

**Medical Manpower projection - Submitted by the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists in December 2007**

The Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists considers that the provision of specialist psychiatrists in Hong Kong significantly lags behind that of most developed countries. The population to specialist ratio for psychiatrist in Hong Kong is 1:44,202 as at 2005 (see Table 1):

**Table 1: International benchmarking of population specialist ratio (as at 2005)**

<b>Country</b>	Hong Kong	Singapore	New Zealand	UK	USA
<b>Population to specialist ratio</b>	44,202	40,384	11,087	16,836*	8,652

\* Excluding subspecialties

The insufficient provision of specialist psychiatrists has resulted in long waiting time for first appointment and short consultation time for subsequent assessments in the public system.

In a manpower planning paper submitted to the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine in September 2007, the College recommended a population to specialist ratio of 1:16,000-19,000. To reach the basic standard benchmarking with UK, 22 new trainees will need to be recruited annually. This will indicate that there will be approximately 415 specialists in psychiatry by 2011.

The manpower projection has been reflecting a basic minimum. The benchmarking is made with reference to the provision of specialist psychiatrists in General Adult Psychiatry in the UK. Our projection merely reflects the basic need of the community for management of severe mental disorders of the adult population. To cope with the changing population structure in Hong Kong, as well as increasing demand for better psychiatric care, the current projection needs to be regularly reviewed to cater for development of specialized psychiatric services in the near future.

Since the Government is likely to assume major health care responsibilities for persons with mental disorders, **investment is needed to employ and retain at least twice the current number of specialist psychiatrists in the public service**, taking into account the rate of anticipated attrition in the future.