanged ratio of consultants

** The recommendation is based on information in Table 1.2 and represents a range from the lowest to the highest ratio considered

Table 1.2

Hanly (2003)	Hanly (2003) recommended a ratio of 1: 58,000 consultant gastroenterologists (including hepatology specialists) per head of population to achieve a consultant-provided service and to comply with the European Working Time Directive (EWTD) in 2013. This represents approximately 1.7 consultants per 100,000 of the population. Using CSO population projections (CSO, 2011), we estimate the recommended ratio to equate to 80 consultant gastroenterologists today and approximately 86 consultant gastroenterologists in 2024 approximately. Using a WTE rate of .86, this would equate to 69 and 74 whole-time equivalent (WTE) consultants in 2014 and 2024 respectively.
Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI), Faculty of Medicine	<p>The provision of General Internal Medicine (GIM) comprises a large part of the workload of most gastroenterologists in Ireland. At present there are 51 gastroenterologists (including hepatologists) working in the public system in Ireland. In addition there are 14 WTE consultants in the private sector. 31% (16) are aged over 50 and 47% (24) are aged under 45, 14 are female and 37 are male. Approximately 8-10 consultant posts will be required per decade to replace those vacated through retirement. 50% of the publicly appointed consultants are in the Dublin area (25/51) and the majority of those in full time private practice (9/15) are also in the Dublin area. The remainder are working in Cork and Galway, with one in Waterford.</p> <p>The population of England and Wales is 53.8 million (11.7 times that of Ireland). In Ireland there is currently 1 WTE public gastroenterologist per 88,000 of population (1.14 per 100,000). A recent benchmarking study carried out in the UK by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) found an average ratio of 1 gastroenterologist per 51,000 population (1.96 per 100,000) with some geographical variations. Moreover a national consultant workforce recommendation by RCP was to increase consultant numbers from 1,005 to 1,753 which would equate to 1 per 31,000 population. This is almost 3 times the current number provision in Ireland. Based on these figures, the recommended number of consultants in Ireland should be increased 3 fold, constituting an increase of approximately 100 posts from 52 to 150. There should be at least a 40% (21 posts) increase in consultant numbers from 52 to 73 posts which would give a ratio of 1 per 51,000 of population, representing an increase of 21 posts. However an increase of 100 posts would be needed to bring Ireland in line with the recommended expansion in the UK over the next decade.</p> <p>Currently there are 24 SpRs in training in Ireland. There are 33 approved training posts, and each year there is a deficit of suitable trainees for the programme. The reasons for this are multifactor</p>

	but include the perceived and actual unfavourable training conditions for NCHDs in Ireland; the well recognized ‘brain drain’ of NCHDs to other jurisdictions, and the migration of many newly qualified doctors into general practice. Based on the above-mentioned shortfall in consultant numbers, to achieve the recommended increase of 100 consultant posts and to allow for approximately 10 retirements in the next decade, this would involve training 11 trainees per year, as opposed to the current 4-5 per year. Moreover, a proportion of our current SpR trainees are non-Irish nationals and have indicated that their intention is to return to their own country once fully qualified. The main stumbling block to increasing trainee numbers will be having sufficient trainers in place and/or having an insufficient pool of applicants for the SpR posts.
United Kingdom – Royal College of Physicians (2013)	On 30 September 2012, there were 1,005 consultant gastroenterologists in England. A whole-time consultant currently serves a population of around 51,000. There has been a 30% expansion in trainee numbers over the last 8 years. There are currently 622 trainees in gastroenterology in England. RCP (2013) use the Centre for Workforce Intelligence calculations to estimate the total demand in England and Wales at 1,753 consultants (headcount) in 2008 which was 53,861,800. This gives a recommended ratio of 3.25: 100,000.
England - Centre for Workforce Intelligence (2011)	The National Health Service Information Centre census (NHS IC, 2011) reports that there were 758 (727 WTE) consultant gastroenterologists (including hepatologists) employed in England as of 30 September 2010, giving a ratio of 1.5 per 100,000. Centre for Workforce Intelligence supply forecasts predict that the current outturn of Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) holders will be enough to grow the consultant workforce by 6.4 per cent annually, resulting in a consultant headcount of over 1,400 WTE (1,450 headcount) by 2020 giving a ratio of 2.6 per 100,000. If consultant posts continue to grow at the current rate (6.9 per cent over the last year), there are likely to be enough consultant posts for the number of trainees gaining Certificates of Completion of Training (CCT).
International	Moayyedi et al. (2007) estimate that there were specialist-to-population ratios of 3.9: 100,000 in the United States, 3.48: 100,000 in France, 2.1: 100,000 in Australia, 1.83: 100,000 in Canada, and 1.41: 100,000 in the United Kingdom.
Australia	The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2014) estimate that there were 612 specialists working in gastroenterology in 2012 (whereby gastroenterology was their main specialism). This equates to a ratio of 2.7 per 100,000 of the population for 2012 (the population of Australia in 2012 was 22.68 million).

Notes:

- Gastroenterology: 25 specialists were employed in the public sector (excluding specified purpose contract employees and those on career breaks). Source: HSE Workforce Planning, Analysis, & Informatics Unit, Dec 2013
- Gastroenterology: 17 specialists were estimated to be employed in the private sector. Source: Medical Directory; Google and hospital websites
- WTE rate used herein is .86. Source: HSE Workforce Planning, Analysis, & Informatics Unit, Dec 2013
- Population 2014 is projected to be 4,626,423 using the M2F2 scenario CSO (2011)
- Population 2024 is projected to be 4,979,921 using the M2F2 scenario CSO (2011)
- Information in Table 1.2 does not necessarily represent the views of HSE-NDTP