

Admitted Patients

Hospital Quarterly:

Performance of
NSW public hospitals

January to March 2013

People are admitted to hospital for a variety of reasons, such as surgery, illness or childbirth. When a person is admitted to hospital, they begin what is termed an *'episode of care'*.

This covers a single type of care such as acute care, rehabilitation or palliative care. Sometimes, a change in the medical needs of a person can require that they start a second or third episode during the same period of stay in hospital.

Healthcare professionals monitor episodes to better understand local clinical needs and to allow planning for hospital beds, waiting lists and staffing.

The report shows there were 422,350 admitted patient episodes during January to March 2013, 9,639 (2%) more than the same quarter in 2012 and 25,673 (6%) more than the same quarter two years ago. The number of admitted patient

episodes in this quarter is slightly lower when compared with the October to December quarter, which is typical for this time of year.

Patients admitted for acute care or maternity and birth comprised 96% of all admitted episodes. More than half of these patients (55%) were admitted for one night or more (overnight admissions) and this percentage is largely unchanged over the past nine quarters. Patients stayed a total of 1,291,717 bed days during the quarter and, on average, each episode of care was 3.2 days. There were 17,806 babies born, down 2% from the same quarter one year ago.

This is one of three *Hospital Quarterly* modules. For the Emergency Departments and Elective Surgery modules visit www.bhi.nsw.gov.au

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During the quarter	Jan-Mar 2013	Jan-Mar 2012	The difference
Admitted patient episodes	422,350 episodes	412,711 episodes	+9,639 (+2%)
Admitted patient episodes considered to be planned	41% planned	41% planned	unchanged
Babies born	17,806 babies	18,186 babies	-380 (-2%)
Admitted patient episodes considered to be acute	96% acute	97% acute	-1 percentage point
Acute episodes that were overnight admissions	55% overnight	55% overnight	unchanged
Total bed days for acute admitted patient episodes	1,291,717 days	1,347,022 days	-55,305 (-4%)
Average length of stay for acute admitted patient episodes	3.2 days	3.4 days	-0.2 days (-6%)

Number of admitted patient episodes

Admitted patient episodes can be either **'planned'** (arranged in advance so the hospital can organise what care is needed) or **'unplanned / other'** (which include emergency admissions or unplanned surgical patients).

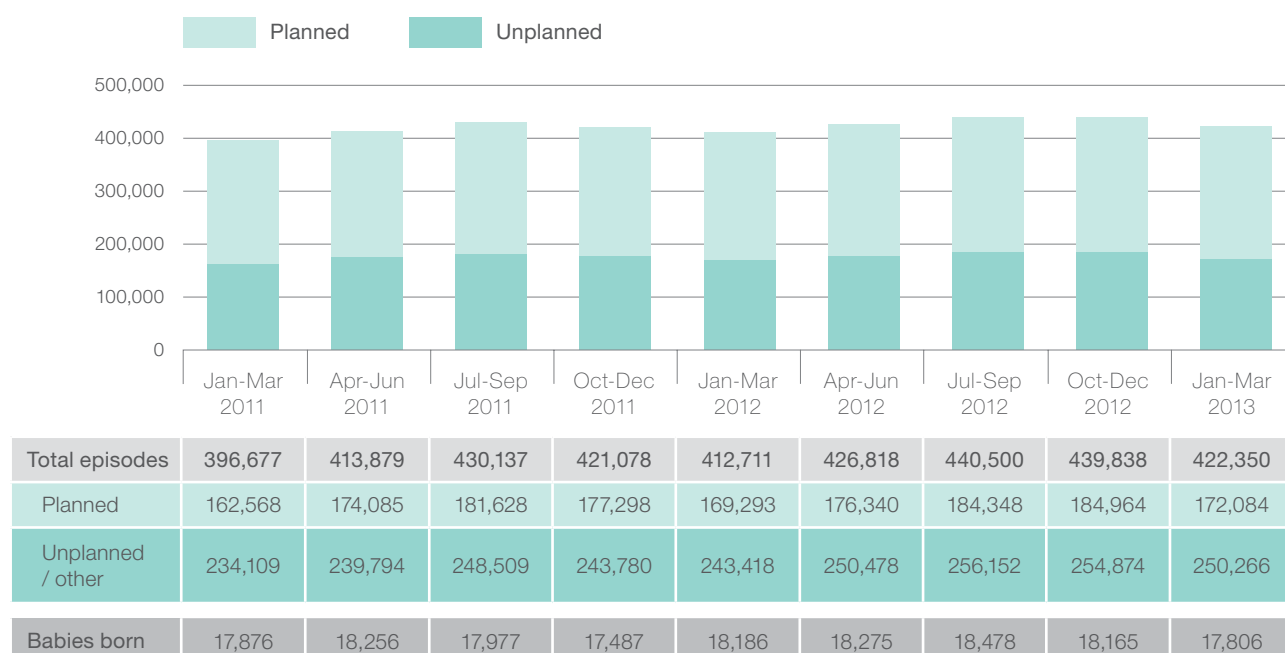
In the January to March 2013 quarter, there were 422,350 admitted patient episodes of care in NSW public hospitals, lower than the previous quarter. Each year there is a seasonal peak in the number of admitted patient episodes during the July to September quarter. The lowest number of admitted patient episodes usually occurs during the January to March quarter. **Figure 1** illustrates these seasonal patterns.

The number of admitted patient episodes in NSW public hospitals has increased over time, up from 412,711 episodes in the same quarter one year ago (2%) and from 396,677 episodes two years ago (6%).

During the quarter there were 172,084 planned admitted patient episodes and 162,293 were unplanned (**Figure 1**). Planned episodes accounted for 41% of all admitted patient episodes.

An admission for childbirth is considered **'unplanned'** and approximately one in every 14 unplanned episodes was for childbirth. During the quarter, there were 17,806 babies born in NSW public hospitals, down 2% from the same time one year ago.

Figure 1: Planned and unplanned admitted patient episodes in NSW public hospitals, January 2011 to March 2013



Note: Only babies born in NSW public hospitals and multi-purpose services are included in this count.

Note: Numbers might differ slightly from those reported in previous *Hospital Quarterly* reports and in the NSW Ministry of Health's *Quarterly Hospital Performance Report* due to differences in when data were extracted.

Source: NSW Health, *Health Information Exchange, Admitted Patient Data Collection*. Data extracted on 19 April 2013.

Number of acute patient episodes

Admitted patient episodes may be for acute care or subacute care (such as rehabilitation or palliative care). This section focuses on acute care, which is typically a short-term admission for immediate care. For this report, maternal and newborn admissions are also included under the category of acute episodes. Examples of acute care include hip replacement surgery and medical care following a heart attack. Acute episode activity is presented in [Figure 2](#).

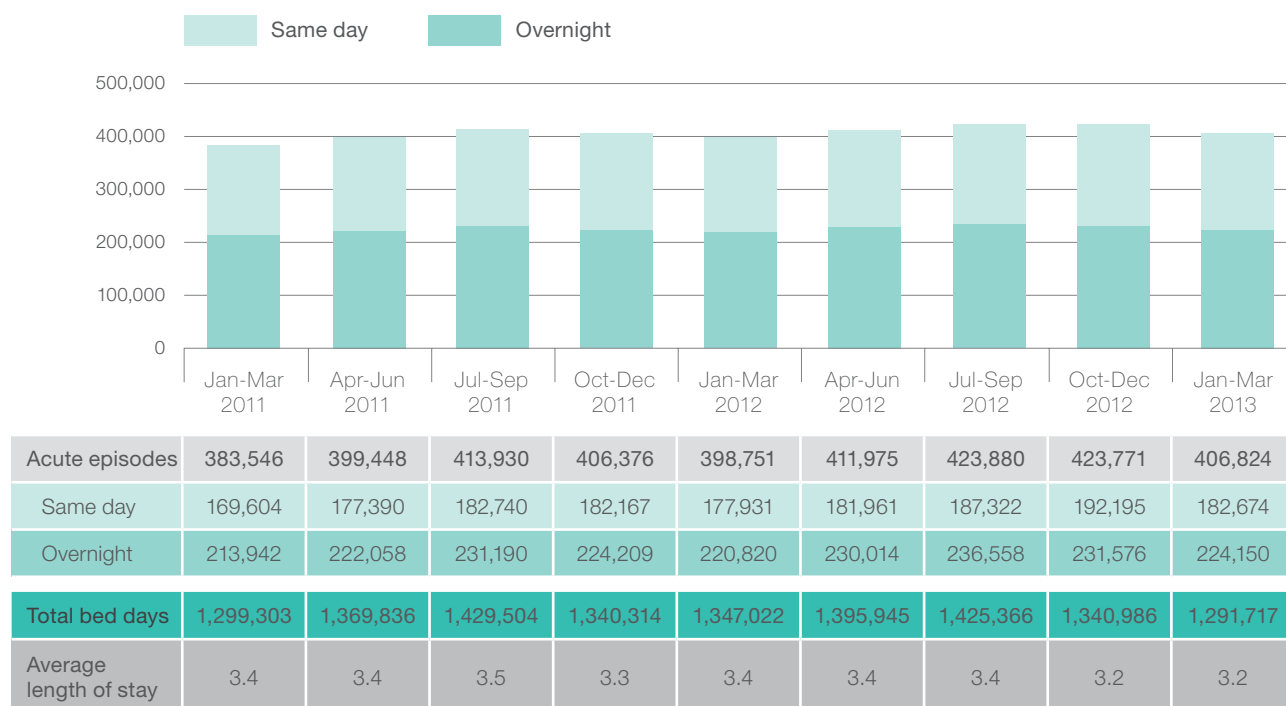
In the January to March 2013 quarter, there were 406,824 acute admitted patient episodes, down from 423,771 in the previous quarter.

The number of acute episodes in NSW public hospitals has been increasing for comparable quarters, up from 398,751 episodes (2%) in the same quarter one year ago and from 383,546 episodes (6%) two years ago.

Acute admitted patient episodes can be either **same day** (admitted for a single day or part of a day to have a test, to receive surgery or another procedure) or **overnight** (admitted for one or more nights in hospital).

During January to March, there were 182,674 same day episodes (45% of acute admitted episodes) and 224,150 overnight episodes (representing 55%) as shown in [Figure 2](#).

Figure 2: Same day and overnight acute admitted patient episodes in NSW public hospitals, January 2011 to March 2013



Note: Numbers might differ slightly from those reported in previous *Hospital Quarterly* reports and in the NSW Ministry of Health's *Quarterly Hospital Performance Report* due to differences in when data were extracted.

Source: NSW Health, *Health Information Exchange, Admitted Patient Data Collection*. Data extracted on 19 April 2013.

Hospital bed use for acute patients

Total acute bed days is the sum of all the lengths of time acute patients stayed in NSW hospitals. The number of acute bed days in NSW public hospitals has generally been increasing. This quarter there were 1,291,717 total acute bed days. This is 4% lower than the same quarter one year ago (1,347,022) and 1% lower than the same quarter two years ago (1,299,303).

Average length of stay is influenced by the different types of patients that a hospital provides care for.

The average length of stay for acute admitted patient episodes (including same day patients) decreased to 3.2 days during the January to March 2013 quarter, from 3.4 days in the same quarter a year ago and two years ago (Figure 2).

Appendix table 1a: activity by hospital and local health district

Appendix table 1a presents the admitted patient episode activity for public hospitals in NSW. Data are presented by local health district for all principal referral, paediatric specialist, ungrouped acute – tertiary referral, major and district groups 1 and 2 hospitals. Information from smaller hospitals is presented for each local health district under the ‘other’ category.

[Download activity by ‘local health district’ in a PDF file](#)

[Download activity by ‘local health district’ in an Excel file](#)

Appendix table 1b: activity by hospital and peer group

Appendix table 1b presents the admitted patient episode activity for public hospitals in NSW. Data are presented by peer group for all principal referral, paediatric specialist, ungrouped acute – tertiary referral, major and district groups 1 and 2 hospitals. Information from smaller hospitals is presented under the ‘other’ category.

[Download activity by ‘peer group’ in a PDF file](#)

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The Bureau of Health Information provides the community, healthcare professionals and the NSW Parliament with timely, accurate and comparable information on the performance of the NSW public health system in ways that enhance the system's accountability and inform efforts to increase its beneficial impact on the health and wellbeing of the people of NSW.

The Bureau is an independent, board-governed statutory health corporation. The conclusions in this report are those of the Bureau and no official endorsement by the NSW Minister for Health, the NSW Ministry of Health or any other NSW public health organisation is intended or should be inferred.

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Please note that there is the potential for minor revisions of data in this report. Please check the online version at www.bhi.nsw.gov.au for any amendments.