

Snapshot



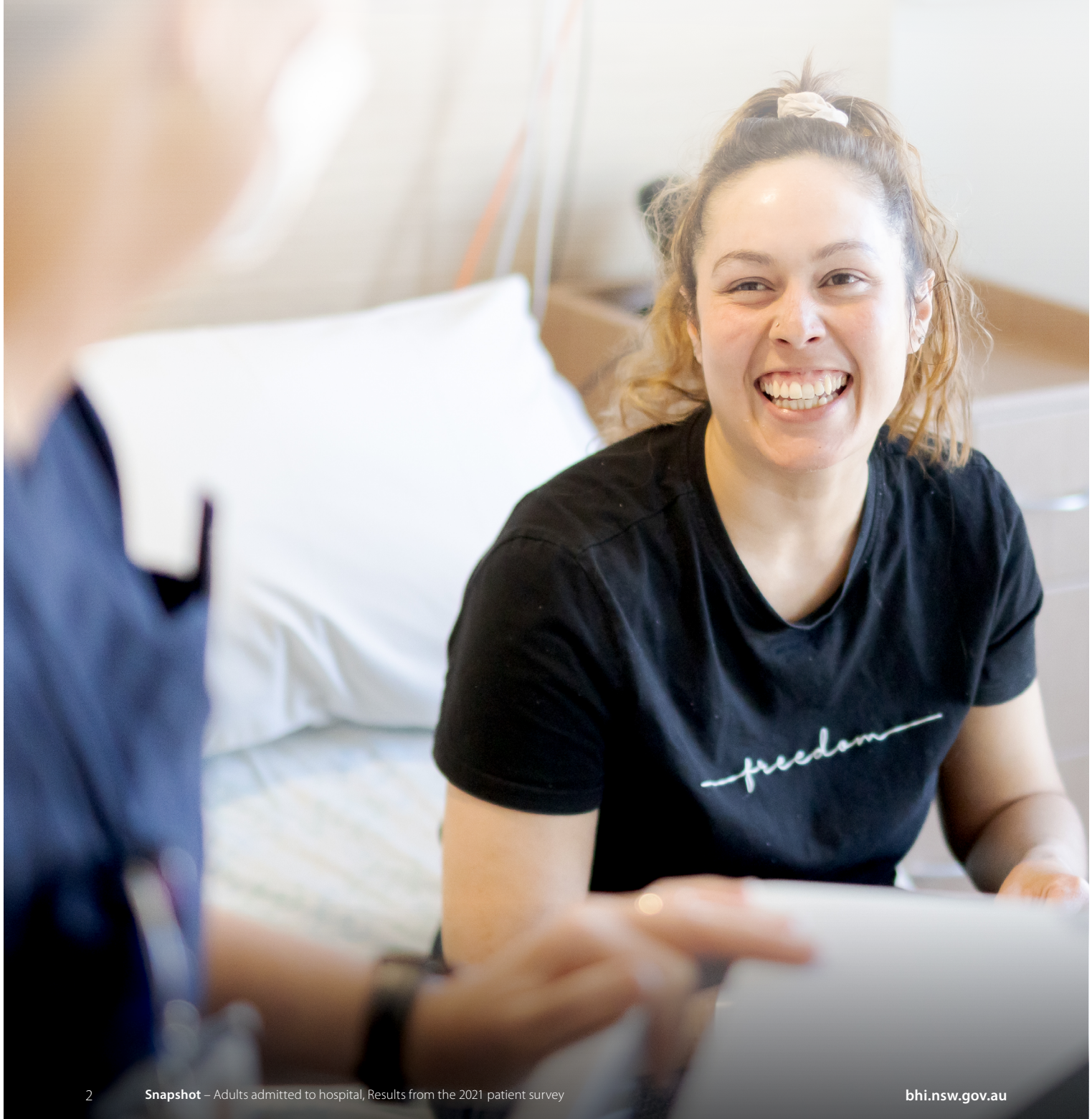
Adults admitted to hospital

Results from the 2021 patient survey





We heard from more than
19,000 people about their
experiences as admitted patients
in NSW **public hospitals** in 2021



People are admitted to hospital for a wide range of services, including medical and surgical care. The care they receive should be safe and of high-quality, result in positive health outcomes and enable them to transition well from hospital to home.

The results of the Adult Admitted Patient Survey 2021 reflect the experiences of 19,304 adults who completed a survey about their care in one of 87 NSW public hospitals during January to December 2021. This Snapshot report highlights key findings in relation to patients' experiences across a range of aspects of care and shows variation across hospitals. Results for each hospital are available in supplementary data tables and on the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) Data Portal at bhi.nsw.gov.au

The Delta and Omicron waves of COVID-19 in NSW in the second half of 2021 presented great challenges to health services. Hospitals needed to adapt in multiple ways to maintain sufficient capacity as well as adopt additional preventative measures to ensure the safety of staff and patients, which may have affected experiences of care.

Overall ratings of care: Around nine in 10 patients (92%) said, overall, the care they received was 'very good' (68%) or 'good' (24%), and when asked how well health professionals worked together, more than six in 10 (64%) said 'very good' (pages 4–5).

Overall ratings of care by month: Overall ratings of care increased in the first half of the year, before declining during the Delta and Omicron COVID-19 outbreaks in the second half of 2021 (pages 6–7).

Person-centred care: Almost seven in 10 patients (67%) said they were 'definitely' involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care and treatment. Almost eight in 10 patients (79%) said health professionals 'always' explained things in a way they could understand (pages 8–9).

Engagement at discharge: Around six in 10 patients (63%) said they 'definitely' felt involved in decisions about their discharge, and more than seven in 10 (75%) said hospital staff took their family and home situation into account when planning their discharge (pages 10–11).

Experiences in rural and urban hospitals: Patients who attended rural and urban hospitals generally gave positive ratings of their care. For most questions, for the most positive response option, there were no significant differences between rural and urban patients (pages 12–13).

Experiences of virtual care: Of those patients who said they had a virtual care appointment with a hospital or outpatient clinic in the three months following discharge, nine in 10 (90%) said, overall, the virtual care they received was 'very good' or 'good' (pages 14–15).

Overall, **92%** of patients rated their care as



'very good'

68%

'good'

24%

Overall ratings of care

Overall ratings of care reflect general measures of patient satisfaction about their hospital experience.

Around nine in 10 patients (92%) said, overall, the care they received was 'very good' (68%) or 'good' (24%) (Figure 1a). For those patients who said 'very good', results ranged from 55% to 87% across hospitals (Figure 2a).

When asked to rate how well health professionals worked together, more than six in 10 patients (64%) said 'very good' (Figure 1b). Across hospitals, results ranged from 45% to 84% (Figure 2b).

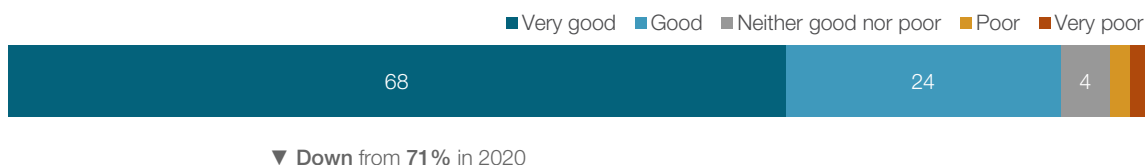
Almost seven in 10 patients (68%) said the care they received in hospital was 'very well organised' (Figure 1c). Across hospitals, results ranged from 51% to 88% (Figure 2c).

Almost eight in 10 patients (78%) rated their nurses as 'very good' and more than seven in 10 (74%) rated their doctors as 'very good'.

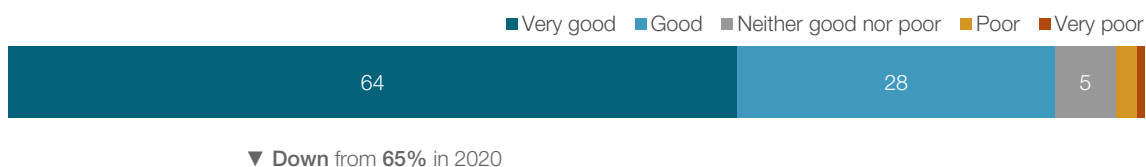
This Snapshot report focuses on experiences of care in 2021 and presents changes from the previous survey year for the most positive response option for selected questions at NSW level. To see changes from the previous survey for all comparable questions at NSW, local health district and hospital levels, please see the **BHI Data Portal** and the supplementary data tables to this report at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Figure 1 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2021

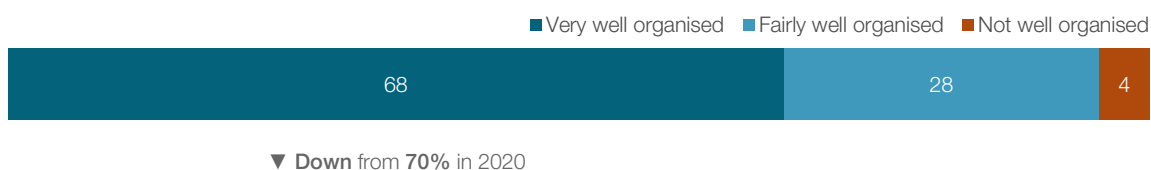
a. Overall, how would you rate the care you received while in hospital?



b. How would you rate how well the health professionals worked together as a team?



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



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

More than seven in 10 patients said their nurses and doctors were 'very good'



Best part of care...

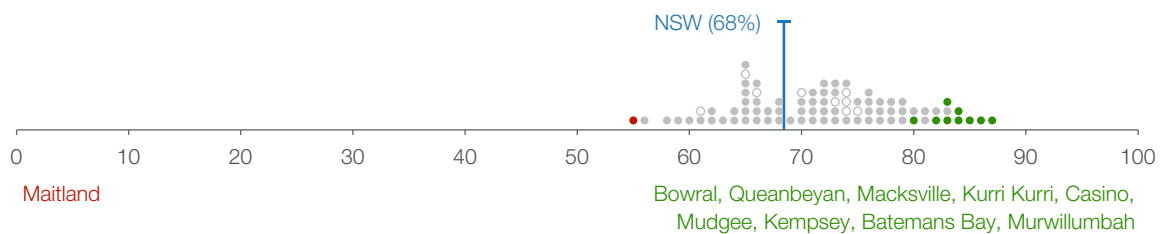
“
In ICU, when I had my cardiac arrest, the team worked together like a well-oiled machine to save my life. I had full confidence in the doctors and nurses.
”

In the figures below, each dot represents an individual hospital's result. To enable fairer comparison across hospitals, BHI has taken into account differences in patient characteristics (age, gender, education level and language spoken at home) at each hospital. Those 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 supplementary data tables and on the BHI Data Portal at bhi.nsw.gov.au

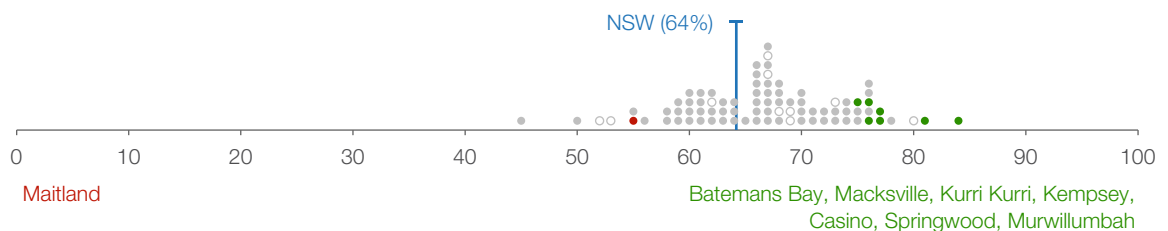
Figure 2 **Percentage of patients in each hospital who selected the most positive response option, 2021**

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

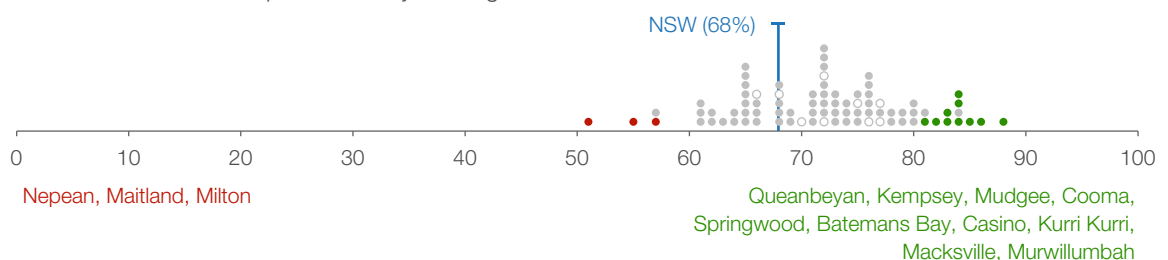
a. Overall, hospital care was 'very good'



b. Rated how health professionals worked together as a team as 'very good'



c. Care received in hospital was 'very well organised'



Note: Due to greater variability in hospital results with fewer respondents, hospitals marked 'Interpret with caution' are not compared with the NSW result.

Overall ratings of care

By month

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic again created great challenges for the people of NSW. The healthcare system responded to the emergence of two significant variants, Delta and Omicron.

Patients' overall ratings of care are presented here for each month of 2021, in comparison with 2019 and 2020, to provide insights into patient experience at different times both before and during the pandemic.

Overall, patients gave generally positive ratings of care. For most months of 2021, they gave higher overall ratings of care compared with 2019 but lower when compared with 2020 (Figure 3).

Ratings of overall care, health professionals working together and care organisation gradually increased during the first half of 2021. When the health system was under significant pressure at the peak of the Delta outbreak in September and the beginning of the Omicron outbreak in December, overall ratings and those of care organisation declined. (Figures 3–5).

BHI produces an annual *Healthcare in Focus* report which provides insights in key areas of health system activity and performance, including patient experience. For further insights into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the NSW health system, please explore recent *Healthcare in Focus* reports at bhi.nsw.gov.au. Detailed healthcare performance information is also available on the **BHI Data Portal**.

Figure 3 Percentage of patients in NSW who rated their care, overall, as 'very good', January to December 2019, 2020 and 2021

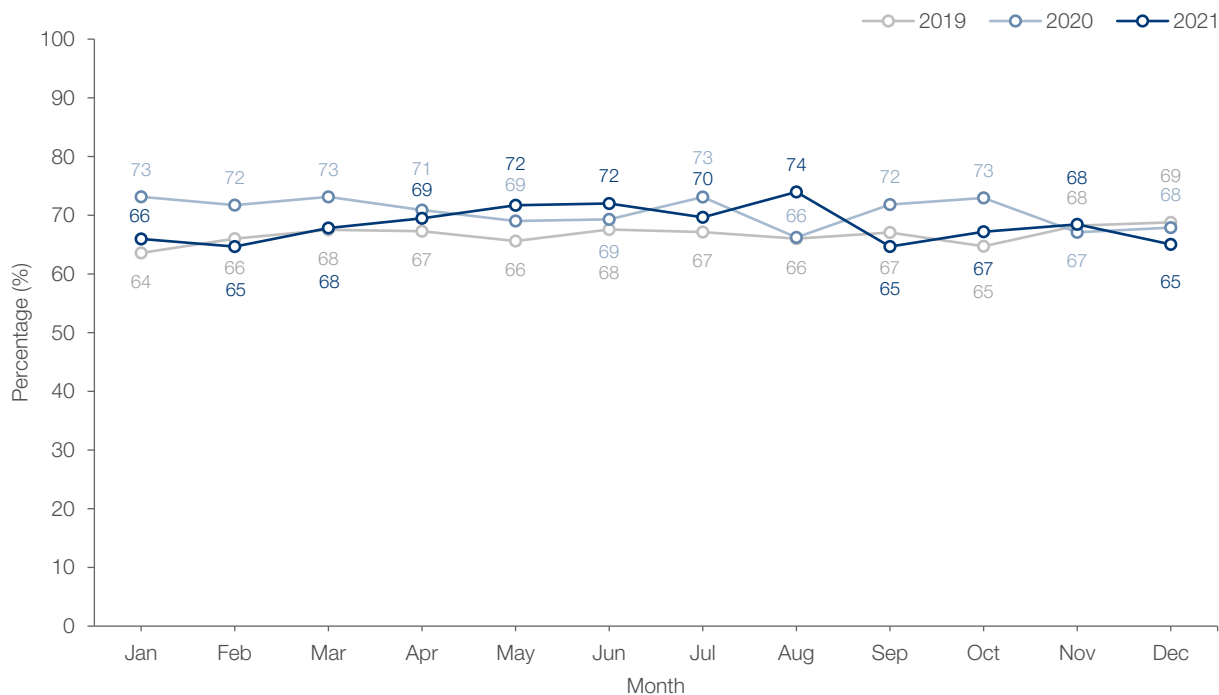


Figure 4 Percentage of patients in NSW who rated how health professionals worked together as 'very good', January to December 2019, 2020 and 2021

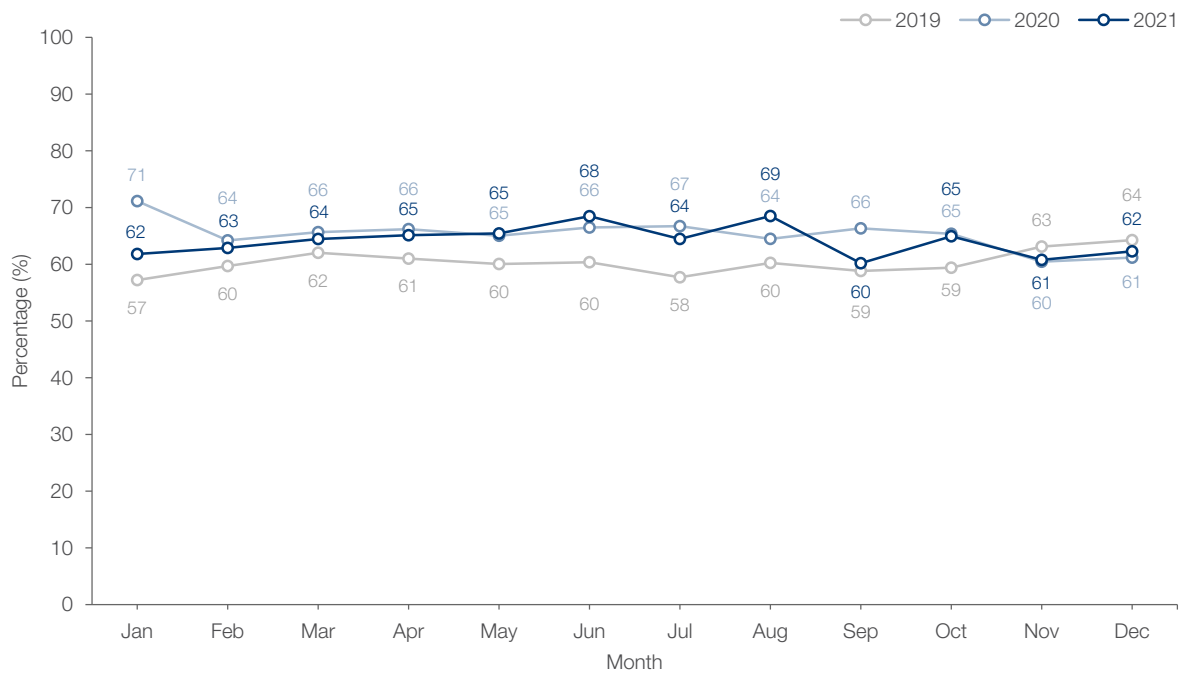
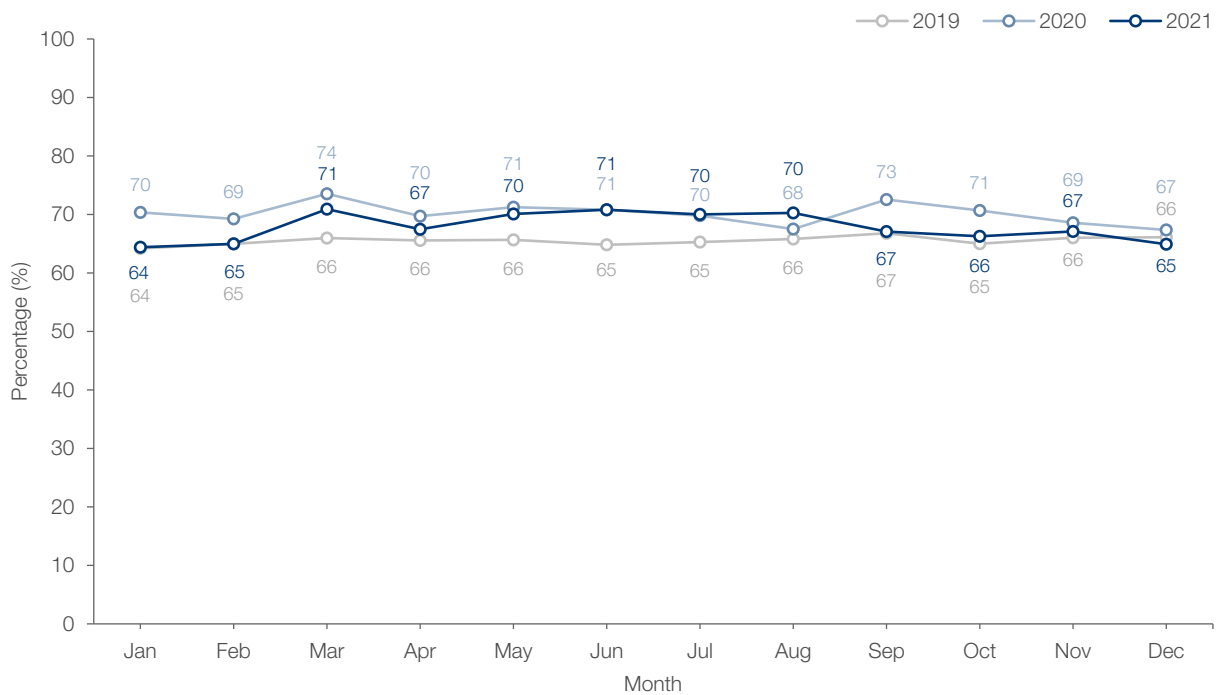


Figure 5 Percentage of patients in NSW who rated their care as 'very well organised', January to December 2019, 2020 and 2021



Person-centred care

Adult patients who were admitted to hospital shared their experiences of a range of aspects of their care, including whether they felt sufficiently involved in decisions about their care and treatment.

More than nine in 10 patients (94%) said they were ‘definitely’ (67%) or ‘to some extent’ (27%) involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care and treatment (Figure 6a). For those patients who said ‘definitely’, results ranged from 50% to 84% across hospitals (Figure 7a).

Almost eight in 10 patients (79%) said health professionals ‘always’ explained things in a way they could understand (Figure 6b). Across hospitals, results ranged from 59% to 90% (Figure 7b).

Almost eight in 10 patients (79%) said they did not receive contradictory information about their condition or treatment from health professionals (Figure 6c). Across hospitals, this ranged from 48% to 93% (Figure 7c). However, around one in five patients (21%) said they did receive contradictory information.

Figure 6 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2021

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



Not comparable with 2020 as response options changed

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



▼ Down from 82% in 2020

c. Did you ever receive contradictory information about your condition or treatment from the health professionals?



▼ Down from 80% in 2020

* Based on the responses of 17,474 patients (94%) who wanted to be involved in decisions about their care and treatment.
Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

More than eight in 10 patients (86%) said health professionals were 'always' kind and caring



Best part of care...

“

It was my first major operation and thanks to COVID restrictions, I was alone. The nurses made me feel at ease.

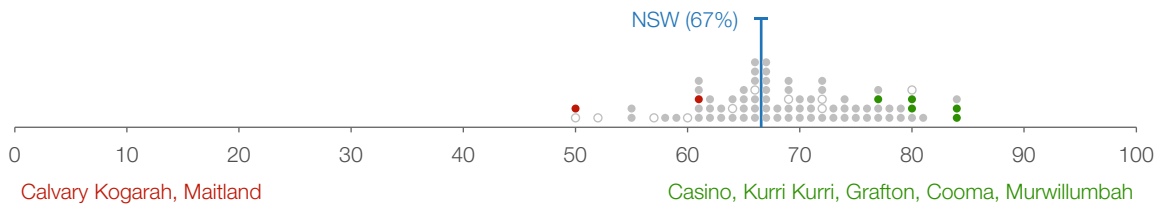
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Figure 7

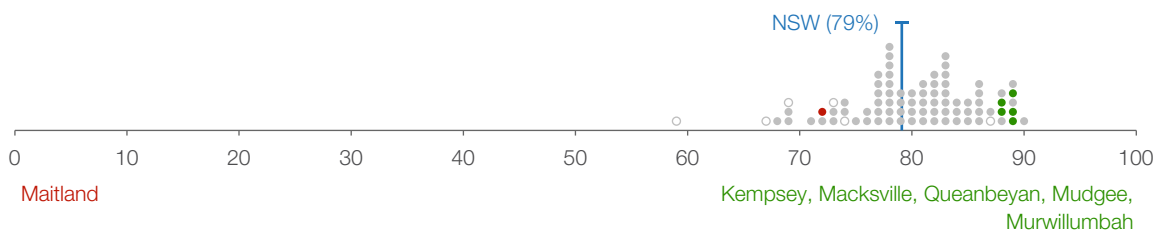
Percentage of patients in each hospital who selected the most positive response option, 2021

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

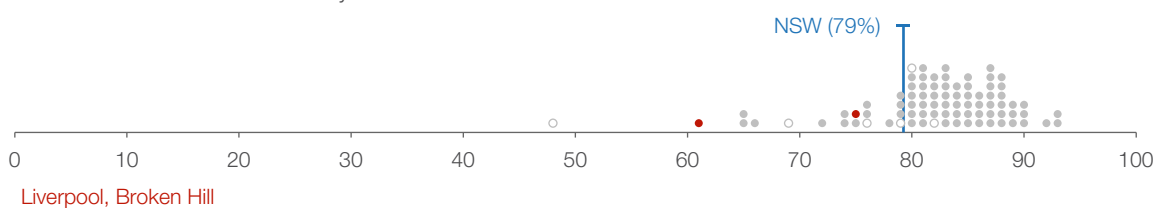
a. 'Definitely' involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about care and treatment



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



c. Did not receive contradictory information about condition or treatment



Note: A hospital is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or 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. Due to greater variability in hospital results with fewer respondents, hospitals marked 'Interpret with caution' are not compared with the NSW result.

Engagement at discharge

The survey also captured patients' experiences when leaving hospital.

Around six in 10 patients (63%) said they 'definitely' felt involved in decisions about their discharge, down from 67% in 2020 (Figure 8a). Across hospitals, results ranged from 46% to 83% (Figure 9a). Around one in 10 patients (11%) said they did not feel involved in decisions about their discharge.

Many patients need support from family and friends to manage their ongoing care. Around eight in 10 patients (83%) said they had a family or home situation that needed to be considered when

planning their discharge. Of these patients, more than seven in 10 (75%) said staff 'definitely' took their situation into account (Figure 8b). Across hospitals, results ranged from 62% to 91% (Figure 9b).

Around seven in 10 patients (72%) said they were given 'completely' enough information about how to manage their care at home (Figure 8c). Across hospitals, results ranged from 60% to 97% (Figure 9c).

Figure 8 Percentage of patients in NSW, all response options, 2021

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



▼ Down from 67% in 2020

b. Was your family and home situation taken into account when you were discharged?†



▼ Down from 76% in 2020

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



▼ Down from 75% in 2020

* Based on the responses of 17,474 patients (94%) who wanted to be involved in decisions about their discharge from hospital.

† Based on the responses of 15,739 patients (84%) who had a family or home situation to take into account.

‡ Based on the responses of 17,623 patients (95%) who needed information about how to manage their care at home.

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

What could improve...

“

Operation was a success, even though I had to return a couple of days later as I had an infection and needed antibiotics.

”



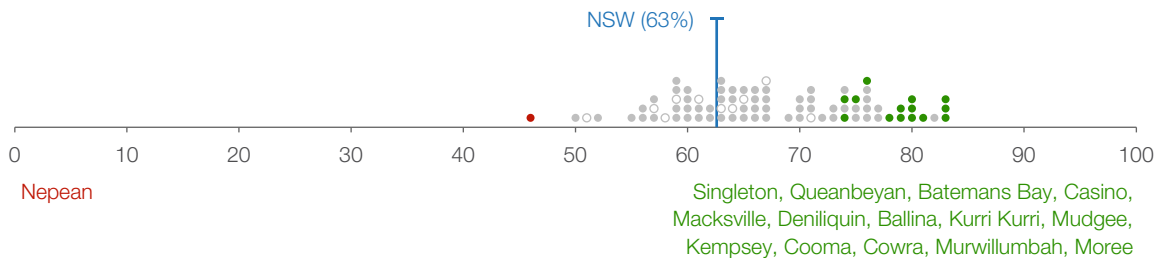
Eight in 10 patients (80%) received a document summarising their hospital care

Figure 9

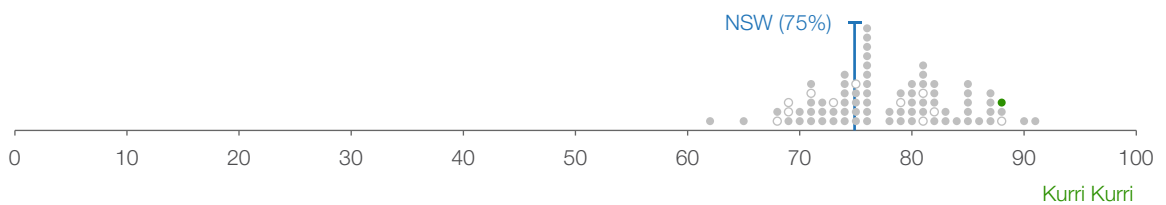
Percentage of patients in each hospital who selected the most positive response option, 2021

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

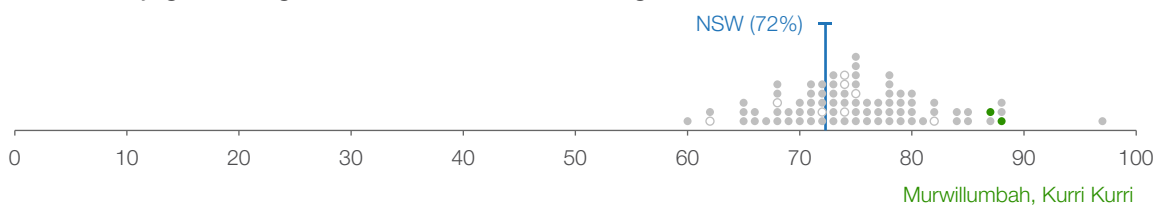
a. 'Definitely' involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their discharge from hospital



b. Family and home situation was 'definitely' taken into account when discharged



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



Note: A hospital is noted as having a result that is significantly higher or 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. Due to greater variability in hospital results with fewer respondents, hospitals marked 'Interpret with caution' are not compared with the NSW result.

Experiences in rural and urban hospitals

BHI conducted additional analyses for this Snapshot report to examine the experiences of the 8,973 patients who attended the 46 urban hospitals included in this survey, and the 10,331 patients who attended the 41 larger rural hospitals. Experiences were compared across the most positive response options.

Patients who attended rural and urban hospitals gave mostly positive ratings of their care. For the majority of questions in the survey, there were no significant differences between rural and urban patients.

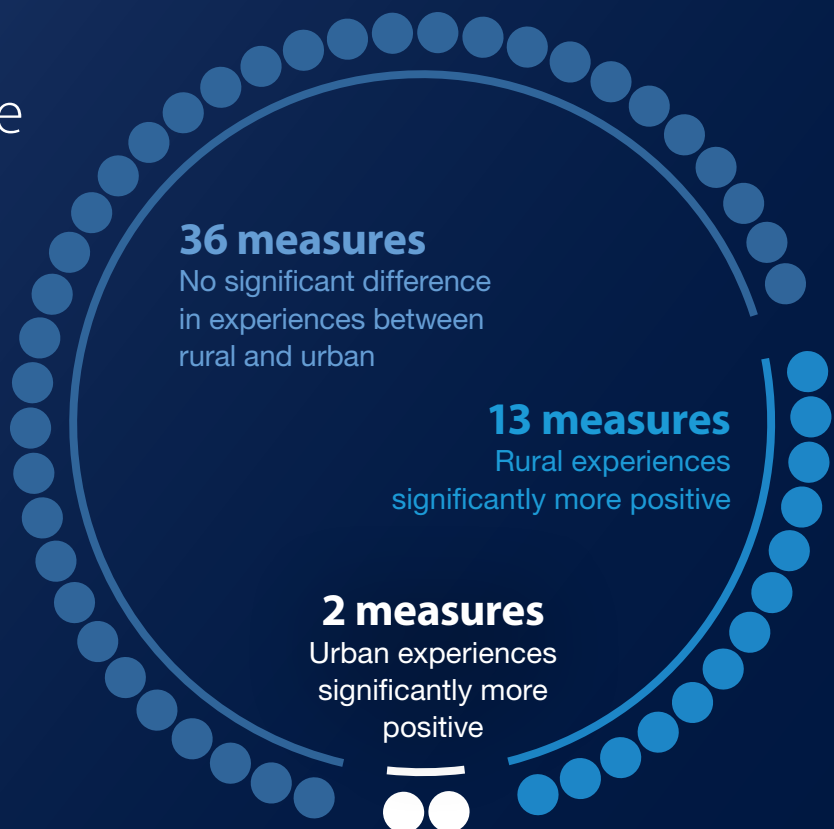
Patients in rural hospitals gave higher ratings for overall satisfaction and outcomes, timely and coordinated care, and a safe, comfortable environment. For example, 72% of patients in rural hospitals said that, overall, the care they received in hospital was 'very good', compared with 67% of patients in urban hospitals.

There were no significant differences between patients in urban and rural hospitals for questions related to involvement in decision-making, clear information and effective communication.

Patients in urban hospitals were more likely to say the health professionals who treated them introduced themselves (82%, compared with 80% for rural patients) and that they received a document summarising their care (84%, compared with 67% for rural patients).

Patient characteristics (age, gender, education level and language spoken at home) have been taken into account when identifying significant differences between urban and rural hospitals results. For more information, see the technical supplement. Detailed results for survey questions by patient groups, including rurality of hospital, are available on the BHI Data Portal at bhi.nsw.gov.au/data-portal

We compared experiences of care in rural and urban hospitals across 51 measures





Best part of care...

“ Considering how isolated the hospital is, to still be able to get the quality of medical care I did, is great. ”

What could improve...

“ Discharge took a very long time which is difficult for patients living many kilometres away from the hospital. Travelling late in the day is not ideal when you live in outback regions. ”

Experiences of virtual care

The use of virtual care (over the telephone or by video call) has continued to expand in recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Of patients who were admitted to hospital between July and December, 26% (1,819 patients) said they had a virtual care appointment with a hospital or outpatient clinic in the three months after their discharge. Nine in 10 of these patients (90%) said, overall, the care they received was ‘very good’ or ‘good’ (Figure 10a).

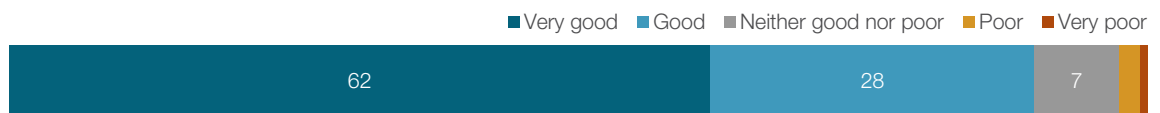
Almost eight in 10 patients (77%) said virtual care was ‘better’ or ‘about the same’ compared with in-person appointments. However, around two in 10 (23%) said virtual care was ‘not as good’ (Figure 10b).

More than eight in 10 patients (85%) said, if given the choice, they would ‘definitely’ (34%) or ‘in some circumstances’ (51%) use virtual care again (Figure 10c). The most frequently cited benefits from virtual care were convenience (66%) and saving time (53%).

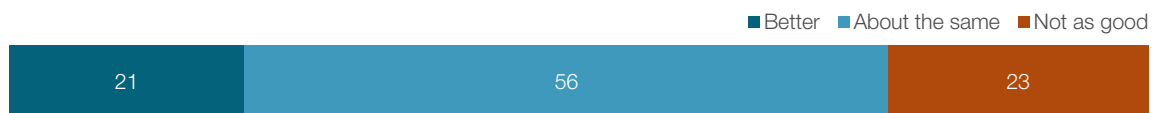
Compared with patients who had only one or two virtual care appointments, patients who had more than five were more likely to say they would ‘definitely’ use virtual care again. This was after adjusting for patient characteristics (data not shown).

Figure 10 **Percentage of patients in NSW who also had a virtual care appointment with a hospital or outpatient clinic in three months after discharge, all response options, discharged July to December 2021**

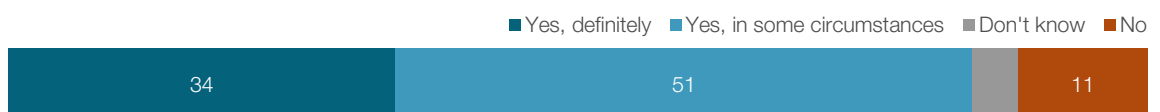
a. Overall, how would you rate the virtual care you received after discharge?



b. Compared with in-person appointments, was your virtual care experience...?



c. If given the choice, would you use virtual care again?



* Based on the responses of 1,819 patients (26%) who had a virtual care appointment in the three months after their discharge from hospital.

When asked about the benefits of virtual care after discharge, patients told us...

It was convenient

66%

They saved time

53%

They got the right care at the right time

41%

They felt at ease being in their own home/surroundings

41%



Best part of care...

“

I was very happy to have a video meeting with my family and carers at the hospital, as visitors were not allowed because of COVID.

”



What could improve...

“

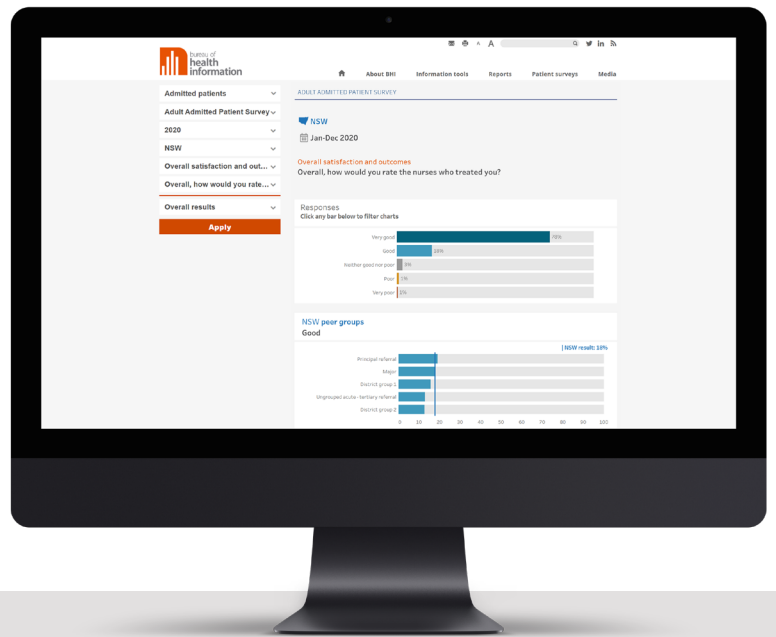
Virtual care was a problem as I had no computer.

”

Data portal

The **BHI Data Portal** is part of a transition to a digital-first way of reporting healthcare performance results in NSW, making them more accessible and user friendly.

The Data Portal allows you to find and compare activity and performance, and patient survey results, including for the larger individual hospitals and local health districts.



Adult Admitted Patient Survey



Emergency Department Patient Survey



Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey



Virtual Care 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 compassion, respect and kindness, involvement in decision-making, effective communication, and a safe, comfortable environment.

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) 210454
ISBN: 978-1-76081-920-0

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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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