



Addendum

Technical supplement:
elective surgery measures

Hospital Quarterly: October to December 2010

BUREAU OF HEALTH INFORMATION

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This document is an addendum to the Bureau's *Technical supplement: measures of elective surgery, July to September 2010*. It adds new information for more than 80 hospitals on the proportion of category 3 patients who had a waiting time of one day or less before being admitted for elective surgery and corresponding data on the median waiting times for each surgical category. Data presented here refers to patients admitted for elective surgery during October to December 2010.

Hospitals with a high percentage of category 3 patients waiting one day or less to be treated

Patients are provided with a List Date when added to the WLCOS and a Removal Date when they are taken off the list. At the most simplistic level, the time between these two dates is the waiting period for that patient. Patients can also be recorded as 'not ready for care' due to either clinical reasons (patient too ill, doctor sets a minimum period between operations, etc) or personal reasons (patient away on holiday, etc). Any days that the patient is recorded as being 'not ready for care' days are subtracted from the total waiting time of each patient.

During production of *Hospital Quarterly, July to September 2010*, the Bureau noted that some NSW public hospitals had a high percentage of category 3 patients recorded with 'not ready for care days' equal to the total length of time they had been on the waiting list. This resulted in those patients having a waiting time of one day or less. Across the largest hospitals on WLCOS in the October to December 2010 quarter, the percentage of category 3 patients

who had one day or less total waiting time ranged from 0-49% of patients.* During the October to December quarter, 17 hospitals recorded that 10% or greater of their category 3 patients waited one day or less for admission to hospital ([Table 1](#)).

The Bureau has investigated the effect on median waiting times for hospitals with a high percentage of category 3 patients waiting one day or less for admission. This has the effect of reducing median waiting time for patients undergoing elective surgery at these hospitals. In interpreting the performance indicators for category 3 patients at these hospitals, caution is advised as this may result in unfair or inequitable comparisons.

Additional detail about 'not ready to care' days can be found on [page 4](#) of this document as well as [page 20](#) of *Hospital Quarterly: performance of NSW public hospitals, October to December 2010*.

* Including all 83 hospitals on WLCOS from the principal referral, paediatric specialist, ungrouped acute / tertiary referral, major metropolitan, major non-metropolitan and district groups 1 and 2 peer groups.

Table 1: Hospitals with a high proportion of category 3 patients waiting one day or less to be admitted, October to December 2010

	Patients treated on time		Median waiting time (days)		
	Category 3 patients	Waiting time < 1 day (%)	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Campbelltown Hospital	558	49%	21	66	25
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital	681	28%	6	14	14
Concord Hospital	953	28%	11	46	81
The Tweed Hospital	329	23%	18	51	137
Gosford Hospital	652	23%	15	57	283
The Children's Hospital at Westmead	705	22%	6	47	51
Liverpool Hospital	562	22%	11	60	170
Port Macquarie Base Hospital	252	19%	15	64	225
Griffith Base Hospital	125	17%	15	54	264
St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst	311	15%	6	38	106
Bathurst Base Hospital	186	15%	14	59	189
Mona Vale and District Hospital	213	12%	6	18	28
Lithgow Health Service	95	12%	18	53	282
Hawkesbury Private Hospital - public contract services	103	11%	15	72	360
Hornsby and Ku-Ring-Gai Hospital	376	10%	6	30	58
Bankstown / Lidcombe Hospital	658	10%	17	63	149
Dubbo Base Hospital	425	10%	7	28	177
Royal North Shore Hospital	466	9%	6	44	117
Manly District Hospital	78	9%	7	33	59
Murwillumbah District Hospital	331	8%	18	68	324
Shoalhaven and District Memorial Hospital	393	8%	13	61	280
Orange Base Hospital	343	8%	7	61	346
Wyong Hospital	423	8%	14	39	228
Canterbury Hospital	266	8%	13	63	297
Wollongong Hospital	492	7%	10	66	48
Lismore Base Hospital	382	7%	13	50	246
Ballina District Hospital	33	6%	19	43	44
Bowral and District Hospital	170	5%	14	42	178
Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital	39	5%	13	29	98
Ryde Hospital	150	5%	15	37	133
Coffs Harbour Base Hospital	441	4%	15	81	350
Broken Hill Base Hospital	125	4%	15	63	215
Sydney Children's Hospital	316	4%	10	17	97
Tumut Health Service	28	4%	13	63	49
Fairfield Hospital	437	3%	11	43	270
Parkes District Hospital	33	3%	13	21	17
Moree District Hospital	67	3%	2	34	97
Grafton Base Hospital	138	3%	12	35	252
Moruya District Hospital	46	2%	8	47	103
Calvary Mater Newcastle	54	2%	14	43	148

**Patients
treated on time**

Median waiting time (days)

	Category 3 patients	Waiting time < 1 day (%)	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
St George Hospital	235	2%	11	52	184
Tamworth Base Hospital	371	2%	11	47	145
Casino and District Memorial Hospital	128	2%	12	38	69
Royal Hospital for Women	72	1%	7	32	72
Cessnock District Hospital	80	1%	19	11	44
Mount Druitt Hospital	246	1%	10	51	266
RPAH Institute of Rheumatology & Orthopaedics	293	1%	6	23	39
Westmead Hospital (all units)	443	1%	12	35	95
Belmont Hospital	237	1%	14	51	178
Bateman's Bay District Hospital	154	1%	20	57	326
Kempsey Hospital	254	0%	15	60	141
Blacktown Hospital	304	0%	12	48	145
John Hunter Hospital	622	0%	10	47	209
Manning Base Hospital	367	0%	20	53	267
Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital	626	0%	11	46	207
Armidale and New England Hospital	101	0%	17	55	234
Auburn Hospital	265	0%	11	70	301
Bega District Hospital	146	0%	14	72	337
Bulli District Hospital	97	0%	12	45	207
Cooma Health Service	35	0%	3	40	221
Cowra District Hospital	44	0%	6	57	122
Deniliquin Health Service	27	0%	8	51	223
Forbes District Hospital	80	0%	12	36	225
Goulburn Base Hospital	179	0%	13	31	156
Gunnedah District Hospital	38	0%	9	30	18
Inverell District Hospital	19	0%	10	55	334
Kurri Kurri District Hospital	223	0%	17	82	250
Macksville District Hospital	66	0%	24	55	268
Macleay District Hospital	17	0%	14	25	43
Maitland Hospital	223	0%	13	43	229
Milton and Ulladulla Hospital	7	0%	4	29	40
Mudgee District Hospital	67	0%	10	36	307
Muswellbrook District Hospital	19	0%	3	14	76
Narrabri District Hospital	6	0%	6	26	88
Nepean Hospital	540	0%	13	69	344
Pambula District Hospital	7	0%	9	29	285
Prince of Wales Hospital	343	0%	11	43	251
Queanbeyan Health Service	48	0%	18	64	101
Shellharbour Hospital	485	0%	22	57	189
Singleton District Hospital	86	0%	6	15	35
Sutherland Hospital	270	0%	19	61	290
Wagga Wagga Base Hospital	416	0%	16	61	338
Young Health Service	28	0%	21	80	48

Waiting times of less than one day

All hospitals have some patients in each urgency category who were recorded as waiting one day or less to be admitted for surgery. The percentage of urgent (category 1), semi-urgent (category 2) and non-urgent (category 3) patients who waited one day or less are 10%, 2% and 9% respectively. In some hospitals, a substantial percentage of patients recorded as waiting one day or less were coded as 'not ready for care' for the entire period they were on the waiting list.

Patients can be appropriately coded as 'not ready for care' for either clinical reasons (patient unfit for surgery, staged operations, etc) or personal reasons (patient away on holiday, work commitment, etc). We found that these patients were most commonly waiting for gynaecological or urological (bladder and urinary tract) surgery, removal of pins or plates, or cataract removal. High numbers of these procedures were concentrated in a small number of hospitals.

Listing a patient as 'not ready for care' for clinical reasons may be due to booking the patient for 'staged' surgery. A staged surgical procedure is when there is a clinically appropriate interval before the procedure can occur and, as the patient either cannot or should not undergo the procedure any sooner, they are not technically waiting for surgery. Examples of this include:

- Fractured bones sometimes require metal pins and / or plates to hold the bones in place while they heal. Until the bone is healed, the pins / plates are not removed and the patient is coded as 'not ready for care'
- In-vitro fertilisation (IVF) may require egg harvesting after a course of hormones. A woman would be listed as 'not ready for care' while she underwent the hormone therapy in preparation for the procedure.

Hospitals with specialties requiring staged surgery tend to have a higher percentage of patients with very short wait times. This has the effect of reducing median waiting time for patients undergoing elective surgery at these hospitals. Comparisons between these hospitals and hospitals that perform few staged procedures may result in unfair or inequitable comparisons.

About the Bureau

The Bureau of Health Information was established by the NSW Government in 2009 as an independent, board-governed organisation. The Bureau aims to be the leading source of information on the performance of the public health system in NSW.

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- Dr Diane Watson (Chief Executive)

The Bureau's Mission

The Bureau provides the community, healthcare professionals and the NSW Parliament with timely, accurate and comparable information about 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 people in NSW.

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