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BACKGROUND

Barriers to prescribing opioid pharmacotherapies include:

- Requirement for specific training¹
- Uncertain evidence of safety and efficacy¹
- Stigmatised patient group and treatment¹
- Negative patient experiences^{1,2}
- Poor access to specialist support^{1,2}
- Structural and operational barriers²

Introductory training and accreditation courses exist for health professionals to meet regulatory requirements and could help address commonly reported barriers to prescribing.

ACCREDITATION PATHWAY IN NSW

Three stage process for New South Wales medical and nurse practitioners obtain accreditation to prescribe pharmacotherapies for opioid dependence.

1. Completion of training courses:

- Fundamentals Training
- Opioid Treatment Accreditation Course (OTAC)

2. Clinical placement with an experienced specialist in addiction medicine or addiction psychiatry.

3. Application to the NSW Ministry of Health Pharmacotherapy Credentialing Subcommittee.

AIMS

To assess participants in the OTAC and Fundamentals Training courses, to identify how prescriber capacity can be increased in New South Wales.

METHODS

Self-enrolment data for the OTAC and Fundamentals Training courses were analysed to determine demographics:

- Locality; through Local Health District (LHD) catchment areas.
- Field of speciality.

Data presented were extracted from the course participant enrolment portal since course re-launch (n=121; June 2018 – August 2018).

RESULTS

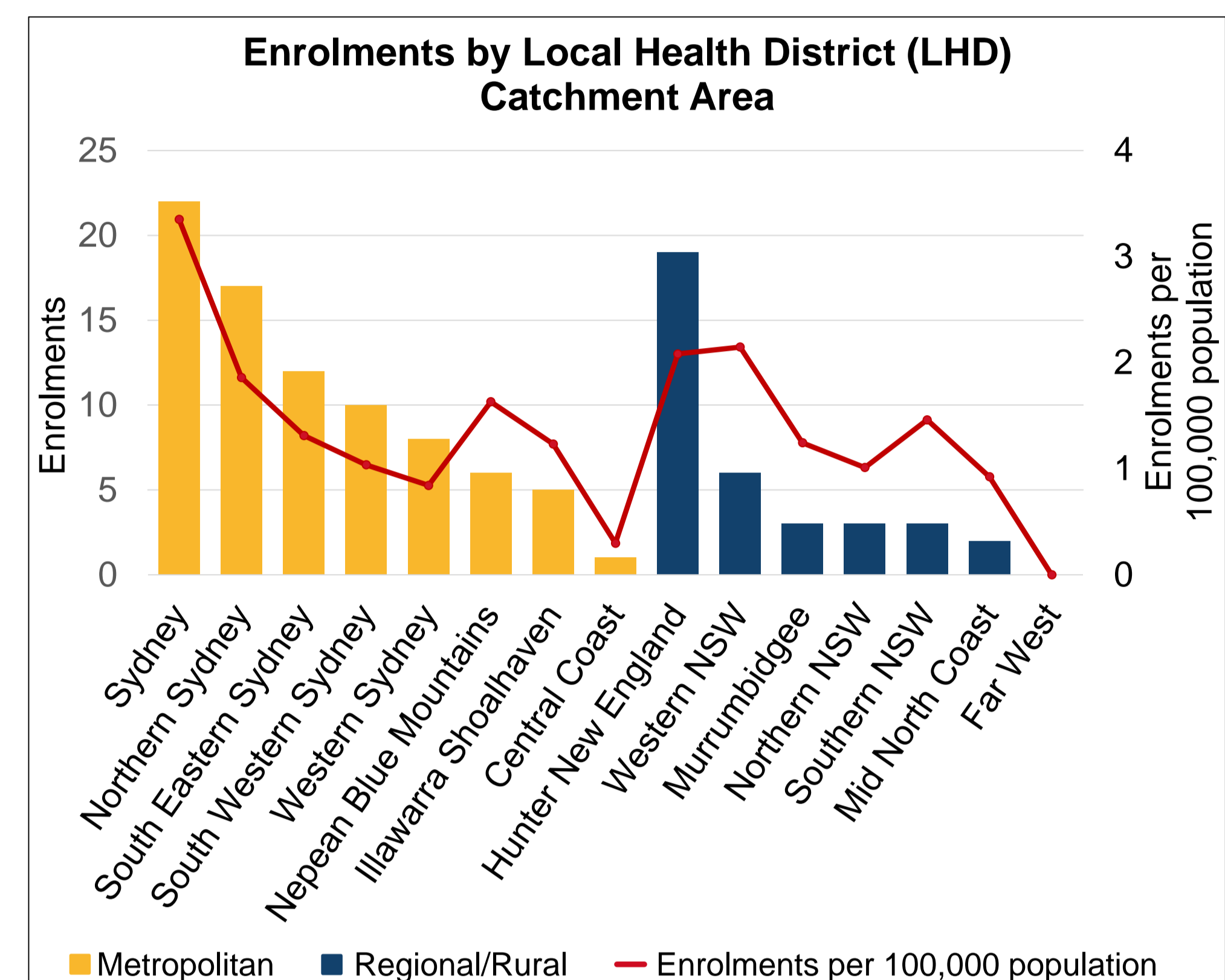
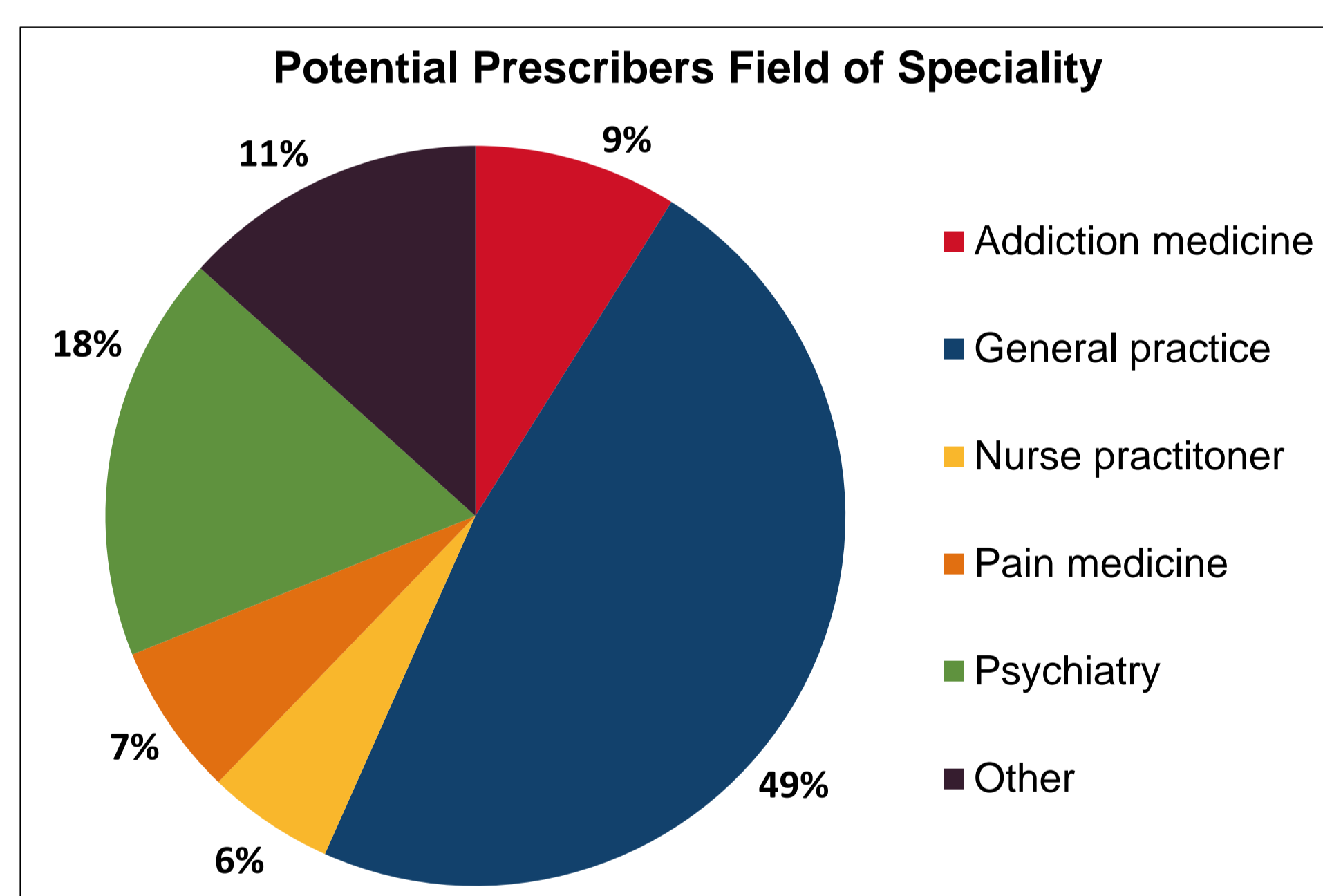
Locality

- Majority of participants from metropolitan LHD catchment areas (70%), compared to regional and rural (30%).
- Metropolitan enrolments greater in inner-Sydney catchment areas.
- Regional and rural enrolments primarily from Hunter New England.
- Central Coast (adjacent to Hunter New England) has few enrolments.
- Far West (rural) lacking any enrolments.

Field of Speciality

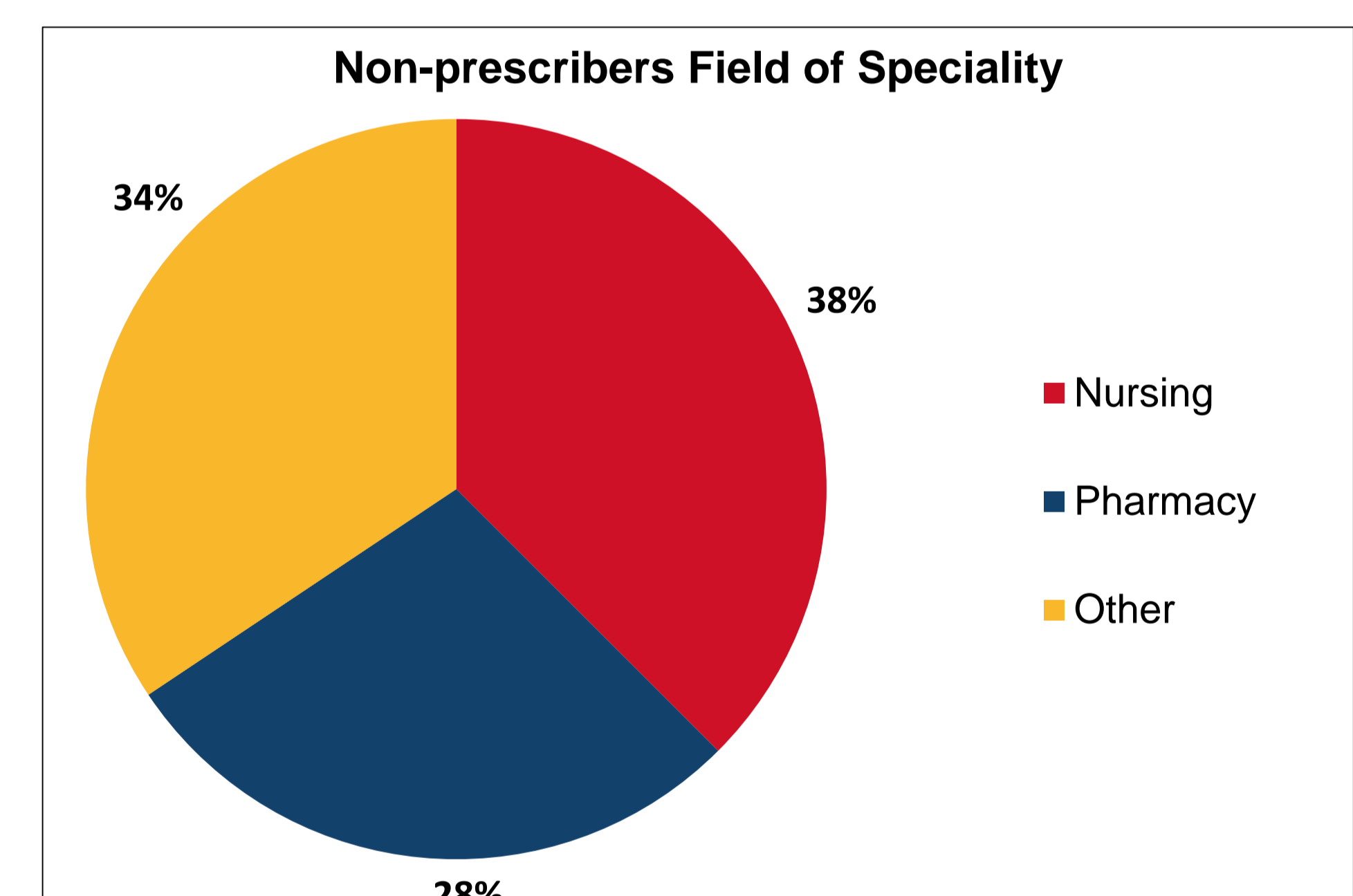
Potential prescribers (n=89)

- General practice formed largest group of potential prescriber enrolments (49%).
- Other prescribers: anaesthesia, infectious disease, rehabilitation, public health.



Non-prescribers (n=32)

- Nursing staff (38%) and pharmacists (28%) form the majority of non-prescriber enrolments.
- Other non-prescribers: clinic manager, clinical liaison, paramedic, physiotherapy.



DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

- A difference in enrolments between metropolitan and regional or rural settings was found.
- Wide variation between each LHD catchments even after adjusting for population size.
- General practitioners have expressed greatest interest, with other specialities expressing limited interest in training courses.
- Non-prescriber enrolments suggest an interest to increase understanding of NSW Opioid Treatment Program and pharmacotherapies.
- Targeting areas of low enrolment and linking participants to drug and alcohol services could increase treatment capacity and improve shared care systems.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the OTAC course development committee for their contribution in the development of the Fundamentals Training course and the re-development of the Opioid Treatment Accreditation Course.

The University of Sydney Discipline of Addiction Medicine has received funding from the NSW Ministry of Health to operate the Fundamentals Training course and the Opioid Treatment Accreditation Course.

REFERENCES

1. Holliday *et al.*, *Drug Alcohol Rev.*, 2012.
2. Longman *et al.*, *Aust. J. Prim. Health*, 2011.

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