

Snapshot



Adults admitted to rural hospitals

Results from the 2019–20 patient survey





We heard from almost **4,500 people** about their experiences as admitted patients in small, rural public hospitals in NSW in 2019–20



Small hospitals in rural and regional areas are part of a network of services that provide care and treatment for people in their own communities. Understanding peoples' experiences of healthcare in these hospitals helps health professionals to identify where and how improvements can be made.

The results of the Rural Hospital Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2019–20 reflect the experiences of 4,487 adult patients who were admitted to one of 98 small, rural public hospitals in NSW from July 2019 to June 2020.

Information for all 98 hospitals contributes to the NSW and LHD-level results. Results for the 55 hospitals where enough responses were received to report at the hospital level are available in the supplementary data tables and on the Bureau of Health Information's (BHI's) interactive data portal, Healthcare Observer, at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Small, rural hospitals tend to see more patients aged 50+ years, with this group generally more likely to respond to a formal survey invitation. Of those hospitals surveyed in 2019–20, patients aged 50+ made up 84% of the total number of sampled patients, and 94% of total survey respondents.

More information on survey respondent characteristics can be found in the technical supplement to this report on BHI's website.

Overall ratings of care: Almost all patients (95%) said, overall, the care they received was 'very good' (78%) or 'good' (17%). More than seven in 10 patients (76%) said the care was 'very well organised'. When asked how well health professionals worked together, seven in 10 patients (70%) said 'very good' (pages 4–5).

Experiences of care: Around nine in 10 patients (91%) said they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity. Around eight in 10 patients (82%) said health professionals 'always' explained things in a way they could understand (pages 8–9).

Discharge and continuity of care: More than seven in 10 patients (76%) said they 'definitely' felt involved in decisions about their discharge. Eight in 10 patients (80%) said they were given 'completely' enough information to manage their care at home (pages 10–11).

Overall, **95%** of patients rated their care as



'very good'

78%

'good'

17%

Overall ratings of care

Overall ratings of care measure patients' satisfaction with their experience, from admission through to discharge and recovery. Patients who were admitted to small, rural hospitals in NSW gave high overall ratings of their care.

Almost all patients (95%) said, overall, the care they received was 'very good' (78%) or 'good' (17%) (Figure 1a).

More than seven in 10 patients (76%) said the care they received was 'very well organised' (Figure 1b).

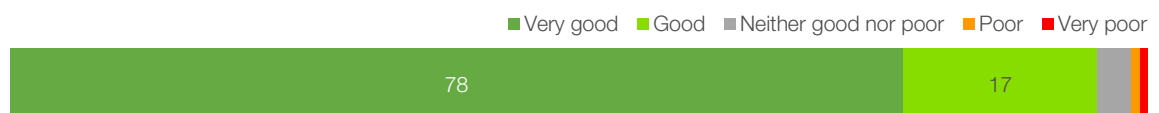
When asked to rate how well health professionals worked together, seven in 10 patients (70%) said 'very good'. (Figure 1c).

Almost eight in 10 patients (78%) said, overall, the health professionals who treated them were 'very good' (data not shown).

Some patient groups tend to respond more positively to surveys. This means that hospitals with higher proportions of patients with these characteristics tend to have higher patient experience ratings. To enable a fairer comparison across hospitals, BHI has taken into account differences in patient characteristics (age and sex) at each hospital. Therefore, when a hospital is flagged as having a significantly higher or lower result than NSW, this is more likely to reflect differences in patient experiences and less likely to reflect differences in the hospital's patient mix. For further details, please see the survey's technical supplement at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Figure 1 **Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2019–20**

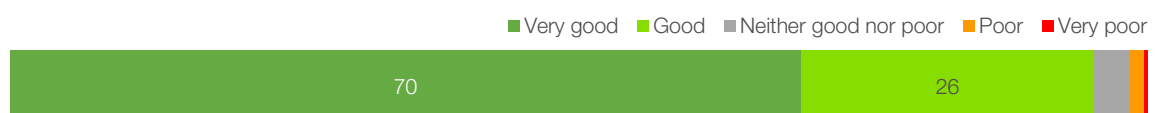
a. Overall, how would you rate the care you received while in hospital?



b. How well organised was the care you received in hospital?



c. How would you rate how well the health professionals worked together?



Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

When patients were asked about the health professionals who cared for them...

78%

rated them, overall, as **'very good'**



Best part of care...

“

The care and compassion given by the doctor, nursing staff and the friendly kitchen staff.

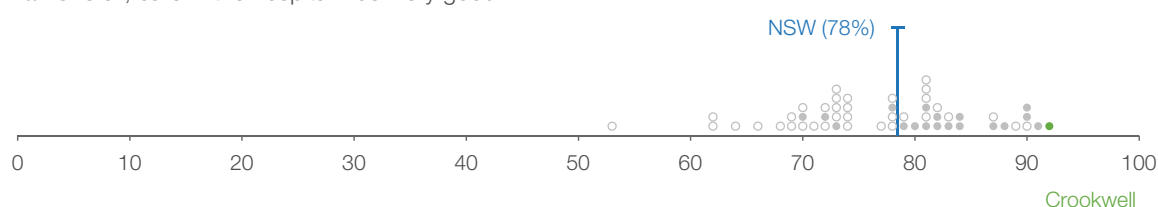
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In the figures below, each dot represents an individual hospital's result. After accounting for patient characteristics, hospitals whose results are significantly different from NSW are listed below the graph in order from lowest to highest. Detailed results for hospitals where enough responses were received to report at the hospital level are available in Healthcare Observer and the supplementary data tables at bhi.nsw.gov.au

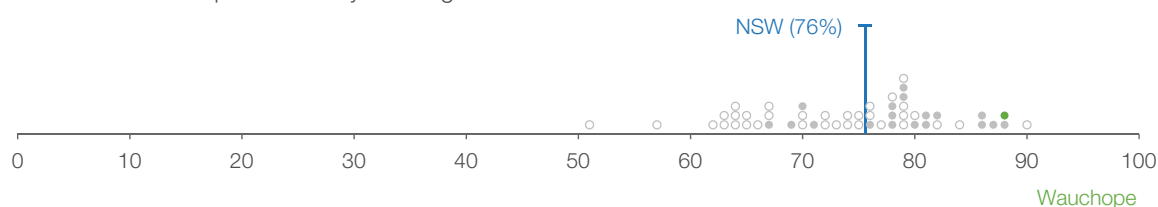
Figure 2 **Percentage of patients in each hospital who selected the most positive response option, 2019–20**

Hospital result relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher ○ Interpret with caution

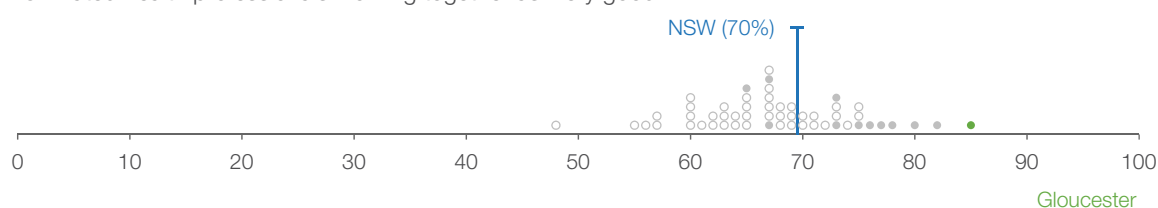
a. Overall, care in the hospital was 'very good'



b. Care in the hospital was 'very well' organised



c. Rated health professionals working together as 'very good'



Note: A hospital is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or significantly lower than NSW for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age and sex) have been taken into account. Due to greater variability in hospital results with fewer respondents, hospitals marked interpret with caution are not compared with the NSW result.



Around two in 10 patients (22%) said they were transferred from a larger hospital to a small, rural hospital



Of these patients...

93%

said the transfer benefitted them

86%

said it happened at the right time

Best part of care...

“

The staff were very understanding, helpful with organising my clothing and calming as I was very upset due to the sudden transfer.

”

What could improve...

“

I didn't know when the transfer was happening. It ended up being Saturday evening and I felt a bit confused when I got there.

”

Experiences of care

Being informed about their care and involved in decisions can help patients feel supported during their journey of care and can contribute to better health outcomes.

Around nine in 10 patients (91%) said they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity (Figure 3a).

Around eight in 10 patients (82%) said health professionals 'always' explained things in a way they could understand (Figure 3b).

Almost nine in 10 patients (88%) said they were provided the 'right amount' of information about their condition or treatment while in hospital. However, around one in 10 patients (12%) said they did not receive enough information about their condition or treatment (Figure 3c).

Around six in 10 patients (63%) said they were 'always' involved, as much as they wanted to be, in their treatment and care. Almost seven in 10 patients (68%) said their views and concerns were 'always' listened to (data not shown).

Figure 3 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2019–20

a. Did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the hospital?



b. Did the health professionals explain things in a way you could understand?



c. During your stay in the hospital, how much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?



Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

What could improve...

“

Additional nursing staff could help current staff to spend more time with patients.

”

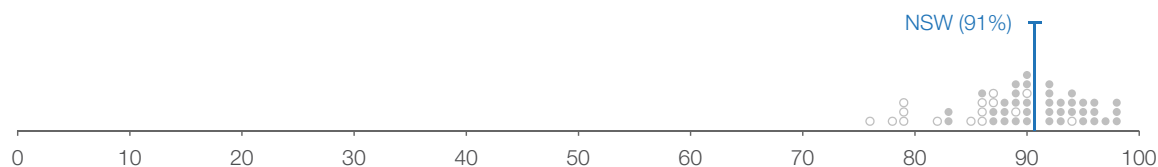
Almost seven in 10 patients (68%) said they were 'always' listened to when expressing their views and concerns



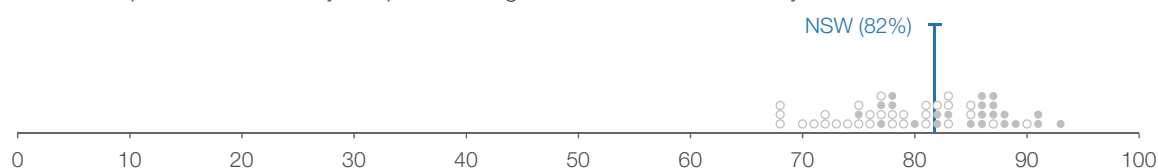
Figure 4 Percentage of patients in each hospital who selected the most positive response option, 2019–20

Hospital result relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher ○ Interpret with caution

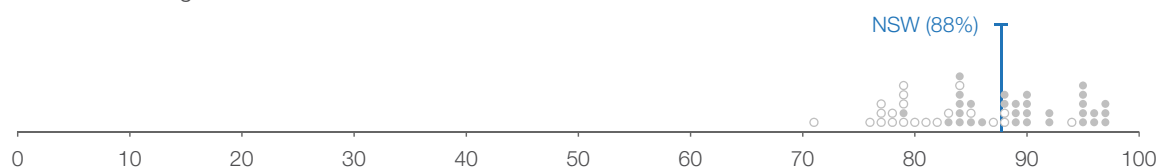
a. 'Always' treated with respect and dignity



b. Health professionals 'always' explained things in an understandable way



c. Given the 'right amount' of information on condition and treatment



Note: A hospital is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or significantly lower than NSW for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age and sex) have been taken into account. Due to greater variability in hospital results with fewer respondents, hospitals marked interpret with caution are not compared with the NSW result.

Experiences at discharge and continuity of care

The survey also captured patients' experiences of care at discharge and once they left the hospital.

Around nine in 10 patients (92%) said they wanted to be involved in decisions about their discharge. Of these patients, more than seven in 10 (76%) said they 'definitely' felt involved (Figure 5a).

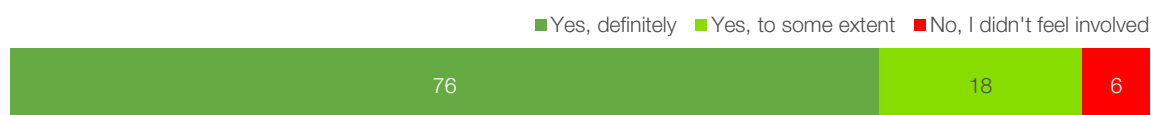
Around eight in 10 patients (83%) said they needed information about how to manage their care at home. Of these patients, eight in 10 (80%) said they were given 'completely' enough information (Figure 5b).

Around seven in 10 patients (71%) said they saw a health professional in their rural community after being discharged from hospital. Of these patients, almost eight in 10 (79%) said those health professionals were up to date about the care they received in hospital (Figure 5c).

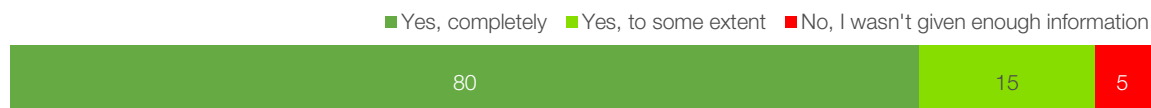
Patients were also asked if they received any telehealth services in the three months following discharge from hospital. Around one in 10 (13%) said they did and, of these patients, around nine in 10 (92%) said they benefitted from the services (data not shown).

Figure 5 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2019–20

a. Did you feel involved in decisions about your discharge from the hospital?*



b. Thinking about when you left the hospital, were you given enough information about how to manage your care at home?**



c. After you left the hospital and went home, were the health professionals you saw in your rural community up to date about the care you received in the hospital?***



* Based on responses from 4,011 patients (92%), excluding those who did not want or need to be involved in decisions about discharge.

** Based on responses from 3,568 patients (83%), excluding those who said they did not need information on how to manage care at home.

*** Based on responses from 3,012 patients (71%), excluding those who said they did not see a health professional in the community after discharge.

Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Of the 13% of patients provided telehealth services in the three months following discharge...



More than nine in 10 (92%) said these services benefitted them

What could improve...

“

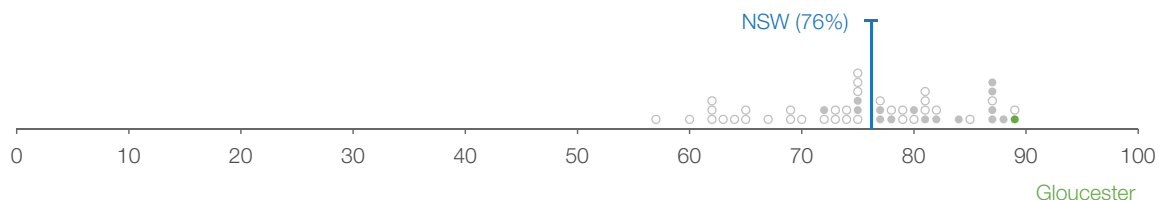
More communication between staff and patients, home aftercare, communication with family members and follow-up from the hospital.

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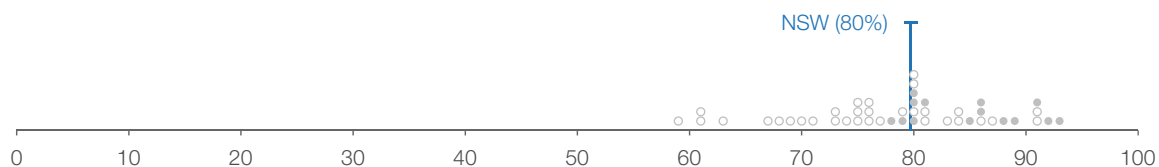
Figure 6 Percentage of patients in each hospital who selected the most positive response option, 2019–20

Hospital result relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher ○ Interpret with caution

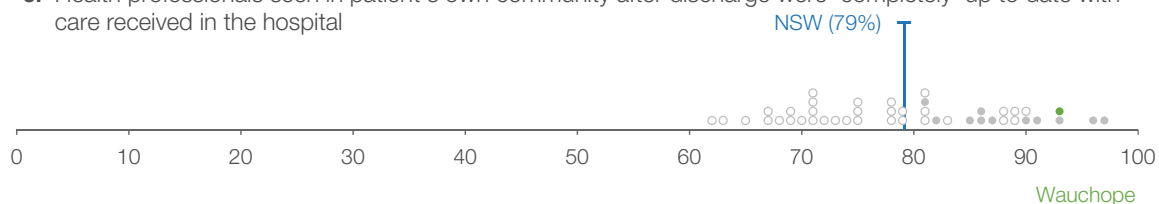
a. 'Definitely' felt involved in decisions about discharge



b. Given 'completely' enough information to manage care at home



c. Health professionals seen in patient's own community after discharge were 'completely' up to date with care received in the hospital



Note: A hospital is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or significantly lower than NSW for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age and sex) have been taken into account. Due to greater variability in hospital results with fewer respondents, hospitals marked interpret with caution are not compared with the NSW result.

Healthcare Observer

Healthcare Observer is the Bureau of Health Information's (BHI's) online interactive data portal which lets you explore and download information about the performance of the NSW healthcare system.

Full results from the Rural Hospital Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2019–20 are available at bhi.nsw.gov.au/Healthcare_Observer



Adult Admitted Patient Survey



Emergency Department Patient Survey



Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey



Admitted Children and Young Patients Survey



Maternity Care Survey



Rural Hospital Adult Admitted Patient Survey



Rural Hospital Emergency Care Patient Survey

NSW Patient Survey Program

Each month we ask thousands of people in NSW to tell us about their recent experience with the public healthcare system as part of the NSW Patient Survey Program.

The surveys ask people questions about different aspects of their care such as accessibility and timeliness, the physical environment of the hospital, safety and hygiene, communication and information, and whether they were treated with respect and dignity.

Further information about our surveys can be found at bhi.nsw.gov.au/nsw_patient_survey_program

About the Bureau of Health Information

BHI is a board-governed organisation that publishes independent reports and information about the performance of the healthcare system in NSW.

We aim to provide the community, health professionals and policy makers with information that enhances visibility and understanding of the performance of the healthcare system, in order to inform actions to improve healthcare and strengthen accountability.

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The conclusions in this report are those of BHI 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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