

# Support soars for nurse practitioners

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Older people are more sceptical of them, but nurse practitioners are being embraced by the young and those in the workforce, according to results from a WA survey.

A poll of more than 600 people by Painted Dog Research for health insurer HBF and *The West Australian* shows about seven in 10 people would be happy to see nurse practitioners for most of their medical problems.

Men and those aged 25 to 44 were the most willing.

Since the Federal Government agreed to fund them from last November, nurse practitioners have been allowed to order diagnostic tests, prescribe drugs and offer patients a Medicare rebate.

Only a third of those surveyed said they would trust a diagnosis from a

nurse practitioner as much as one from a doctor, but bucking this trend were young people without children, with 54 per cent saying they would trust nurses just as much.

Asked if they would see a nurse practitioner if it was cheaper than seeing a doctor, half of people under the age of 45 agreed.

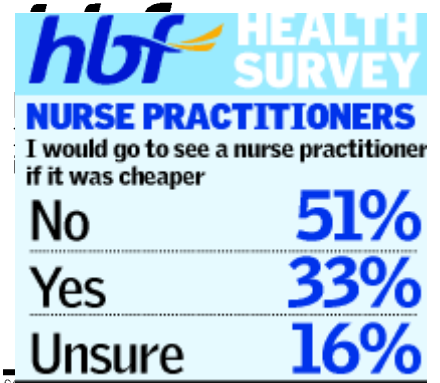
Nurse Clinton Fonceca, who runs one of the few full-time nurse practitioner clinics in Australia, said business was strong.

His pharmacy-based clinic in Hay Street saw about 20 patients a day, most of them young workers or people new to WA who did not have a family doctor.

Australian Medical Association WA president Dave Mountain said he was not surprised many people were

less trusting of a diagnosis from a nurse practitioner.

"Nurse practitioners have a role but generally people still want experienced practitioners," he said.



SOURCE: HBF HEALTH SURVEY 2011