The changing pattern of emergency medical evacuations from remote South Australia

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Much has been written about the changing nature of the workforce in rural and remote Australia with numerous references to issues relating to the fly-in/fly-out workforce. The Port Augusta Base of RFDS Central Operations has provided emergency primary medical evacuation services to remote South Australia since 1956 and over the last decade has conducted approximately 150 evacuations each year.

In the past decade there has been a significant shift in the make-up of the population living and working in remote SA and this paper will review the nature of emergency aero medical evacuations at the start of the decade and compare them with data collected in the last 12 months. Changes in patterns of evacuations will be discussed in the context of the changing demographics and consideration of the impact on future health service delivery requirements will be undertaken.

The data will cover the locations from which primary evacuations have taken place, the age and gender of the patient, the ICD-9 chapter heading diagnosis to describe the reason for the evacuation, the severity of the illness and the level of clinical care required.