



Results from the 2018–19 patient survey

Emergency department

More than 18,000 people told us about their experiences of care in emergency departments in NSW public hospitals

Emergency departments (EDs) aim to provide patients with access to high quality care in their time of need.

The results of the Emergency Department Patient Survey 2018–19 reflect the experiences of 18,086 patients who attended one of 77 large EDs in NSW public hospitals from August 2018 to June 2019. Results for individual hospitals are available in the supplementary data tables for this survey and on the Bureau of Health Information (BHI's) interactive data portal, Healthcare Observer, at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Overall ratings of care: More than eight in 10 patients (87%) said, overall, the care they received was 'very good' (58%) or 'good' (29%). Around nine in 10 patients (92%) said, overall, they would rate ED health professionals as 'very good' (65%) or 'good' (27%) (pages 2–3).

Experiences of care: More than eight in 10 patients (84%) said they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity. Almost eight in 10 patients (79%) said they were 'always' given enough privacy (pages 4–5).

Patient engagement: Eight in 10 patients (80%) said ED health professionals 'always' explained things in an understandable way. More than six in 10 patients (65%) said they were 'definitely' involved, as much as they wanted to be, in decisions about their care and treatment (pages 6–7).

Experiences at discharge and patient outcomes: Around seven in 10 patients (71%) said they 'definitely' felt involved in decisions about their discharge. One in 10 patients (10%) said they experienced at least one complication or problem related to their ED visit (pages 8–9).

Differences in ratings of care by patient group: Patient groups who tended to report less positive experiences of care included Aboriginal people and those with a mental health condition (pages 10–11).

Overall, patients rated their care as

'very good'

58%

'good'

29%



Overall ratings of care

Overall ratings of care provide valuable insight into the broad range of experiences patients have when they visit the ED.

Almost six in 10 patients (58%) said, overall, the care they received was 'very good' (Figure 1a). This was down from 59% in 2017–18. Results ranged from 44% to 84% across EDs (Figure 2a).

More than six in 10 patients (65%) said, overall, they would rate the ED health professionals who treated them as 'very good' (Figure 1b). This was unchanged from 2017–18. Results ranged from 50% to 83% across EDs (Figure 2b).

More than five in 10 patients (55%) rated the way ED health professionals worked together as 'very good' (Figure 1c). This was down from 56% in 2017–18. Results ranged from 40% to 76% across EDs (Figure 2c).

Some patient groups tend to respond more positively to surveys. This means that EDs with higher proportions of patients with these characteristics tend to have higher patient experience ratings. To enable fairer comparisons across EDs, BHI has taken characteristics of EDs' patients (age, sex, education and language spoken at home) into account. Therefore, when an ED 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 ED'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, 2018–19

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



b. Overall, how would you rate the ED health professionals who treated you?



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



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



Almost seven in 10 patients (69%) said they would 'speak highly' of their hospital experience if asked by friends and family.

Best part of care...

“

The doctor was very friendly and caring... I felt as though I was really being listened to and given the correct information.

”

In the figures below, each dot represents an individual ED's result. After accounting for patient characteristics, EDs with results significantly different from NSW are listed below the graph in order from lowest to highest. Detailed results for all hospitals are available in Healthcare Observer at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Figure 2

Percentage of patients in each emergency department who selected the most positive response option, 2018–19

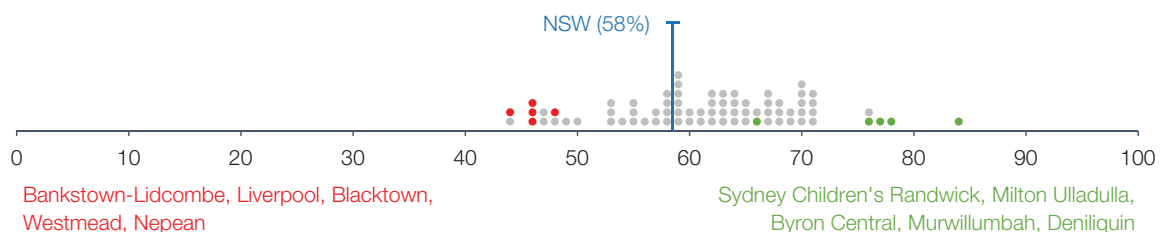
ED result relative to NSW:

• Significantly lower

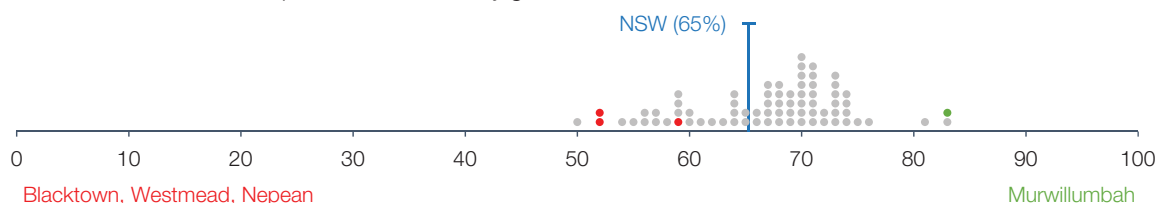
• Not significantly different

• Significantly higher

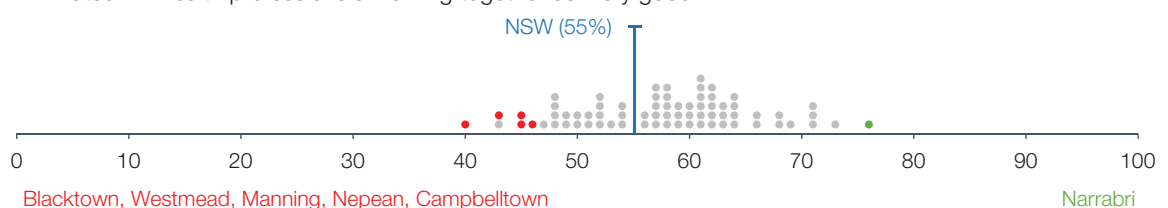
a. Overall, care in the ED was 'very good'



b. Would rate ED health professionals as 'very good'



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



Note: An ED is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or significantly lower than the NSW result for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age, sex, education and language spoken at home) have been taken into account.

Experiences of care

Patients shared their experiences about different aspects of their care and treatment in the ED, including how health professionals treated them and if they were given enough privacy.

More than eight in 10 patients (84%) said they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity in the ED (Figure 3a). This was down from 85% in 2017–18. Results ranged from 76% to 92% across hospitals (Figure 4a).

Almost eight in 10 patients (79%) said they were 'always' given enough privacy while they were in the ED (Figure 3b). This was up from 78% in 2017–18. Results ranged from 61% to 94% across EDs (Figure 4b).

More than eight in 10 patients (85%) said ED health professionals were 'always' polite and courteous (Figure 3c). This was down from 86% in 2017–18. Results ranged from 71% to 94% across EDs (Figure 4c).

Figure 3 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2018–19

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



▼ Down from 85% in 2017–18

b. Were you given enough privacy during your visit to the ED?



▲ Up from 78% in 2017–18

c. Were the ED health professionals polite and courteous?



▼ Down from 86% in 2017–18

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

What could improve...

“

The biggest problem was a lack of communication... it made it very hard to know how long to wait or what the process was going to be.

”



Less than half of patients (48%) said that when they arrived, they were given 'completely' enough information about what to expect during their visit to the ED.

Figure 4

Percentage of patients in each emergency department who selected the most positive response option, 2018–19

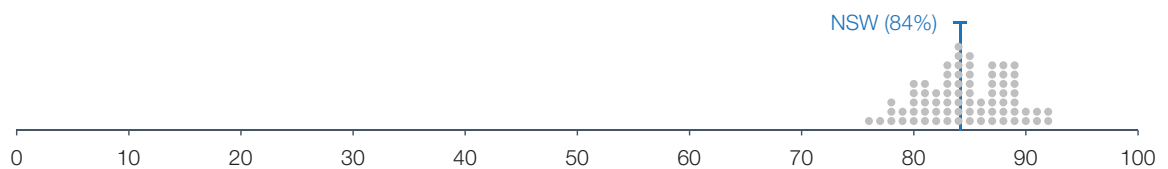
ED result relative to NSW:

• Significantly lower

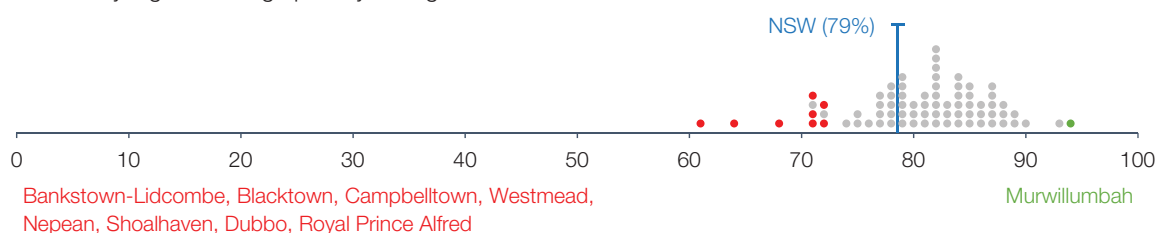
• Not significantly different

• Significantly higher

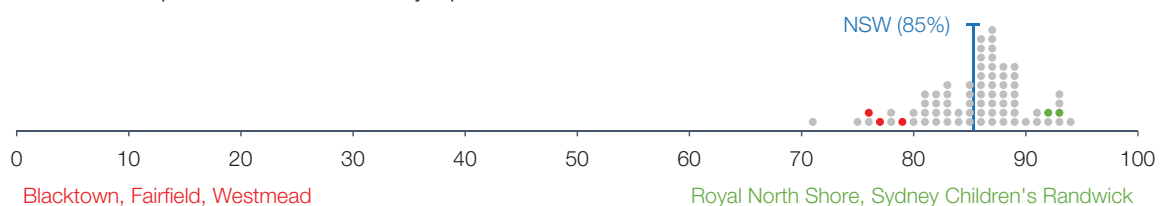
a. 'Always' treated with respect and dignity while in the ED*



b. 'Always' given enough privacy during visit to the ED



c. ED health professionals were 'always' polite and courteous



*There were no EDs that had a significantly higher or lower result than NSW for this measure.

Note: An ED is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or significantly lower than NSW for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age, sex, education and language spoken at home) have been taken into account.

Patient engagement

Patients were asked whether they and their families understood, and were involved in, the care and treatment they received in the ED.

Eight in 10 patients (80%) said ED health professionals 'always' explained things in a way they could understand (Figure 5a). This was down from 81% in 2017–18. Results ranged from 69% to 91% across EDs (Figure 6a).

Almost all patients (96%) said they needed information about their condition or treatment. Of these patients, more than eight in 10 (84%) said ED health professionals gave them the 'right amount' of information about their condition or treatment (Figure 5b). This was down from 87% in 2017–18. Results ranged from 75% to 94% across EDs (Figure 6b).

More than nine in 10 patients (94%) said they wanted to be involved in decisions about their care and treatment. Of those patients, more than six in 10 (65%) said they were 'definitely' involved as much as they wanted to be (Figure 5c). This was down from 66% in 2017–18. Results ranged from 55% to 83% across EDs (Figure 6c).

Less than two in 10 patients (18%) said they received contradictory information about their condition or treatment from ED health professionals (data not shown).

Figure 5 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2018–19

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



b. How much information about your condition or treatment was given to you by ED health professionals?*



c. Were you involved, as much as you wanted to be, in decisions about your care and treatment?*

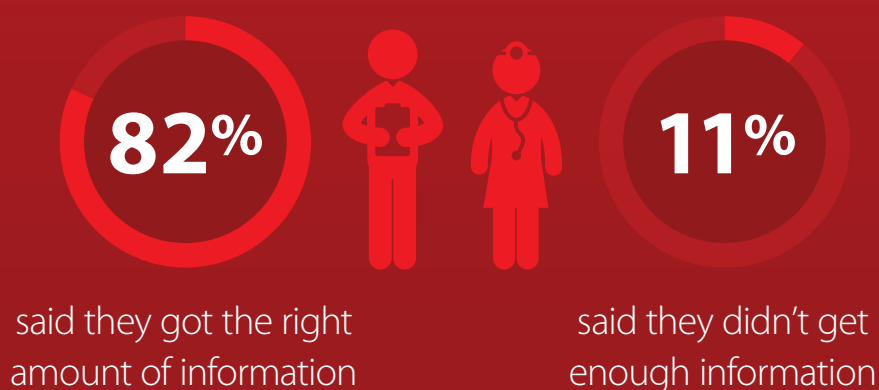


* Based on responses from 96% of patients, excluding those who said they did not need information.

** Based on responses from 94% of patients, excluding those who did not want or were too unwell to be involved in decisions about their care and treatment

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

Of the almost 70% of patients who said their family or carer wanted information from ED health professionals...



Note: 1% of patients said their family received too much information and 6% said they didn't know or could not say.

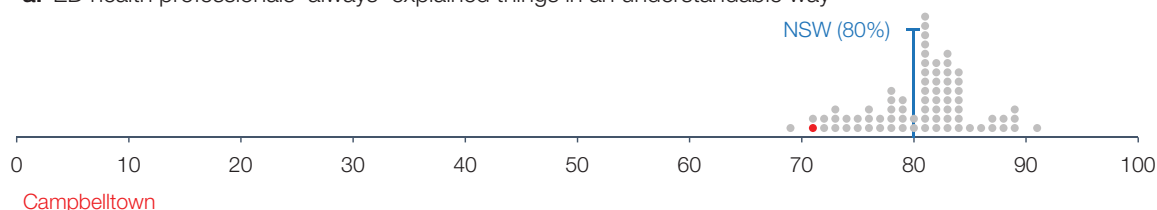
Best part of care...

“The nurses were courteous to my family and answered, or tried to answer, any questions we had.”

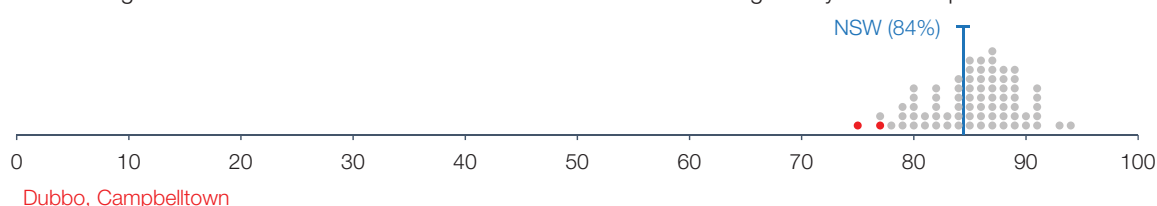
Figure 6 Percentage of patients in each emergency department who selected the most positive response option, 2018–19

ED result relative to NSW: • Significantly lower • Not significantly different • Significantly higher

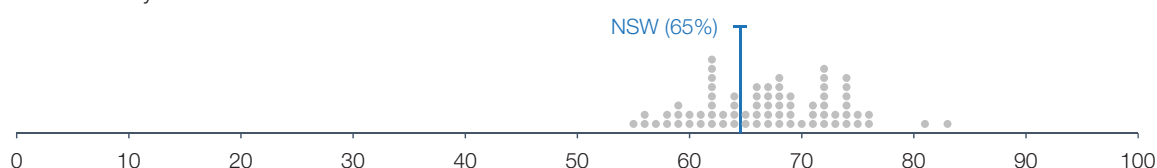
a. ED health professionals 'always' explained things in an understandable way



b. The 'right amount' of information about condition or treatment was given by ED health professionals



c. 'Definitely' involved in decisions about care and treatment*



*There were no EDs that had a significantly higher or lower result than NSW for this measure.

Note: An ED is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or significantly lower than NSW for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age, sex, education and language spoken at home) have been taken into account.

Experiences at discharge and patient outcomes

Patients were asked about their experiences at discharge and outcomes after leaving the ED.

Around nine in 10 patients (93%) said they wanted to be involved in decisions about their discharge from the ED. Of these patients, around seven in 10 (71%) said they 'definitely' felt involved in decisions about discharge (Figure 7a). This was down from 72% in 2017–18. Results ranged from 49% to 88% across EDs (Figure 8a).

Almost all patients (95%) said they needed information on how to manage their care at home. Of these patients, almost seven in 10 (69%) said they were 'definitely' given enough information about how to manage their care when they left the ED (Figure 7b). This was down from 71% in 2017–18. Results ranged from 57% to 84% across EDs (Figure 8b).

Around eight in 10 patients (83%) said ED staff told them who to contact if they were worried about their condition or treatment after they left the hospital (Figure 7c). This was down from 84% in 2017–18. Results ranged from 74% to 92% across EDs (Figure 8c).

Patients may experience complications or problems during or shortly after their visit to hospital. One in 10 patients (10%) said they experienced at least one complication or problem related to their stay. This was up from 9% in 2017–18. The most common complications or problems reported by patients were infection (3%), negative reaction to medication (1%), falls (1%), complication from tests/procedures (1%), uncontrolled bleeding (1%) and blood clot (1%) (data not shown).

Figure 7 Percentage of discharged patients in NSW, all response options, 2018–19

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



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



c. Did ED staff tell you who to contact if you were worried about your condition or treatment after you left hospital?



* Based on responses from 93% of patients, excluding those who did not want or were too unwell to be involved in decisions about discharge.

** Based on responses from 95% of patients, excluding those who said they did not want or need information about how to manage care at home.

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

What could improve...

“

The information provided by the doctor that discharged us was a little vague. I needed to go to my GP after the visit to clear up some information I needed in regards to my ongoing care.

”



Of the 10% of patients who said they experienced a complication or problem related to their stay...

41%

said staff were 'completely' open with them about it

21%

said its impact was 'very serious'

Figure 8

Percentage of patients in each emergency department who selected the most positive response option, 2018–19

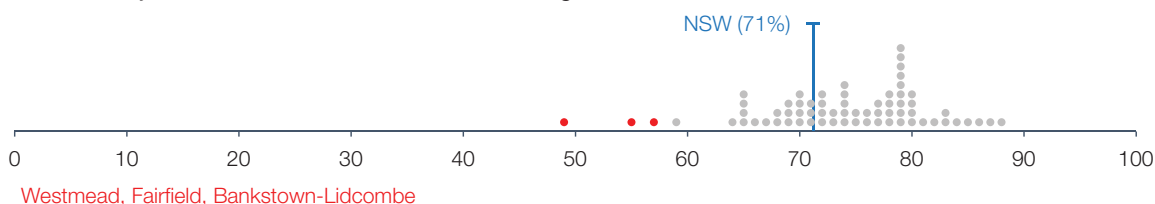
ED result relative to NSW:

• Significantly lower

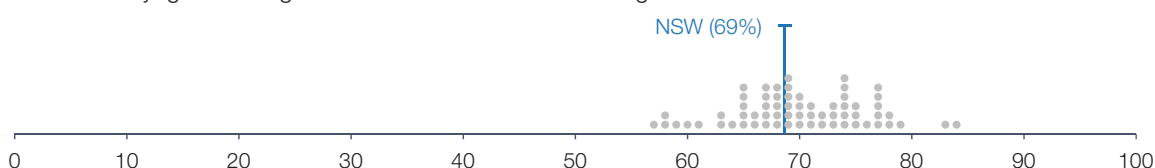
• Not significantly different

• Significantly higher

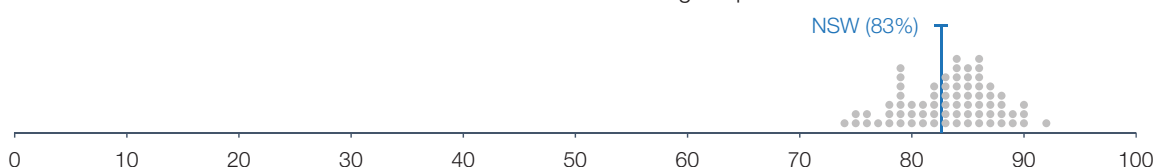
a. 'Definitely' felt involved in decisions about discharge



b. 'Definitely' given enough information about how to manage care at home*



c. Told who to contact about condition or treatment after leaving hospital*



*There were no EDs that had a significantly higher or lower result than NSW for this measure.

Note: An ED is noted as having a result that is significantly lower than NSW for a question after differences in patient characteristics (age, sex, education and language spoken at home) have been taken into account.

Differences in ratings of care by patient group

An equitable health system provides fair access to quality healthcare, allowing everyone the opportunity to reach their full health potential.

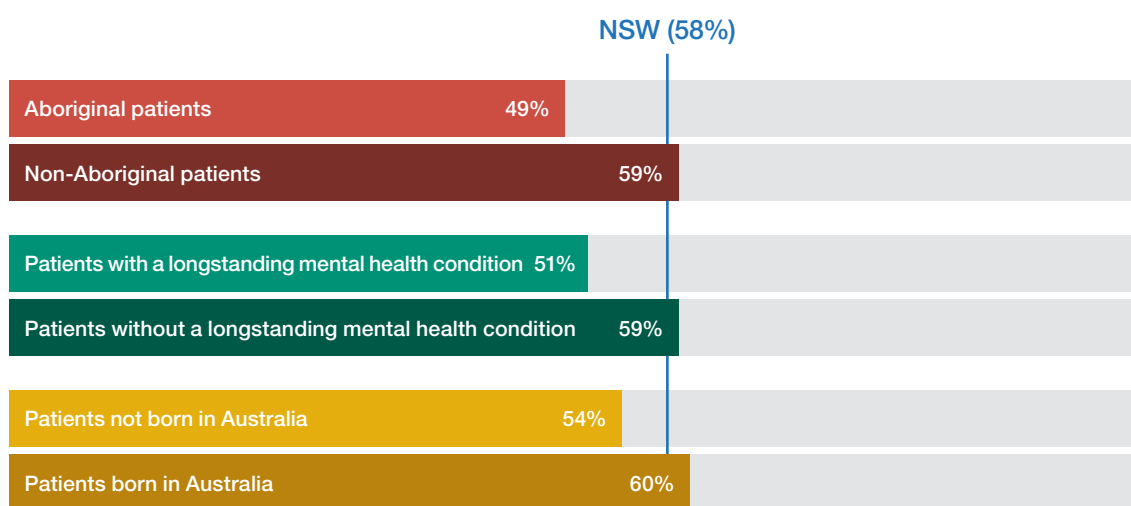
These survey results show that some patient groups reported less positive experiences in EDs. Differences in reported experiences between patient groups may reflect differences in the quality of care, or in the way groups tend to respond to survey questions. In either case, awareness of differences in experiences may help health professionals tailor their care.

In 2018–19, 535 Aboriginal people responded to the Emergency Department Patient Survey. Aboriginal people tended to report less positive experiences than non-Aboriginal people. Almost five in 10 Aboriginal people (49%) rated their overall care as ‘very good’ compared with almost six in 10 (59%) non-Aboriginal people (Figure 9).

There were 1,767 people who reported having a longstanding mental health condition, though they did not necessarily attend the ED for mental health-related reasons. People with a longstanding mental health condition tended to report less positive experiences. More than five in 10 people with a longstanding mental health condition (55%) said they were ‘definitely’ involved, as much as they wanted to be, in decisions about their care and treatment compared with more than six in 10 people (66%) with no mental health condition (Figure 11).

In 2018–19, 4,119 people born in a country other than Australia responded to the survey. People born overseas who completed the survey tended to report less positive experiences in many areas compared with patients born in Australia. Around six in 10 people (61%) born in a country other than Australia rated ED health professionals as ‘very good’ compared with almost seven in 10 people (67%) who were born in Australia (Figure 10).

Figure 9 Percentage of patient group who rated **overall care** as ‘very good’, NSW, 2018–19



Note: Results may not be representative of all patients in that group.

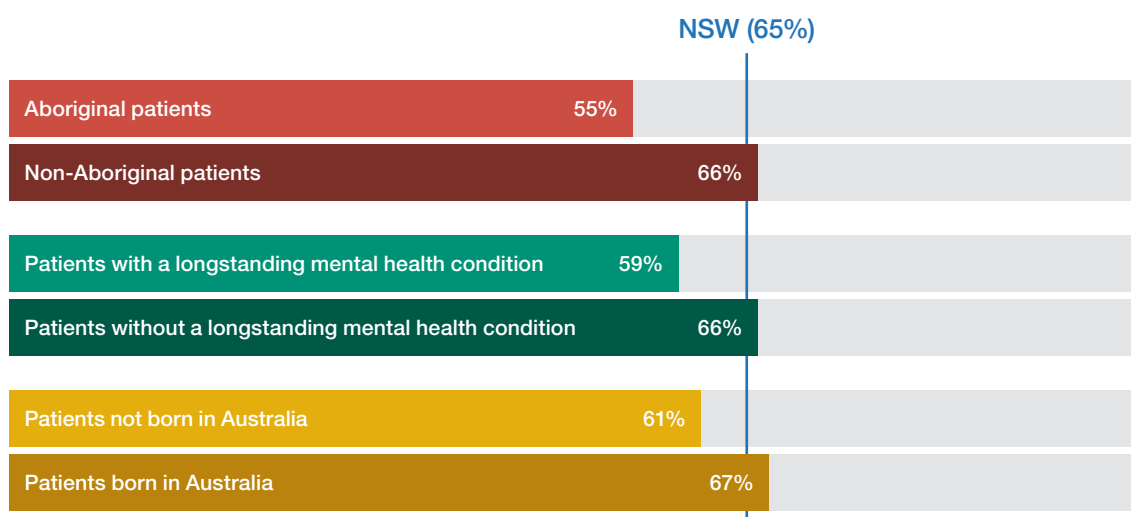
When asked whether they were treated with respect and dignity in the ED...



What could improve...

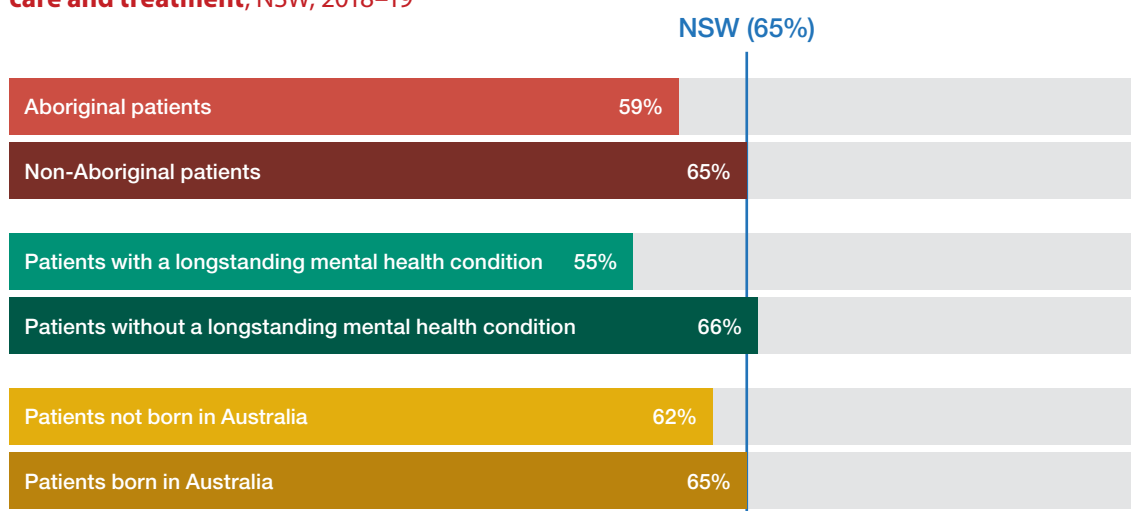
“
More respect and understanding relating to mental health relapses and episodes. Calming and non-condescending language is especially important.
”

Figure 10 Percentage of patient group who rated the **ED health professionals** as 'very good', NSW, 2018–19



Note: Results may not be representative of all patients in that group.

Figure 11 Percentage of patient group who said they were '**definitely**' involved in decisions about their **care and treatment**, NSW, 2018–19



Note: Results may not be representative of all patients in that group.

Healthcare Observer

Healthcare Observer is the Bureau of Health Information (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 Emergency Department Patient Survey 2018–19 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.

State Health Publication Number: (BHI) 200143

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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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