

# Emergency Department Patient Survey 2022–23

with ambulance and rural modules

Development Report

April 2023

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State Health Publication Number: (BHI) 220754

Suggested citation:

Bureau of Health Information. Development Report – Emergency Department Patient Survey 2022–23. Sydney (NSW); BHI: 2023.

Please note that there is the potential for minor revisions of this report.

Please check the online version at **bhi.nsw.gov.au** for any amendments or errata.

Published April 2023

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.

## Background

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) is the statutory agency responsible for reporting on the performance of the NSW public health system.

The Emergency Department Patient Survey (EDPS) is a core component of the NSW Patient Survey Program, which BHI manages on behalf of NSW Health. Every year this statewide program gives thousands of patients the opportunity to provide feedback about their experiences of care in the healthcare system and subsequent outcomes, using evidence-based, validated survey instruments.

The program provides essential system-wide intelligence about patient experience to strengthen accountability and support improvement. It is the only statewide data asset that delivers robust and representative comparative patient experience information at hospital, local health district (LHD) and state level. It plays a distinct and complementary role alongside current and emergent real-time feedback from patients about their experiences in hospitals, which can inform day-to-day local improvement.

## Review of the Emergency Department Patient Survey

As part of the NSW Patient Survey Program Strategy 2019–22, BHI reformed the survey program. As well as addressing the timeliness and usefulness of results to inform improvements, BHI reviewed the length and structure of patient surveys to minimise the burden on patients, maximise the value of results and improve response rates. BHI undertook a major review of the EDPS questionnaire in 2020 as part of this reform.

The new approach involves maintaining a set of core questions (referred to in this report as 'core content'), while introducing 'modules', which are targeted sets of questions that are added to a questionnaire to collect data for a particular patient group or service. These one-off periodic modules are designed to meet particular health system needs for additional information.

BHI also completed a review of the 2021–22 question set in 2022 to identify any opportunities for improvement, such as:

- survey sections that would benefit from a modified preamble to provide clearer instructions to the survey respondent
- response patterns for each question, including rates of item non-response (respondents not answering a question they should have), invalid responses (selecting more than one answer to a single response question or answering a question they should have skipped) and non-specific responses such as 'don't know', 'can't remember' or 'not applicable to me'
- ceiling and floor effects of response categories (responses where almost all patients were very positive or very negative, with little variation between hospitals) using the scored mean, standard deviation and skewness of responses.

The EDPS 2022–23 questionnaire includes two new modules, which are further detailed below. The questionnaire is available on the [BHI website](#).

### Addition of an ambulance module

In response to the increased use of ambulance services in NSW, as reported in BHI's activity and performance results in *Healthcare Quarterly*, BHI saw an opportunity to gain insights into patients' experiences and journey of care with ambulance services to their emergency department (ED) visit.

A module of 18 questions was developed, designed to be answered by patients who are identified in the administrative data as having arrived at the ED by ambulance.

The questions explore the patients' experiences of care with ambulance services, including ambulance staff, while waiting for the ambulance to arrive, on the journey to the ED and experience with the ED staff. Questions also look at whether any ambulance services were used by the patient after they left the ED.

The selection of questions for the module was guided by:

- evidence and feedback about aspects of experiences and outcomes that are particularly important to patients who use ambulance services across NSW, and to those responsible for providing such services
- the need to generate meaningful information to enable sound analysis and interpretation
- the need for the module to be brief and straightforward for respondents to complete.

Questions in this module were sourced from BHI's core set of questions in EDPS and applied in the context of ambulance services. A review of existing surveys, including the Victorian Healthcare Experience Survey: Ambulance Emergency and the NSW Ambulance 2022 Patient Experience Survey was also undertaken to guide question prioritisation for the module.

The questions were developed in consultation with NSW Ambulance.

The ambulance module was included in the EDPS questionnaire for July to September 2022 patients.

## Addition of a rural module

In response to the Inquiry into rural, regional and remote healthcare, BHI was commissioned by the NSW Ministry of Health's Regional Health Division to develop a question module to collect insights into patients' experiences with regional and rural emergency care facilities, as well as information about their journey of care. The module was developed in consultation with regional local health districts (LHDs) and the Regional Health Division.

The 17-question module was provided to patients who the administrative data identified as having attended a regional or rural emergency care facility.

The questions ask patients about different aspects of their experiences of care at regional and rural EDs, including accessing the facilities, transfers to other hospitals for further treatments, health outcomes and follow-up care.

The selection of questions for the module was guided by:

- the findings of the Inquiry into rural, regional and remote healthcare
- stakeholder feedback around aspects such as terminology used within the questions, usefulness and value of questions and rural patient journey of care
- the need to generate meaningful information to enable sound analysis and interpretation
- the need for the module to be short in length and straightforward for respondents to complete.

Questions in this module were sourced from BHI's core set of EDPS questions and applied in the context of rural services.

The rural module was included in the EDPS questionnaire for patients who attended an eligible facility from January to March 2023.

## Overview of changes

An overview of changes to the core EDPS questionnaire content is provided in the Details of changes – Core content table starting on the next page.

The content of the new modules is outlined in separate tables below:

Module – [Ambulance experience](#)

Module – [Rural experience](#)

## Details of changes – Core content

Question # 2022–23	Question # 2021–22	Updated question (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)	Change from 2021–22	Rationale
Q1–5	Q1–5	<p><b>ARRIVAL AT THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT</b></p> <p>For the questions in this section, please think about when you first arrived at the ED and all the staff you met, including receptionists, nurses and others.</p>	<p><b>Modified preamble</b></p> <p>Preamble changed from 'For the following questions, please think about when you first arrived at the hospital and all the staff you met, including receptionists, nurses and others.'</p>	The preamble was modified for consistency with other BHI patient questionnaires.
Q6–24	Q6–24	<p><b>CARE AND TREATMENT</b></p> <p>For the questions in this section, please think about all the health professionals who treated or examined you in the ED. This may include doctors, nurses, allied health (e.g. physiotherapists) and others.</p>	<p><b>Modified preamble</b></p> <p>Preamble changed from 'For the following questions, please think about all the health professionals who treated or examined you in the ED. This may include doctors, nurses, allied health (e.g. physiotherapists) and others.'</p>	The preamble was modified for consistency with other BHI patient questionnaires.
Q25–31	Q25–31	<p><b>LEAVING THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT</b></p> <p>For the questions in this section, please think about your experiences as you were preparing to leave the ED.</p>	<p><b>Modified preamble</b></p> <p>Preamble changed from 'For the following questions, please think about your experiences as you were preparing to leave the ED.'</p>	The preamble was modified for consistency with other BHI patient questionnaires.
Q32–35	Q32–35	<p><b>OVERALL EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p>For the questions in this section, please think about your overall experiences of the care provided to you in the ED.</p>	<p><b>Modified preamble</b></p> <p>Preamble changed from 'For the following questions, please think about your overall experiences of the care provided to you in the ED.'</p>	The preamble was modified for consistency with other BHI patient questionnaires.

Question # 2022–23	Question # 2021–22	Updated question (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)	Change from 2021–22	Rationale
*	Q36–42	<p><b>ABOUT YOU (THE PATIENT)</b></p> <p>The questions in this section will help us to see how experiences vary between different groups of the population. <b>Please remember to answer the following questions about <u>the patient</u>.</b></p>	<p><b>Modified preamble</b></p> <p>Preamble changed from 'The following questions will help us to see how experiences vary between different groups of the population.'</p>	<p>The preamble was modified for consistency with other BHI patient questionnaires and to provide an instruction to the parents or carers of the child to complete this section about the patient.</p>
*	Q41	<p>Which, if any, of the following longstanding health conditions do you have (including age-related conditions)?</p> <p>Please X <u>all</u> the boxes that apply to you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deafness or severe hearing impairment</li> <li>• Blindness or severe vision impairment</li> <li>• A longstanding illness (e.g. cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease)</li> <li>• A longstanding physical condition (e.g. arthritis, spinal injury, multiple sclerosis)</li> <li>• An intellectual disability</li> <li>• A mental health condition (e.g. depression)</li> <li>• A neurological condition (e.g. Alzheimer's, Parkinson's)</li> <li>• <u>None</u> of these...Go to Q43</li> </ul>	<p><b>Modified question</b></p> <p>Question wording changed from 'Do you have longstanding health conditions that cause you difficulty with your day-to-day activities?'</p>	<p>The question wording was changed to collect data on the prevalence of longstanding health conditions regardless of whether these conditions cause difficulties with day-to-day activities. A separate question was added to ask about difficulties with day-to-day activities.</p>
*	N/A	<p>Does this condition(s) cause you difficulties with your day-to-day activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, definitely</li> <li>• Yes, to some extent</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p><b>New question</b></p>	<p>This question was added to ask separately if the identified longstanding health conditions cause any difficulties with day-to-day activities.</p> <p>This question is necessary to support analysis of results.</p>

Question # 2022–23	Question # 2021–22	Updated question (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)	Change from 2021–22	Rationale
*	Q42	<p><b>BHI would like your permission to link your questionnaire responses to other information from health records relating to you which are maintained by NSW Government and Commonwealth agencies</b> (including your hospitalisations or health registry information).</p> <p>Linking to your health information will allow us to better understand how the care provided by health services is related to the health of their patients.</p> <p><b>Your information will be treated in the strictest confidence.</b> BHI will not report any results that may identify you as an individual. Your questionnaire responses will not be accessible to the health professionals who cared for you.</p> <p><b>Do you give permission for the Bureau of Health Information to link your answers from this survey to health records related to you (the patient)?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p><b>Modified preamble</b></p> <p>Preamble changed from 'The Bureau of Health Information would like your permission to link your survey answers to other information from health records relating to you which are maintained by various NSW and Commonwealth agencies (including your hospitalisations, medical visits, ambulance transportation, medication or health registry information).</p> <p>Linking to your healthcare information will allow us to better understand how the care provided by health facilities is related to the health of their patients and their use of these services.</p> <p><b>Your information will be treated in the strictest confidence.</b> We will receive the linked information after your name and address have been removed. We will not report any results that may identify you as an individual and your responses will not be accessible to the people who looked after you.'</p>	<p>The preamble was modified to clarify the intent of linkage.</p>
*	Q43–44	<b>COMMENTS</b>	<p><b>Removed preamble</b></p> <p>This survey is anonymous. In the comment boxes below, please don't include your name, address or any personal information about yourself or the health professionals who treated you.</p>	<p>The de-identification instruction was moved from the preamble to be included in each question in this section.</p>



Question # 2022–23	Question # 2021–22	Updated question (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)	Change from 2021–22	Rationale
*	Q43	What was the <u>best part</u> of the care you received while in this ED?  Please don't include your name, address or any personal information about yourself or the health professionals who treated you.	<b>Modified question</b>  Question wording changed from 'What was the <u>best part</u> of the care you received while in this ED?'	Additional de-identification instruction was added to reduce the amount of personal information that patients might disclose in the comments
*	Q44	What <u>most needs improving</u> about the care you received while in this ED?  Please don't include your name, address or any personal information about yourself or the health professionals who treated you.	<b>Modified question</b>  Question wording changed from 'What <u>most needs improving</u> about the care you received while in this ED?'	Additional de-identification instruction was added to reduce the amount of personal information that patients might disclose in the comments

\*Question numbers are not included for this section, including all remaining questions, as they will change depending on which modules are included in the survey

## Module – Ambulance experience

The ambulance experience module was added to gain insights into patients' experience of care with ambulance services, including ambulance staff, while waiting for the ambulance to arrive, on the way to the emergency department (ED) and their experience with the ED staff. Questions also look at whether any ambulance services were used by the patient after they left the ED.

The module has been designed to be answered by patients who are identified in the administrative data as having arrived at the ED by ambulance.

Questions in this module were sourced from BHI's core set of questions in EDPS and applied in the context of ambulance services. A scan of existing surveys, including the Victorian Healthcare Experience Survey: Ambulance Emergency and the NSW Ambulance 2022 Patient Experience Survey, was also undertaken to guide question prioritisation for the module. The questions were developed in consultation with NSW Ambulance.

Question numbers are not included for this module as they may change depending on which modules are included in the survey.

### Question/section (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)

#### **AMBULANCE EXPERIENCE**

We have included a set of ambulance questions because hospital records show you arrived for this ED visit by ambulance. Please think about your ambulance experience on the way to this ED visit.

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For this ED visit, do you remember your ambulance experience?

- Yes
- No...Go to QX
- I did not arrive by ambulance...Go to QX

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While waiting for the ambulance, were you given enough information on the triple zero (000) call about how to manage your care?

- Yes, definitely
  - Yes, to some extent
  - No
  - Not applicable
-

**Question/section (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)**

Do you think the time you waited for the ambulance to arrive was....?

- About right
- Slightly too long
- Much too long
- Don't know/can't remember

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For the following questions, please think about the ambulance staff you met when the ambulance arrived, including the paramedics and the driver.

When the ambulance arrived, did the ambulance staff explain things in a way you could understand?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

How much information about your condition or treatment was given to you, your family, carer or someone close to you by the ambulance staff?

- Not enough
- The right amount
- Too much
- Not applicable

Were you involved, as much as you wanted to be, in decisions about your care, treatment and transport made by the ambulance staff?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- I didn't want or need to be involved

Did the ambulance staff listen carefully to any views or concerns you had?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- I didn't have any views or concerns

**Question/section (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)**

Did you have confidence and trust in the ambulance staff treating you?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No

Were the ambulance staff kind and caring towards you?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

Were you treated with respect and dignity by the ambulance staff?

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- No

Do you think the ambulance staff did everything they could to help manage your pain?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- Not applicable

Did the ambulance staff give you enough information about what to expect on arrival at the ED?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- Not applicable

**Question/section (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)**

Overall, how would you rate the care you received from the ambulance staff?

- Very good
- Good
- Neither good nor poor
- Poor
- Very poor

For the following questions, please think about your experience when you arrived at the ED and the ED staff who examined you.

Do you think the time you waited until you were examined by the ED staff was....?

- About right
- Slightly too long
- Much too long
- Don't know/can't remember

How would you rate how the ambulance staff and ED staff worked together?

- Very good
- Good
- Neither good nor poor
- Poor
- Very poor

For the following questions, please think about any ambulance services you may have used after you left the ED.

Following this ED visit, did you or someone on your behalf need to call for another ambulance?

- Yes
- No...Go to QX
- No, I was admitted to hospital...Go to QX

**Question/section (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)**

How long was it before another ambulance needed to be called?

- Less than 2 days
- 2 to 7 days
- 8 to 14 days
- More than 14 days

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Was it for the same reason as your previous visit to this ED?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

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What was the best part of the care you received from the ambulance staff and while in this ED? Please don't include your name, address or any personal information about yourself or the health professionals who treated you.

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What most needs improving about the care you received from the ambulance staff and while in this ED? Please don't include your name, address or any personal information about yourself or the health professionals who treated you.

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## Module - Rural experience

The rural experience module was added to gain insights into patients' experience of care at rural emergency care facilities. The module has been designed to be answered by patients who are identified in the administrative data as having attended a large or small rural facility.

Questions in this module were sourced from the BHI question pool and applied in the context of rural services. The questions were developed in consultation with Regional Local Health Districts and the Regional Health Division.

Question numbers are not included for this module as they may change depending on which modules are included in the survey.

### Question/section (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)

#### RURAL FOCUS

Given the rural, regional or remote location of the ED listed on the cover letter, we have included a set of questions of particular relevance to patients attending rural hospitals.

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What was your main form of transport to the ED?

- Private motor vehicle (e.g. car, motorbike, van)
- Ambulance or patient transport service
- Public transport
- Taxi
- Other

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How far, roughly, did you travel to the ED you visited?

- 0–50km
- 51–100km
- 101–500km
- More than 500km
- Don't know/can't remember

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Was this the nearest ED?

- Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
-

**Question/section (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)**

How difficult was it to get to the ED?

- Very difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Not difficult at all
- Don't know/can't remember

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Do you think you received safe, high-quality care in the ED?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- Don't know

---

For the following questions, please think about your transfer from the ED named in the covering letter to another hospital.

Were you transferred from this ED to another hospital for further treatment?

- Yes
- No... Go to QX
- Don't know... Go to QX

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Were you given enough information about your transfer?

- Yes, definitely
  - Yes, to some extent
  - No
  - Not applicable
-



**Question/section (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)**

In what ways did the transfer affect you?

Please X all the boxes that apply to you

- I received specialist care not available where I was
- I felt more comfortable/confident in the care I received
- There were additional out-of-pocket costs for me or my family
- It was more difficult for my family, carer or someone close to me to visit
- I felt more isolated
- It was more difficult to get home
- Don't know/can't remember
- Other... Please write below.

---

For the following questions, please think about any problem or clinical complication that you may have experienced related to your care and treatment.

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During your ED visit or soon after, did you experience any problem related to your care and treatment?

- Yes
- No... Go to QX

---

Was the impact of this problem...?

- Very serious
- Fairly serious
- Not very serious
- Not at all serious

---

Were the health professionals open with you about this problem?

- Yes, definitely
  - Yes, to some extent
  - No
  - Not applicable
-

**Question/section (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)**

Were the health professionals responsive in addressing this problem?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- Not applicable

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For the following questions, please think about any care you received after you left hospital relating to the same health issue that prompted your ED visit.

Did you receive any follow-up care from a hospital specialist, general practitioner (GP) or other healthcare provider?

- Yes
- No... Go to QX
- Don't know/can't remember ... Go to QX

How did you access the follow-up care?

- In-person or face-to-face
- Phone or video call
- Combination of in-person and phone or video call

Was the follow-up care well coordinated between the health professionals involved?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No
- Don't know/can't remember

For the following questions, please think about your ED visit.

Was your visit to the ED for a condition that, at the time, you thought could have been treated by a GP or other health professional?

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, to some extent
- No... Go to QX
- Don't know... Go to QX

**Question/section (as it appears in 2022–23 questionnaire)**

Why didn't you see a GP or other health professional about that condition?

- There is no GP/health professional close to where I live
  - The GP/health professional service was closed
  - I couldn't get an appointment within a reasonable time
  - I didn't want to pay to see a GP/health professional
  - I could get all the care I needed at the ED
  - Other... Please write below.
-