

Accessibility of AD/HD Assessments in Australia: Preliminary Results from a Secret Shopper Study

Clare O'Toole and John Finlayson
School of Psychology, University of Wollongong

Aims

To investigate the accessibility of AD/HD assessments in New South Wales, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, and the Northern Territory.

Methodology

Accessibility measures included available providers, wait times for first sessions, first session costs and total assessment costs. Clinicians included in the study were psychologists, psychiatrists, and paediatricians.

The sample of clinicians was determined based on proportions of clinician types and geographic remoteness^{1,2}. The dataset of clinicians was sourced through open online clinician databases using the search terms "ADHD" + "clinician type". Calls utilising scripted vignettes where researchers posed as consumers were made between May 20th 2024 and July 23rd 2024. The secret shopper methodology is designed to produce realistic data without bias from Hawthorne or self-report effects³.

Results

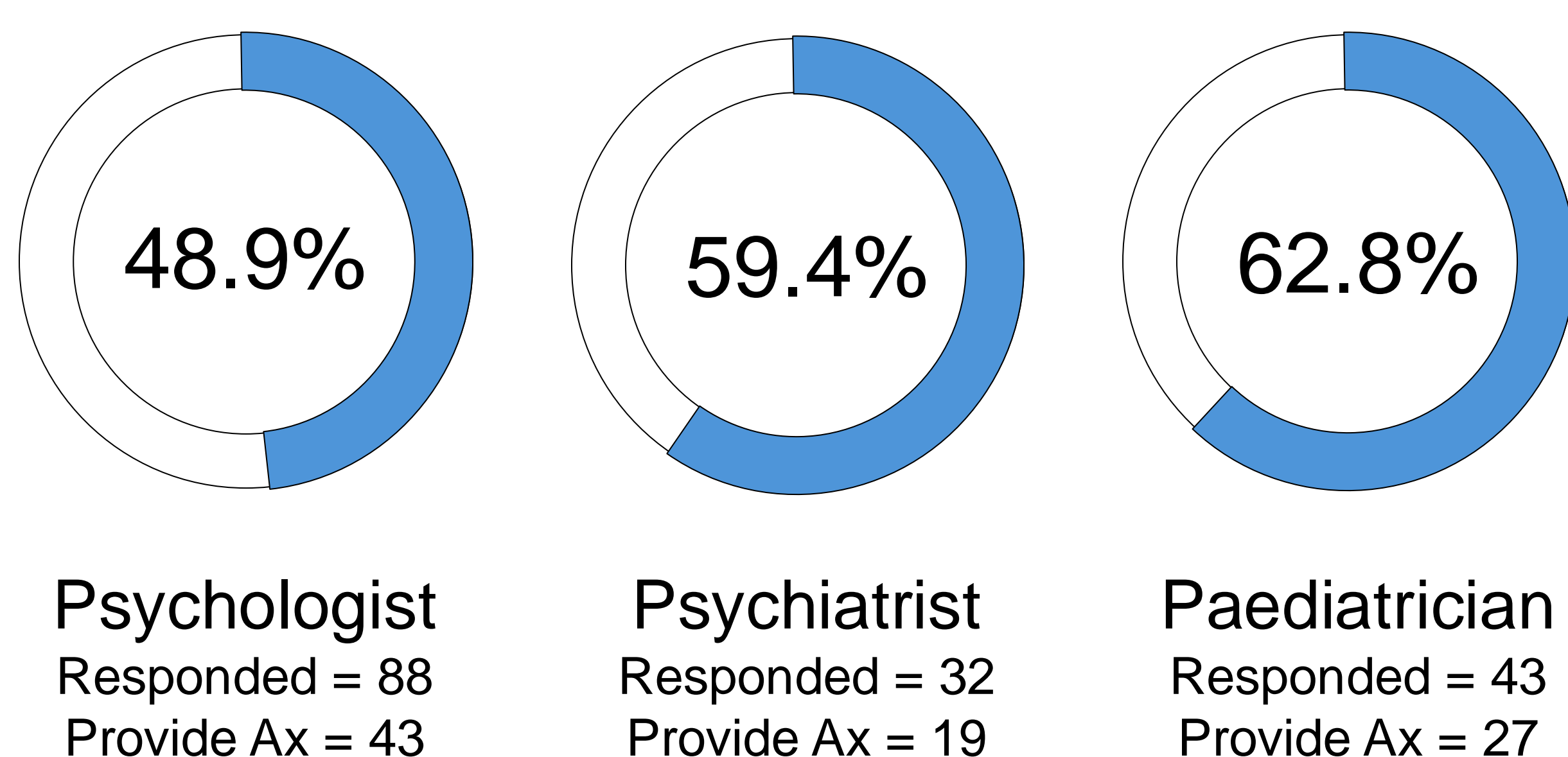
A total of 288 clinicians were selected for contact.

Clinicians Contacted

	Psychologist	Psychiatrist	Paediatrician	Total
NSW	139	52	39	230
TAS	24	3	3	30
ACT	8	3	5	16
NT	5	3	4	12
Total	176	61	51	288

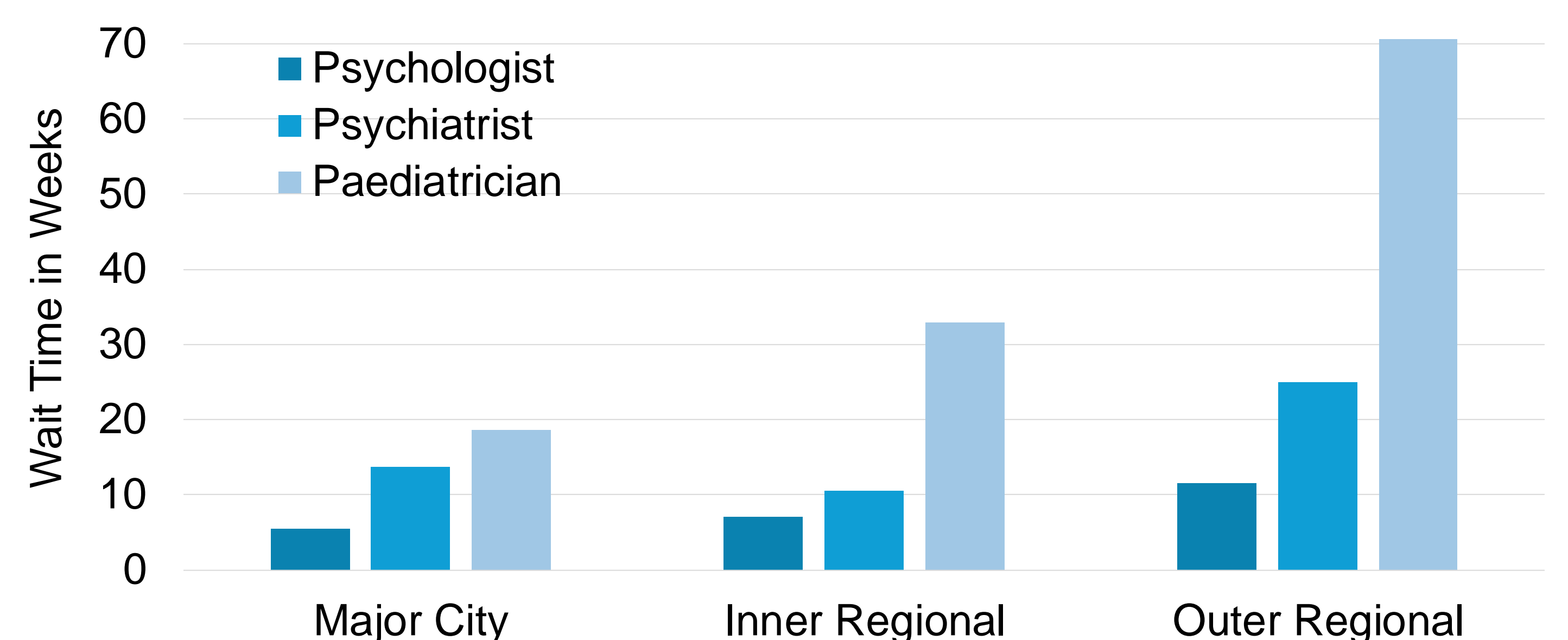
Of those 288 clinicians, 163 responded within two attempts to contact (56.6%).

Assessment Providers

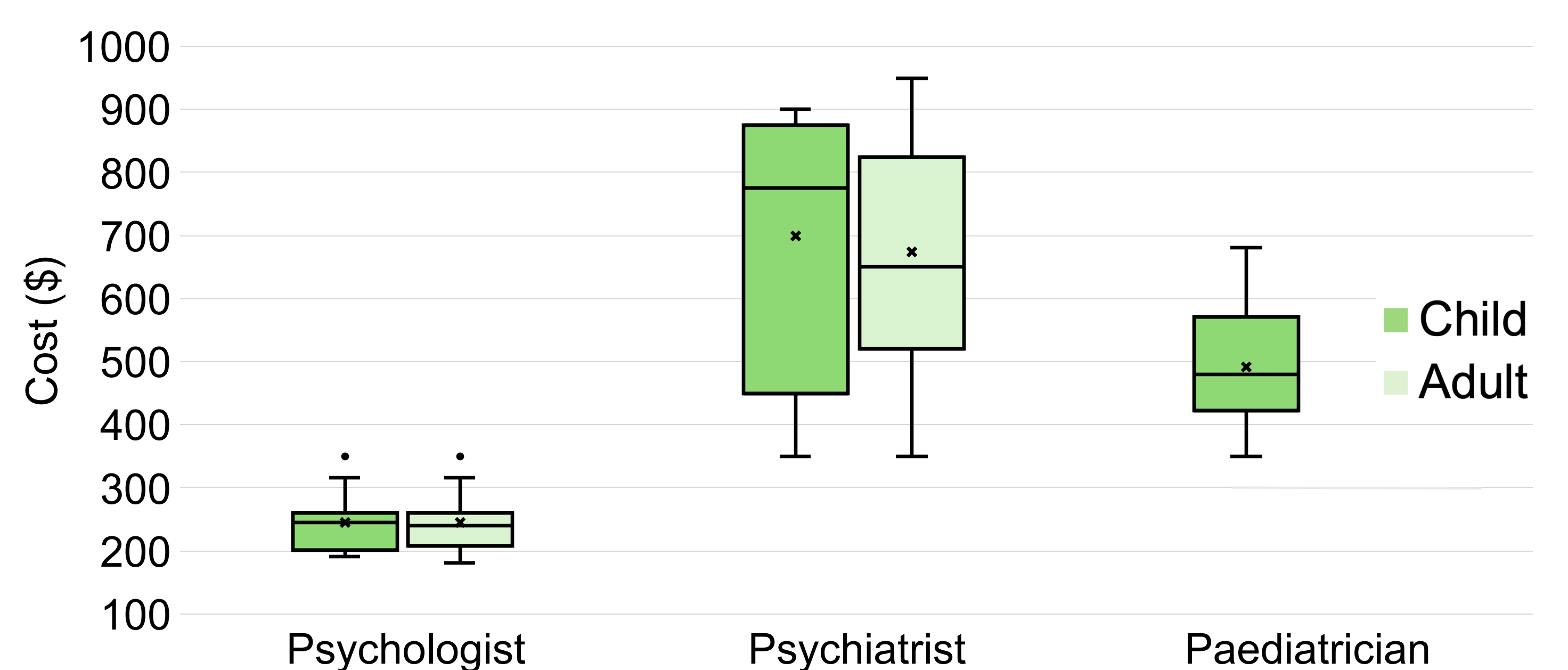


Results

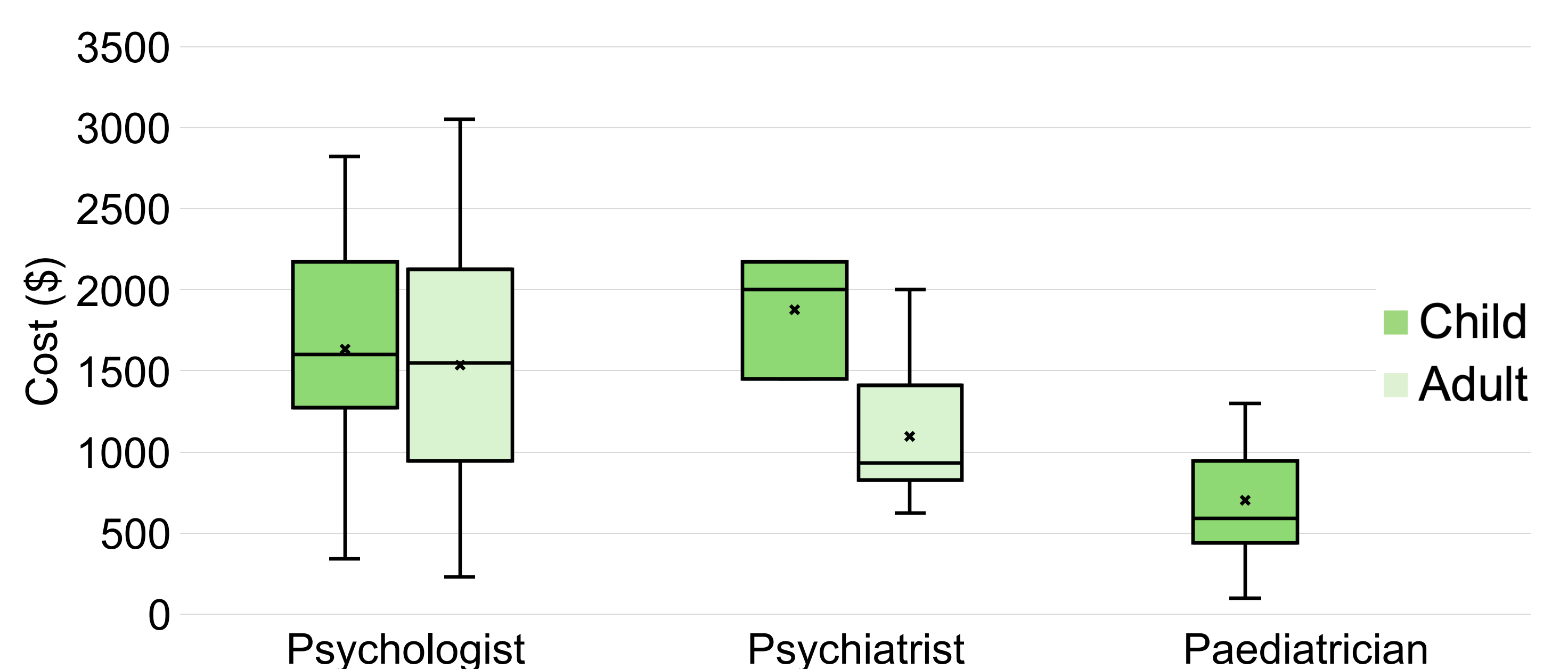
Wait Times



Average First Session Cost



Average Total Assessment Cost



*Cost data does not include rebates

Conclusions

Accessibility of AD/HD assessments relies on availability, workable wait times, and affordable costs. Longer wait times are associated with Outer Regional areas and for Paediatricians. First Session and Total Assessment costs notably vary between clinician types. Further research including all Australian states and territories is underway.



Clare O'Toole
cotoole@uow.edu.au
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/clare-o-7403571b6/>



John Finlayson
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-finlayson-35054729a/>

References

- 1 Australian Institute for Health and Welfare, 2023
- 2 Jobs and Skills Australia, 2023
- 3 Rankin et al., 2022



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA