

Admitted Patients

Hospital Quarterly:

Performance of
NSW public hospitals

July to September 2012

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 439,602 admitted patient episodes during July to September 2012, 9,340 (2%) more than the same quarter in 2011 and 23,682 (6%) more than the same quarter two years ago. There has been an expected increase

in admitted episodes since the previous quarter due to the seasonal peak in the number of admissions during the July to September quarter.

Patients admitted for acute care or maternity and birth comprised 96% of all admitted episodes. More than half of these patients (56%) 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 1,425,888 bed days during the quarter and, on average, each episode of care was 3.4 days. There were 18,483 babies born, up 3% 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	Jul-Sep 2012	Jul-Sep 2011	The difference
Admitted patient episodes	439,602 episodes	430,262 episodes	+9,340 (+2%)
Admitted patient episodes considered to be planned	42% planned	42% planned	unchanged
Babies born	18,483 babies	17,982 babies	+501 (+3%)
Admitted patient episodes considered to be acute	96% acute	96% acute	unchanged
Acute episodes that were overnight admissions	56% overnight	56% overnight	unchanged
Total bed days for acute admitted patient episodes	1,425,888 days	1,429,914 days	unchanged
Average length of stay for acute admitted patient episodes	3.4 days	3.5 days	-0.1 days (-3%)

Number of admitted patient episodes

In the July to September 2012 quarter, there were 439,602 admitted patient episodes of care in NSW public hospitals, up from 426,942 in the last 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 occurs during the January to March quarter. These seasonal patterns are illustrated in [Figure 1](#).

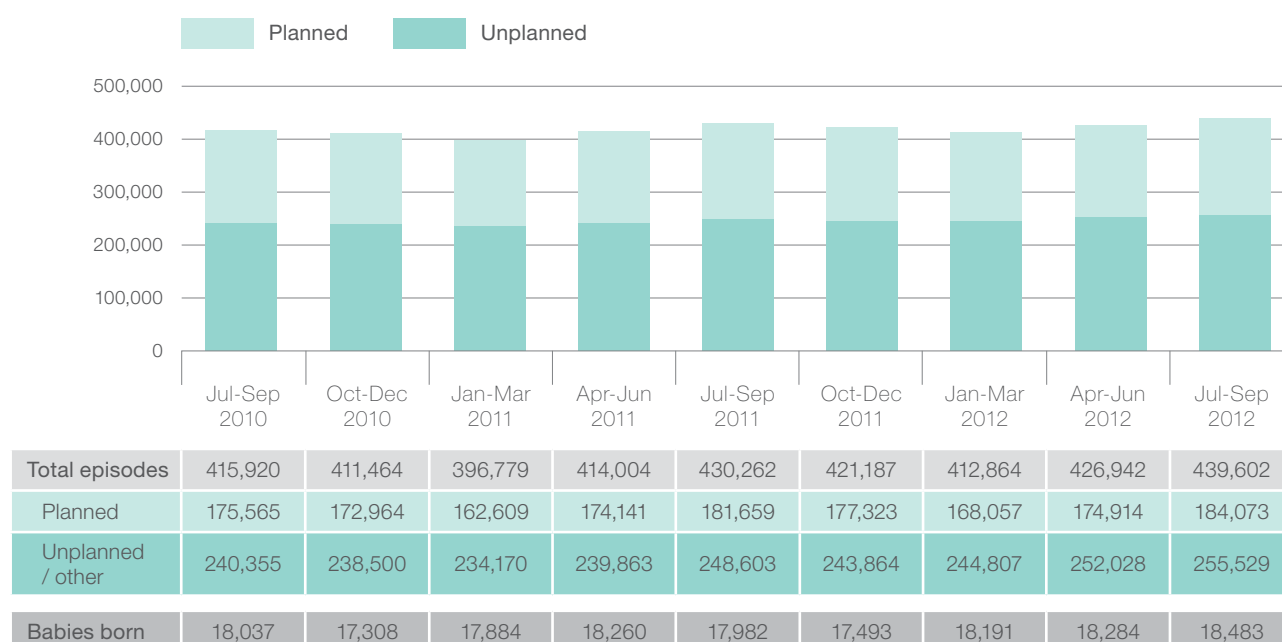
The number of admitted patient episodes in NSW public hospitals has increased over time, up from 430,262 episodes in the same quarter one year ago (2%) and from 415,920 episodes two years ago (6%).

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).

During the quarter there were 184,073 planned admitted patient episodes and 255,529 were unplanned ([Figure 1](#)). Planned episodes accounted for 42% 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 18,483 babies born in NSW public hospitals, up 3% from the same time one year ago.

Figure 1: Planned and unplanned admitted patient episodes in NSW public hospitals, July 2010 to September 2012



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: Admitted Patient Data Collection. Health Information Exchange, NSW Health. Data extracted on 19 October 2012.

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](#).

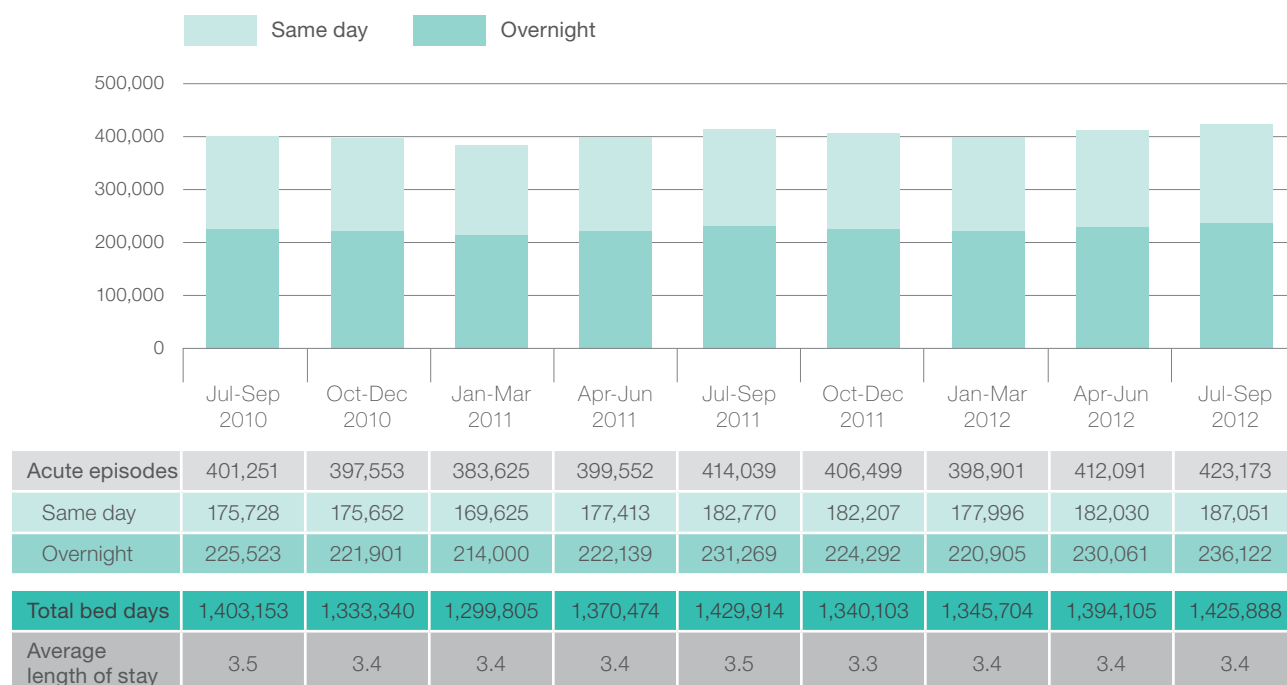
In the July to September 2012 quarter, there were 423,173 acute admitted patient episodes, up from 412,091 in the last quarter. The number of

acute episodes in NSW public hospitals has been increasing for comparable quarters, up from 414,039 episodes (2%) in the same quarter one year ago and from 401,251 episodes (5%) 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 July to September, there were 187,051 same day episodes (44% of acute admitted episodes) and 236,122 overnight episodes (representing 56%) as shown in [Figure 2](#).

Figure 2: Same day and overnight acute admitted patient episodes in NSW public hospitals, July 2010 to September 2012



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: Admitted Patient Data Collection. Health Information Exchange, NSW Health. Data extracted on 19 October 2012.

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 1,425,888 total acute bed days. This is similar to the same quarter one year ago (1,429,914) but 2% higher than the same quarter two years ago (1,403,153).

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) has remained largely unchanged over the past two years at about 3.4 days (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.

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.

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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.