

2021 Health Manpower Survey

Summary of the Characteristics of Optometrists Enumerated

I. Optometrists Covered

1.1 The optometrists covered in the 2021 Health Manpower Survey on Optometrists (HMS-OPT) were optometrists registered with the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong under the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance (Chapter 359) as at the survey reference date of 31 July 2021, and who had provided written consent on receiving information related to HMS-OPT by post or email.

1.2 Among the 2 269 optometrists registered with the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong as at the survey reference date of 31 July 2021, 905 had consented to receive information related to HMS-OPT by post or email. The number of optometrists covered was 905.

II. Response Rate

2.1 Of the 905 optometrists covered, 372 responded to the HMS-OPT, giving an overall response rate of 41.1% (**Chart A**).

III. Activity Status

3.1 The responding optometrists were classified as either “economically active”^{*} or “economically inactive”^{*}. Economically active (“active”) optometrists included:

- (a) “employed” optometrists - optometrists practising in the optometry profession in Hong Kong during the survey period; and
- (b) “unemployed” optometrists - optometrists who (i) were not practising in the local optometry profession during the survey period; (ii) had been available for work during the seven days before the survey[†] AND (iii) had sought work in the local optometry profession during the 30 days before the survey[‡].

3.2 Economically inactive (“inactive”) optometrists referred to the responding optometrists who were not practising in the optometry profession in Hong Kong during the survey period, excluding those who were on leave during the survey period and who were “economically active” but “unemployed”.

3.3 Among the 372 responding optometrists, 360 (96.8%) were active and 12 (3.2%) were inactive in the local optometry profession as at 31 July 2021 (**Chart A**).

^{*} In the survey, the criteria used in defining economically active / inactive followed those recommended by the International Labour Organization, which are also being used by the Census and Statistics Department in Hong Kong.

[†] The respondent would be classified as “unemployed” if he / she had sought work in the local optometry profession but had not been available for work because of temporary sickness.

[‡] The respondent would also be classified as “unemployed” if he / she fulfilled conditions (i) and (ii) but had not sought work during the 30 days before enumeration because he / she believed that work was not available; or had made arrangements to take up a new job; or was starting business on a subsequent date; or was expecting to return to the original job in the local optometry profession.

3.4 Among the 360 active optometrists, 354 (98.3%) were practising in the local optometry profession, two (0.6%) reported that they had not been available for work because of temporary sickness, one (0.3%) was seeking jobs in the optometry profession and three (0.8%) reported that they were available for work but had not sought work during the 30 days before enumeration as they believed no work was available in the profession; were waiting to take up a new job; or expecting to return to their original jobs in the local optometry profession. The survey results presented in paragraph 3.5 to 3.15 were based on the 354 responding optometrists who were practising in the local optometry profession as at 31 July 2021. The percentages presented below may not add up to 100% due to missing responses or rounding **(Chart A)**.

3.5 Of the 12 (3.2%) inactive optometrists enumerated, eight (66.7%) reported not seeking jobs in the local optometry profession during the 30 days before enumeration, two (16.7%) reported practising in the Mainland and two (16.7%) reported practising overseas. Among the eight inactive optometrists who reported not seeking jobs in the local optometry profession, the main reasons included: three (37.5%) were retired, one (12.5%) was working in other profession, one (12.5%) was engaged in household duties, one (12.5%) had emigrated, one (12.5%) was undertaking study and one (12.5%) wanted to take rest/ had no motive to work/ had no financial need **(Chart A)**.

3.6 Of the 354 active optometrists practising in the local optometry profession enumerated, there were 291 (82.2%) male and 62 (17.5%) female and one (0.3%) did not indicate the gender, giving an overall sex ratio (males per 100 females) of 469. Excluding one respondent who did not indicate the age, the median age of the remaining 353 active optometrists was 56.0 years (median age of female was 43.0 years and median age of male was 57.0 years).

3.7 The responding active optometrists practising in the local optometry profession were requested to indicate the characteristics of their main jobs*. Among the 354 respondents, 322 (91.0%) of them reported as working in the private sector, 23 (6.5%) in the Government, academic and subvented sectors, three (0.8%) in the Hospital Authority and six (1.7%) did not indicate their sectors for the main job.

3.8 For the active optometrists practising in the local optometry profession enumerated, the median age for those working in the private sector was 56.0 years, the median age for those working in the Hospital Authority was 52.0 years, whereas the median age for those working in the Government, academic and subvented sectors was 43.0 years.

3.9 Of the 354 active optometrists practising in the local optometry profession enumerated, 89.8% reported spending most of their working time on service of optometric care, while 4.2% reported spending most of their working time on administration/ management, 1.7% reported teaching and 1.1% reported research as the main area of work.

3.10 The median number of hours of work per week (excluding meal breaks) of the 354 active optometrists practising in the local optometry profession enumerated was 48.0 hours, amongst which 59 (16.7%) were required to undertake on-call duty (excluding normal duty), with a median of 24.0 hours of on-call duty (excluding normal duty) per week.

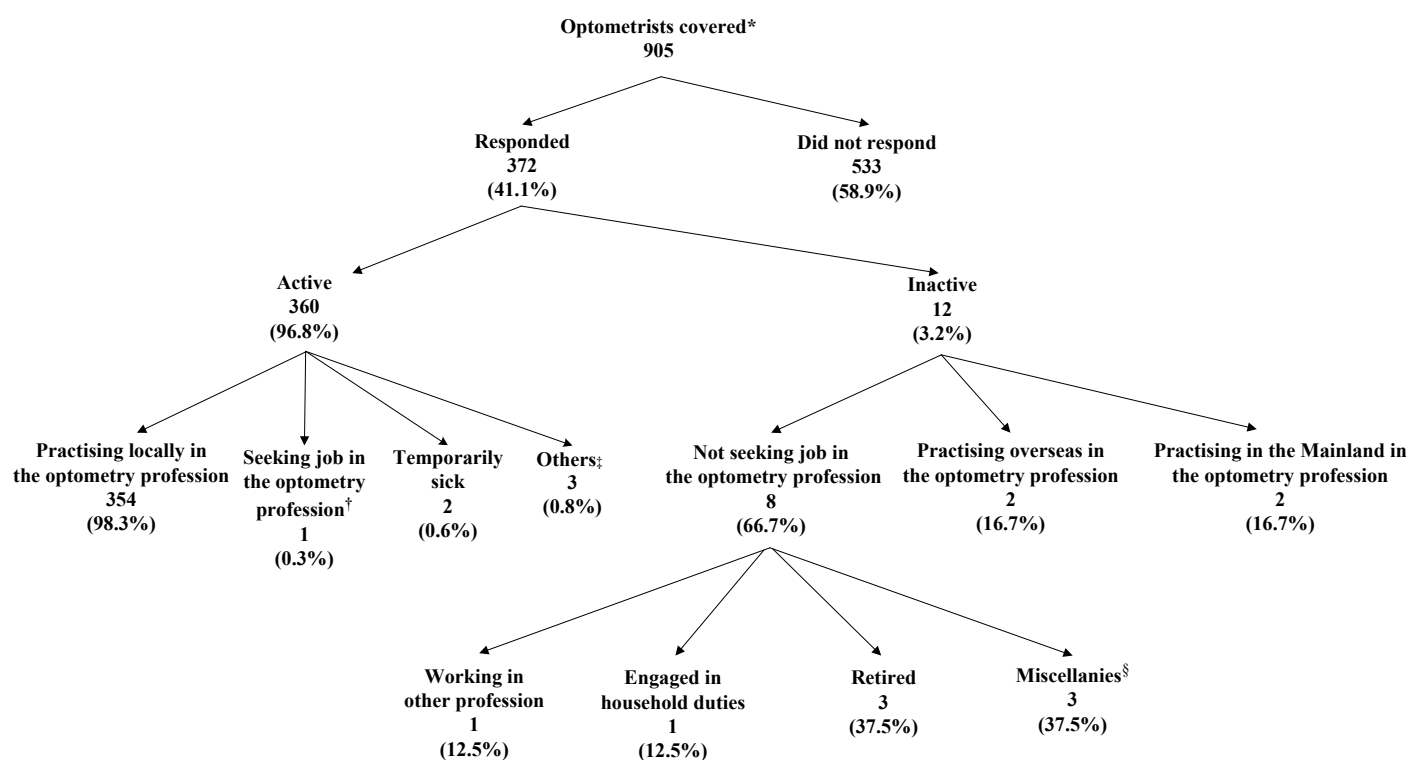
3.11 Among the 354 respondents, 33.3% had been exempted from the examination conducted by the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong†, 31.6% held Bachelor's Degree, 19.5% had the Certification‡ issued by the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong as their earliest basic qualification.

* Main jobs referred to the jobs in which the optometrists had spent most of their working time.

† Figure refers to those optometrists who had been exempted from the examination conducted by the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong.

‡ Figure refers to those optometrists who had certifications issued by the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong.

Chart A : Activity Status of Optometrists Covered



Note : * Figure refers to the number of optometrists who had registered with the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong under the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance (Chapter 359) on or before 31.7.2021, and who had provided written consent to receive information related to HMS-OPT by post or email.

† Figure refers to the number of responding optometrists who (a) were not practising in the optometry profession in Hong Kong during the survey period; (b) had been available for work during the seven days before the survey; AND (c) had sought work in the local optometry profession during the 30 days before the survey.

‡ Figure refers to the number of responding optometrists who (a) were not practising in the optometry profession in Hong Kong during the survey period; (b) had been available for work during the seven days before the survey; AND (c) had not sought work during the 30 days before enumeration because he/ she believed that work was not available; or was waiting to take up a new job; or was expecting to return to the original job in the local optometry profession during the 30 days before the survey.

§ Figure refers to the number of responding optometrists who (a) were not practising in the optometry profession in Hong Kong during the survey period; (b) had been available for work during the seven days before the survey; AND (c) had sought work in the local optometry profession during the 30 days before the survey.

Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

3.12 Of the 354 respondents, 154 (43.5%) had received / were receiving additional training after obtaining their earliest basic qualification, amongst which 85 (55.2%) held Certificate, 15 (9.7%) held Master's Degree and 11 (7.1%) held Doctoral Degree as the highest qualification and 17 (11.0%) had not yet completed the additional training.

3.13 Of the 154 respondents who had received / were receiving additional training after obtaining their earliest basic qualification, 81 (52.6%) had received / were receiving training in one field only, which included training in optometry (65.4%), optometric research (11.1%), orthokeratology (9.9%), contact lens technology (4.9%), optical mechanics (1.2%), ocular pharmacology (1.2%) and counselling (1.2%).

3.14 Of the 154 active optometrists practising in the local optometry profession who had received/ were receiving additional training after obtaining their earliest basic qualification, 66 (42.8%) indicated that they had received / were receiving more than one field of additional training. The most commonly reported fields included: optometry which was reported by 62 (93.9%) of the 66 respondents, contact lens technology which was reported by 53 (80.3%) of the respondents, orthokeratology which was reported by 22 (33.3%) of the respondents, optometric research which was reported by 21 (31.8%) of the respondents and optical mechanics which was reported by 13 (19.7%) of the respondents.

3.15 Among the 354 active optometrists practising in the local optometry profession, 271 (76.6%) reported that they had participated in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities in 2021, 52 (14.7%) reported no participation in any CPD activities and 31 (8.8%) did not report whether they had participated in any CPD activities or not. Among the 271 respondents who had participated in CPD activities, the distribution of CPD hours attained in the past 12 months was: 1 to 10 hours (68.3%), 11 to 20 hours (25.5%), 21 to 30 hours (4.8%), 31 to 40 hours (0.4%) and more than 40 hours (1.1%).

IV. Trend Analysis

4.1 As there have been changes to the survey method, reference date and coverage for 2021 HMS-OPT, findings of the survey cannot be directly comparable to previous surveys.

4.2 The optometrists covered in 2021 HMS-OPT were those registered with the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong as at 31 July 2021, and who had provided written consent on receiving information related to HMS-OPT by post or email. The scope covered in 2021 is different from the previous surveys and constituted approximately 40% of the optometrists registered with the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong under the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance (Chapter 359) as at the survey reference date.

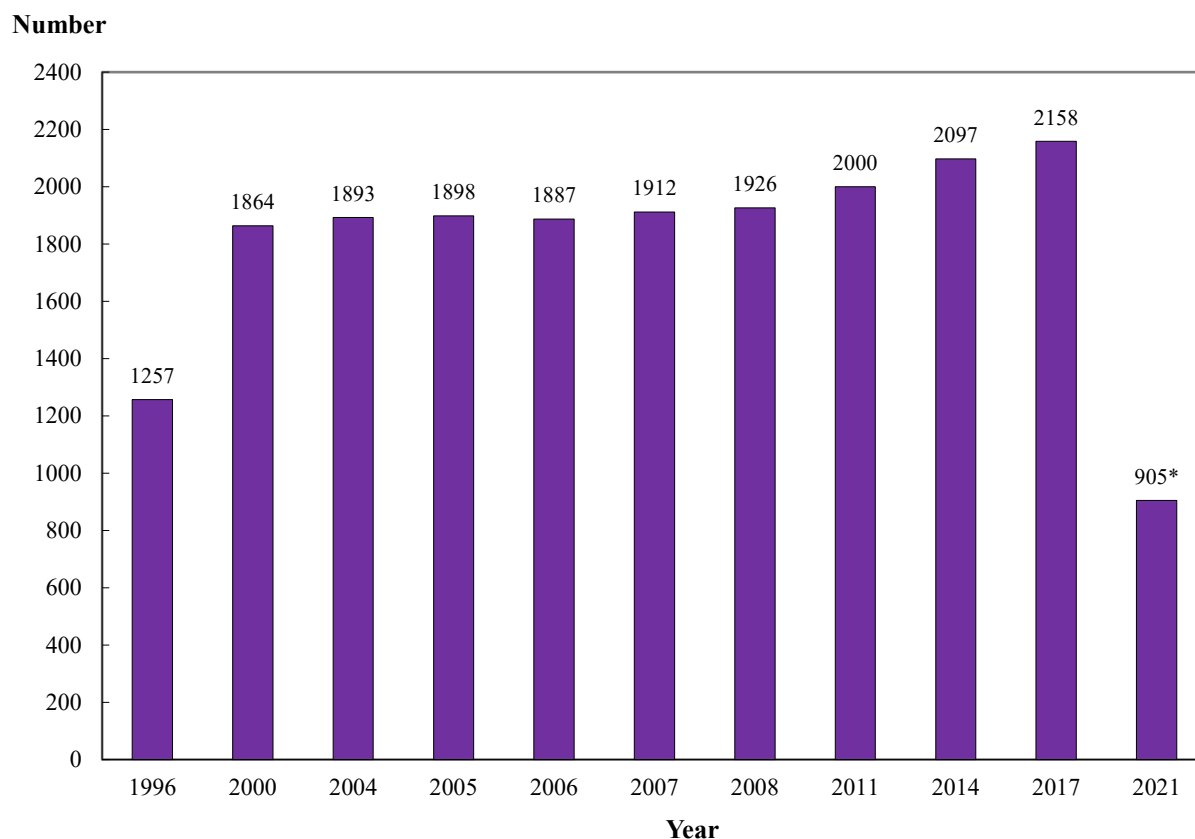
4.3 With the introduction of practising certificate by the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong in October 1990, the method adopted in counting optometrists was changed to include optometrists who had valid practising certificates in optometry as at the survey reference date. Survey coverage from 1992-2017 is summarised as follows:

- The optometrists covered in 1992, 1996 and 2000 were the optometrists registered with the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong as at 1 July of the respective years.
- The optometrists covered from 2004 to 2017 were optometrists registered with the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong as at 31 March of the respective years, excluding those who were later found to have passed away on or before the survey reference date.

4.4 Given the changing survey methodologies, the number of optometrists covered ranged between 905 and 2 158 during the survey years between 1996 and 2021.

4.5 Selected characteristics of active optometrists practising in the local optometry profession enumerated during the survey years between 1992 and 2021 were tabulated in Table A for reference.

Chart B : Number of Optometrists Covered by Year (1996, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017 and 2021)



Note : * Figure of 2021 refers to the number of optometrists who had registered with the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong on or before 31 July 2021 and who had provided written consent to receive information related to HMS-OPT by post or email.

Figures of the year 2000 and before refer to the number of optometrists registered with the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong as at the 1 July of the respective years, whereas the figures of 2004 to 2017 refer to that as at the 31 March of the respective years..

Table A : Selected Characteristics of Active Optometrists Practising in the Local Physiotherapy Profession Enumerated (1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017 and 2021)

Characteristics	Year											
	1992	1996	2000	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2011	2014	2017	2021
A.Registered Optometrists Covered*	N.A.	1 257	1 864	1 893	1 898	1 887	1 912	1 926	2 000	2 097	2 158	905
B.Active Optometrists Enumerated												
Number Enumerated	674	1 054	1 359	1 084	1 294	1 321	1 198	1 034	1 297	1 144	1 216	354
Sex												
Male	566	890	1 159	890	1 059	1 081	967	820	1 018	890	927	291
Female	108	164	200	194	231	239	231	214	275	252	285	62
Unknown	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	4	1	N.A.	N.A.	4	2	4	1
Sex Ratio (males per 100 females)	524	543	580	459	458	452	419	383	370	353	325	469
Mean Age	33.5	39.9	40.0	42.8	42.3	43.7	44.7	44.4	46.7	48.0	49.6	53.7
Median Age	-	-	38.0	42.0	41.0	43.0	44.0	44.0	47.0	49.0	52.0	56.0
Sector of Work[†]												
Hospital Authority	7 (1.0%)	19 (1.8%)	25 (1.8%)	18 (1.7%)	25 (1.9%)	25 (1.9%)	18 (1.5%)	19 (1.8%)	34 (2.6%)	37 (3.2%)	34 (2.8%)	3 (0.8%)
Private	655 (97.2%)	1 018 (96.6%)	1 308 (96.2%)	1 005 (92.7%)	1 209 (93.4%)	1 235 (93.5%)	1 123 (93.7%)	963 (93.1%)	1 193 (92.0%)	1 037 (90.6%)	1 110 (91.3%)	322 (91.0%)
Government, Academic & Subvented	12 (1.8%)	17 (1.6%)	26 (1.9%)	52 (4.8%)	53 (4.1%)	55 (4.2%)	57 (4.8%)	52 (5.0%)	64 (4.9%)	61 (5.3%)	72 (5.9%)	23 (6.5%)
Unknown	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	9 (0.8%)	7 (0.5%)	6 (0.5%)	N.A.	N.A.	6 (0.5%)	9 (0.8%)	N.A.	6 (1.7%)

Notes :* Figures of the year 2000 and before refer to the number of optometrists registered with the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong as at the 1 July of the respective years, whereas the figures of 2004 to 2017 refer to that as at the 31 March of the respective years. Figure of 2021 refers to the number of optometrists registered with the Optometrists Board of Hong Kong on or before 31.7.2021 and who had provided written consent to receive information related to HMS-OPT by post or email.

† In 2004, 2005 and 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017 and 2021 the sector refers to the sector for the main job.
There may be slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total due to rounding.
N.A. Not applicable
'-' Not available