

# 5 Waiting times for elective surgery

## Introduction

This chapter presents national statistics for elective surgery waiting times for the years 1999–00 to 2001–02, and a state and territory overview of elective surgery waiting times for 2001–02. Information on the number of days waited at the 50th and 90th percentiles by patients admitted from waiting lists for elective surgery, the proportion of patients waiting greater than 365 days, and the number of patients admitted is presented by public hospital peer group. Information is also included by the specialty of the surgeon who was to perform the elective surgery and by indicator procedure.

The data cover public hospitals only, except as noted below in the description of the scope of the data collection. Some smaller remote hospitals may have different patterns of service delivery compared to other hospitals because specialists providing elective surgery services visit these hospitals only periodically.

The waiting times data presented here are generally used as the main summary measure of elective surgery waiting times, although they provide measures of waiting times only for patients who complete their wait and are admitted. Most patients are admitted after waiting; however, 9% to 23% of patients are removed from waiting lists for other reasons, for example, they were admitted as an emergency patient for the awaited procedure; or they could not be contacted, had died, had been treated elsewhere or had declined the surgery.

The 50th percentile (the median or the middle value in a group of data arranged from lowest to highest) represents the number of days within which 50% of patients were admitted; half the waiting times will have been shorter, and half the waiting times longer, than the median. The 90th percentile data represent the number of days within which 90% of patients were admitted. The 50th and 90th percentiles were calculated using SAS version 8 and rounded to the nearest number of days.

Data are also presented on the number of patients added to waiting lists and the number of patients removed from waiting lists for admission or another reason. This provides information about the movement of patients onto and off waiting lists. Data on the reasons for removal (elective admission or another reason) are also presented.

*National Health Data Dictionary* definitions (NHDC 2001) are the basis of the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection and are summarised in the Glossary. However, some of the definitions used varied slightly among the states and territories in 2001–02 and in comparison with previous reporting periods. Comparisons between jurisdictions and between 2001–02 and previous reporting periods should therefore be made with reference to the notes on the definitions used and to previous reports (Moon 1996, AIHW 2000b, 2000c, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b).

## Variation in methods to calculate waiting times

Waiting times are generally calculated by comparing the date on which a patient was added to a waiting list with the date that they were admitted. Days on which the patient was 'not ready for care' are excluded.

There was some variation in the method the states and territories used to calculate waiting times for patients who changed clinical urgency category while they were on the waiting list, and for patients who were transferred from a waiting list managed by one hospital to that managed by another.

### Changed clinical urgency category

For patients who changed clinical urgency category, two methods were used:

- (a) counting the time waited in the most recent urgency category plus any time waited in more urgent categories, e.g. time waited in category 2, plus time spent previously in category 1 (this is the agreed national standard for counting);
- (b) counting the time waited in all urgency categories.

New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory counted the time waited in the most recent urgency category plus the time waited in previous urgency categories if the previous urgency categories were of higher urgency (a). South Australia counted total waiting time in all urgency categories (b).

Method (b) would have had the effect of increasing the apparent waiting for admissions in South Australia compared with other jurisdictions.

### Transfers between waiting lists

For patients who were transferred from a waiting list managed by one hospital to that managed by another, the time waited on the first list is not generally included in the waiting time reported to the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection. Therefore, the number of days waited reflects the waiting time on the list managed by the reporting hospital only. This would have the effect of shortening the reported waiting time compared with the time actually waited for these patients.

The Australian Capital Territory was able to report the total time waited on all waiting lists. This could have the effect of increasing the reported waiting time for admissions in the Australian Capital Territory compared with other jurisdictions. South Australia has indicated that it is uncommon for patients to be transferred from a waiting list managed by one public hospital to that managed by another in that jurisdiction.

## Waiting times and other data elements reported for elective surgery

Figure 5.1 presents data on patients admitted to hospital from elective surgery waiting lists for general surgery. The information presented by indicator procedure and public hospital peer groups is for all jurisdictions. The other information was only available for South Australia and Queensland because they provide data for elective surgery admissions linked

with the Queensland and South Australian data in the National Hospital Morbidity Database, respectively. This allows waiting times information for these patients to be analysed with other information relating to their admission for elective surgery. For South Australia, a total of 98.6% of records were linked, so 1.4% of elective surgery admissions were not included in the elective surgery waiting times data.

There were 136,078 admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for general surgery. The median waiting time for these patients was 23 days and 2.8% of these patients waited more than 12 months for admission. *Cholecystectomy* was the indicator procedure with the highest number of admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for general surgery.

For Queensland and South Australia combined, there were 36,795 admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for general surgery and these accounted for 91,487 patient days. The average length of stay was 2.5 days.

The most common procedure reported was *General anaesthesia* (Block 1910), and the most common principal diagnosis reported was *Cholelithiasis* (K80), followed by *Inguinal hernia* (K40). The most common AR-DRG reported was *Other skin, subcutaneous tissue and breast procedure* (J11Z).

The age group with the highest proportion of separations was 55–64 years and more separations were for males than for females. A large proportion of these patients had a separation mode of *Other*, suggesting that these patients went home after separation from hospital.

## State and territory overview

### Coverage

The National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection covers public acute hospitals only. Private hospitals are not included, except for two hospitals in New South Wales that were funded by the New South Wales Health Department to provide services for public patients. Some public patients treated under contract in private hospitals in Victoria and Tasmania are also included.

All public hospitals that undertake elective surgery are generally included; however, some are not. Table 5.2 shows that coverage of the collection (as indicated by the proportion of hospitals included) was highest for the *Principal referral and specialist women's and children's* peer group; all hospitals in this peer group were included. For the *Large hospital* peer group, data for six hospitals in Victoria, and the one hospital in Western Australia were not reported. Data for 56 out of 112 hospitals in the *Medium hospital* peer group were reported. Hospitals that were not included may not actually undertake elective surgery, may not have had waiting lists, or may have had different waiting list characteristics compared with reporting hospitals.

The methodology for assigning public hospital peer groups was adjusted slightly for 2001–02 compared to 1999–00 and 2000–01, so the data presented in Table 5.1 should be interpreted with reference to the information on public hospital peer groups provided in Appendix 4.

Table 5.2 also presents estimates of the proportions of elective surgery admissions that were covered by the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection. The Institute

derived these estimates from data provided by the states and territories for the National Hospital Morbidity Database, as:

- the number of separations with 'urgency of admission' reported as *elective* and a surgical procedure for public hospitals reporting to the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection as a proportion of the number of separations with 'urgency of admission' reported as *elective* and a surgical procedure for all public hospitals.

Separations for cosmetic surgery were excluded. The definition of 'surgical procedure' used for these estimates is detailed in the Glossary and based on the procedures used to define surgical Australian Refined Diagnosis Related Groups version 4.2 (DHAC 1998, 2000a, 2000b). Information about 'urgency of admission' is detailed in Chapter 6.

Based on this measure, overall coverage of the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection was about 84%, and ranged from 100% in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, to about 61% in South Australia (Table 5.2). Coverage was highest for the *Principal referral and specialist women's and children's* peer group hospitals at about 100%, and progressively lower for the *Large hospitals* and *Medium hospitals* groups.

For 1999–00 and 2000–01 (Table 5.1), estimates of the proportion of elective surgery admissions that were covered by the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection were based on all admissions, rather than on elective admissions only. This is because 'urgency of admission' was reported for the first time for 2000–01, and was not used that year in the calculation of the estimate because of concerns over data quality.

## Distribution of days waited

Overall, the median waiting time for patients who were admitted from waiting lists was 27 days in 1999–00, 2000–01 and 2001–02 (Table 5.1). In 2001–02, this ranged from 23 days in Queensland to 40 days in the Australian Capital Territory. Ninety per cent of patients were admitted within 203 days in 2001–02, compared with 202 days in 2000–01 and 175 days in 1999–00. In 2001–02 this ranged from 132 days in Queensland to 339 days in Tasmania.

The shortest median waiting time was for patients admitted from waiting lists in hospitals in the *Principal referral and specialist women's and children's* peer group (24 days). In the *Large hospitals* and *Medium hospitals* peer groups, it was 33 days and 32 days respectively.

## Proportion waiting more than 12 months

Overall, the proportion of patients admitted after waiting more than 12 months was 4.5% in 2001–02 compared with 4.4% in 2000–01 and 3.1% in 1999–00 (Table 5.1). In 2001–02 this proportion varied among the states and territories, ranging from 3.6% in Queensland and South Australia to 9.0% in Tasmania.

In the *Principal referral and specialist women's and children's* peer group, 4.2% of patients were admitted after waiting more than 365 days, as were 5.0% of patients in the *Large hospitals* peer group, and 4.7% of patients in the *Medium hospitals* peer group.

## Admissions from waiting lists

Hospitals in the *Principal referral and specialist women's and children's* peer group accounted for 62.4% of admissions from elective surgery waiting lists in 2001–02 compared with 66.2% in 2000–01 and 65.5% in 1999–00 and respectively. Another 23.0% were reported for

hospitals in the *Large hospitals* peer group in 2001–02, compared with 19.3% in 2000–01 and 18.2% in 1999–00. In 2001–02, 12.3% of admissions were in the *Medium hospitals* peer group, compared with 13.4% in 2000–01 and 14.0% in 1999–00 (Table 5.1). Overall, for 2001–02, the number of admissions from waiting lists ranged from 6,395 in the Northern Territory to 186,229 in New South Wales (Table 5.2).

There were 26.0 admissions reported for elective surgery per 1,000 population (crude rate) for Australia overall in 2001–02, compared with 26.4 in 2000–01 and 27.7 in 1999–00 (Table 5.1).

## Additions and removals from waiting lists

Table 5.3 shows the movement of patients on and off waiting lists in 2001–02. Patients are removed from waiting lists either when they are admitted on an elective basis for the procedure for which they were waiting or for a range of other reasons such as admission as an emergency patient for the procedure for which they were waiting; the surgery not being required; or the patient not being able to be contacted by the hospital, having died, having the surgery elsewhere or declining the surgery (see the Glossary for a full description of the categories).

Of total removals (elective admissions and other), elective admissions accounted for the greatest proportion overall (85.3%), ranging from 76.6% in the Australian Capital Territory to 87.3% in New South Wales.

Information on the reason for removal other than elective admission for the awaited procedure was not available for Queensland. For the other states and territories, surgery not required or declined was the reason for removal with the greatest proportion of removals (16.8%, 35,761 patients) following admissions as elective patients. A further 1.2% of patients (2,570) were admitted as emergency patients, 3.7% (7,912) could not be contacted and 7.1% (15,178) were treated elsewhere. The reason for removal was not reported for 1.4% (6,325) of patients who were removed from waiting lists.

## Specialty of surgeon

Table 5.4 shows the distribution of days waited by patients admitted from waiting lists, the proportion who waited more than 12 months and the total number of patients admitted from waiting lists in 2001–02, by the specialty of the surgeon who was to perform the surgery and by state and territory.

## Distribution of waiting times

Ophthalmology and orthopaedic surgery were the surgical specialties with the longest median waiting times (57 and 45 days respectively). All other surgical specialties except ear, nose and throat surgery had median waiting times of less than 30 days; cardio-thoracic surgery had the shortest median waiting time (12 days).

The median waiting time varied markedly among the states and territories for orthopaedic surgery, with 50% of patients being admitted within 24 days in Queensland and within 168 days in Tasmania. For plastic surgery, variation in the median waiting time was less marked, ranging from 20 days in Western Australia to 43 days in the Northern Territory.

The length of time by which 90% of patients had been admitted also varied by surgical specialty, from 75 days for cardio-thoracic surgery to 395 days for ophthalmology.

## **Proportion waiting more than 12 months**

Ophthalmology and orthopaedic surgery were the specialties with the highest proportion of patients who waited more than a year to be admitted (11.9% and 8.0% respectively). Cardiothoracic surgery had the lowest proportion of patients who waited more than a year (0.2%), followed by gynaecology (1.2%) and neurosurgery (1.5%).

There was marked variation among the states and territories in the proportion of patients who waited more than a year to be admitted for some surgical specialties. For example, 3.9% of patients admitted for orthopaedic surgery waited more than a year in Queensland, compared with 28.5% of patients in Tasmania. For ophthalmology, 4.3% of patients waited more than a year to be admitted in Victoria and South Australia, compared with 36.3% of patients in Tasmania.

## **Admissions from waiting lists**

Nationally, admissions from waiting lists were highest for general surgery (136,078) and lowest for neurosurgery (8,517). Admissions from waiting lists were highest for general surgery for all jurisdictions. Neurosurgery had the lowest number of admissions for all states and territories where it is undertaken.

## **Indicator procedures**

Indicator procedures are procedures, which are of high volume and are often associated with long waits. Table 5.5 shows state and territory data on the distribution of days waited by patients admitted from waiting lists, the proportion of patients who waited more than 12 months to be admitted from waiting lists and the total number of patients admitted from waiting lists for elective surgery in 2001–02, by indicator procedure.

## **Distribution of days waited**

Nationally, the indicator procedure with the lowest median waiting time was coronary artery bypass graft (16 days) and the indicator procedure with the highest median waiting time was total knee replacement (131 days).

There was marked variation among the states and territories in the median waiting time for septoplasty, ranging from 59 days in Queensland to 228 days in Tasmania and 309 days in the Northern Territory.

The length of time by which 90% of patients had been admitted also varied by indicator procedure, from 96 days for coronary artery bypass graft to 546 days for septoplasty.

## **Proportion waiting more than 12 months**

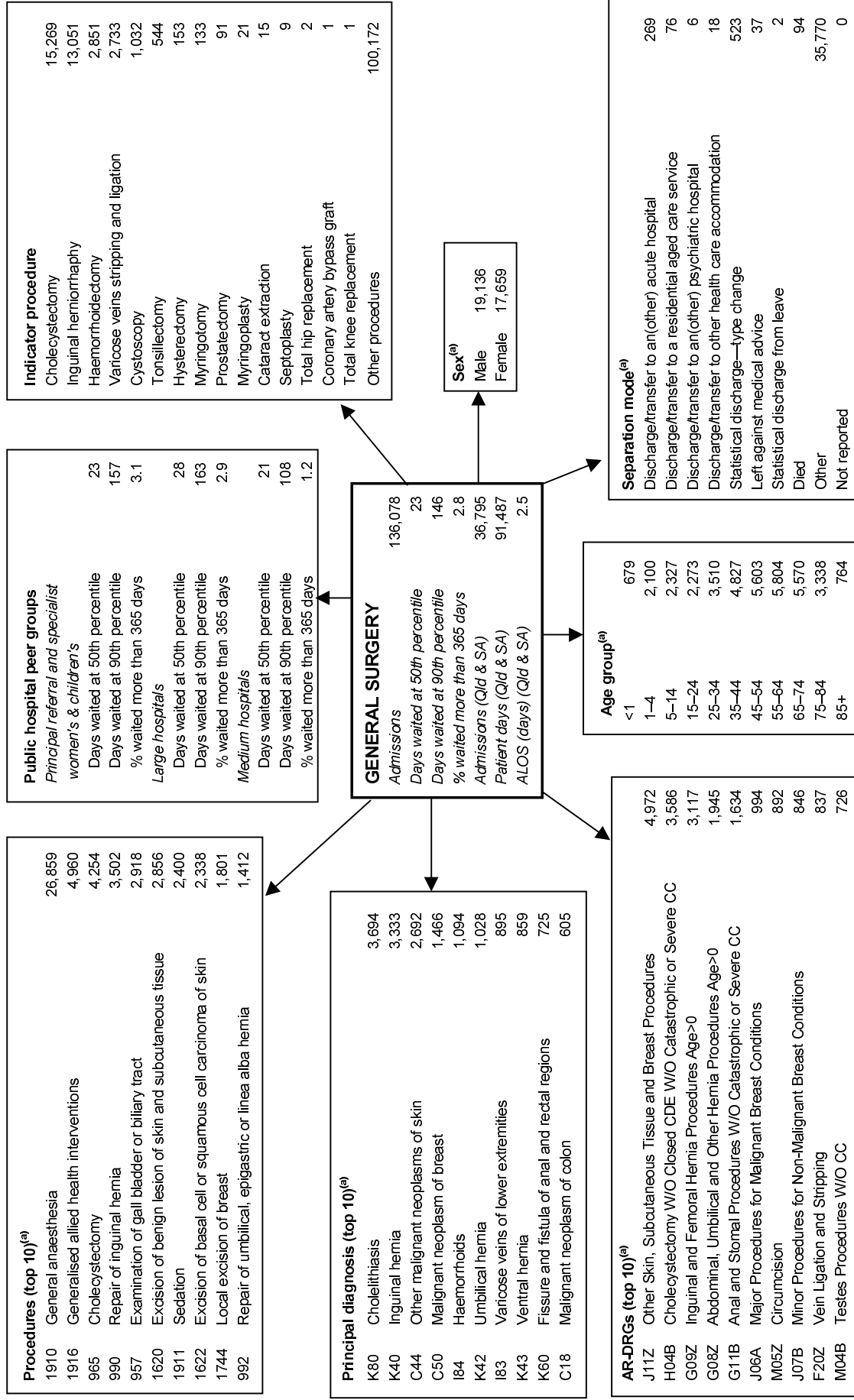
The indicator procedure with the highest proportion of patients waiting more than a year was total knee replacement (19.4%), followed by septoplasty (18.9%). The lowest proportion of patients waiting more than a year were waiting for a coronary artery bypass graft (0.4%).

The proportion of patients admitted from waiting lists who waited more than a year varied among the states and territories. For example, 5.1% of patients waited more than a year for admission for cataract extraction in Victoria, compared with 56.6% in Tasmania. For total hip replacement, the proportion ranged from 4.5% in the Northern Territory to 38.5% in Tasmania.

## **Admissions from waiting lists**

Overall, 31.8% of patients admitted for elective surgery were waiting for one of the indicator procedures. There was some variation among the states and territories: Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory had the highest proportion of admissions for the indicator procedures (33.9%) and the Northern Territory had the lowest proportion (20.6%).

Cataract extraction was the highest volume indicator procedure for all jurisdictions except Queensland and Tasmania, where cystoscopy was the highest. Myringoplasty was the lowest volume indicator procedure for all states and territories except Tasmania, where prostatectomy was the lowest, and the Northern Territory, where myringotomy was the lowest. Coronary artery bypass grafts are not done in the Northern Territory.



(a) These data are supplied to the National Hospital Morbidity Database for South Australia and Queensland only.

Note: Main abbreviations: CC—complications and comorbidities, W/O—without, Inj—injury, W—with, Cat—catastrophic, CDE—common duct exploration, ALOS—average length of stay.

**Figure 5.1: Interrelationships of a specialist of surgeon (General surgery) with other data elements, all hospitals, 2001–02**

**Table 5.1: Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by public hospital peer group<sup>(a)</sup>, Australia, 1999–00 to 2001–02**

	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02
<b>Principal referral and specialist women's &amp; children's hospitals</b>			
Number of hospitals in peer group	66	68	66
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	65	67	66
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) <sup>(d)</sup>	100	99	100
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	349,477	333,013	317,275
Days waited at 50th percentile	24	26	24
Days waited at 90th percentile	177	194	184
% waited more than 365 days	3.4	4.2	4.2
<b>Large hospitals</b>			
Number of hospitals in peer group	45	46	47
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	35	37	40
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) <sup>(d)</sup>	77	79	84
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	96,104	98,315	116,882
Days waited at 50th percentile	31	30	33
Days waited at 90th percentile	174	207	229
% waited more than 365 days	2.7	4.6	5.0
<b>Medium hospitals</b>			
Number of hospitals in peer group	112	112	112
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	60	60	56
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) <sup>(d)</sup>	58	56	53
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	73,851	68,317	62,430
Days waited at 50th percentile	28	30	32
Days waited at 90th percentile	166	221	231
% waited more than 365 days	2.4	4.4	4.7
<b>Total<sup>(b)</sup></b>			
Total number of hospitals	722	719	723
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	191	195	193
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) <sup>(d)</sup>	85	85	84
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	527,910	508,290	508,371
Admissions per 1,000 population <sup>(f)</sup>	27.7	26.4	26.0
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	27	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	175	202	203
% waited more than 365 days	3.1	4.4	4.5

(a) The methodology used to assign public hospital peer groups was adjusted for 2001–02 compared to 1999–00 and 2000–01. See Appendix 4

(b) Includes data for hospitals not included in the specified hospital peer groups and some private hospitals contracted to do elective surgery

(c) Number of hospitals reporting to the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection. See Appendix 4 for further information.

(d) For 1999–00 and 2000–01 this is the number of separations with a surgical procedure for public hospitals reporting to the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection as a proportion of the number of separations with a surgical procedure for all public hospitals.

For 2001–02, this is the number of separations with urgency of admission reported as 'elective' and a surgical procedure for public hospitals reporting to the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection as a proportion of separations with urgency of admission reported as 'elective' and a surgical procedure for all public hospitals. Urgency of admission was reported for the first time in 2000–01.

It was not used to calculate the estimated coverage for that year because of concerns about data quality

(e) Number of admissions for elective surgery reported to the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection.

(f) Crude rate.

**Table 5.2: Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, states and territories, by hospital peer group, 2001–02**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Principal referral and specialist women's &amp; children's hospitals</b>									
Number of hospitals in peer group	20	18	16	4	4	2	1	1	66
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	20	18	16	4	4	2	1	1	66
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations <sup>(d)</sup> (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	89,299	83,257	79,135	21,784	24,796	10,612	4,460	3,932	317,275
Days waited at 50th percentile	22	27	21	23	32	33	n.p.	n.p.	24
Days waited at 90th percentile	161	218	131	224	195	323	n.p.	n.p.	184
% waited more than 365 days	3.4	5.0	3.7	4.8	3.3	8.6	n.p.	n.p.	4.2
<b>Large hospitals</b>									
Number of hospitals in peer group	21	12	7	1	3	1	1	1	47
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	21	6	7	0	3	1	1	1	40
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations <sup>(d)</sup> (%)	100	60	100	n.a.	100	100	100	100	84
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	51,313	25,620	22,301	n.a.	9,881	2,447	3,566	1,754	116,882
Days waited at 50th percentile	34	29	27	n.a.	41	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	33
Days waited at 90th percentile	278	189	137	n.a.	229	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	229
% waited more than 365 days	6.6	2.4	3.4	n.a.	4.4	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	5.0
<b>Medium hospitals</b>									
Number of hospitals in peer group	41	29	17	12	13	0	0	n.a.	112
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	40	1	9	6	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	56
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations <sup>(d)</sup> (%)	100	6	77	72	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	53
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	38,286	2,084	5,012	17,048	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	62,430
Days waited at 50th percentile	35	n.p.	29	27	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	32
Days waited at 90th percentile	269	n.p.	112	210	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	231
% waited more than 365 days	5.8	n.p.	1.4	3.3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4.7

(continued)

**Table 5.2 (continued): Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by hospital peer group, states and territories, 2001-02**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Total<sup>(a)(b)</sup></b>									
Total number of hospitals	221	144	157	89	80	25	2	5	723
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	107	26	33	10	7	3	2	5	193
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations <sup>(d)</sup> (%)	100	70	98	72	61	99	100	100	84
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	186,229	112,309	108,844	38,832	34,677	13,059	8,026	6,395	508,371
Admissions per 1,000 population <sup>(f)</sup>	28	23	30	20	23	28	25	32	26
Days waited at 50th percentile	28	28	23	25	34	34	40	29	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	220	210	132	217	203	339	268	230	203
% waited more than 365 days	5.0	4.4	3.6	4.1	3.6	9.0	6.8	4.4	4.5

(a) Includes data for hospitals not included in the specified hospital peer groups.

(b) Includes data for two private hospitals contracted to do elective surgery in New South Wales.

(c) Number of hospitals reporting to the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection.

(d) The number of separations with urgency of admission reported as 'elective' and a surgical procedure for public hospitals reporting to the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection as a proportion of the number of separations with urgency of admission of 'elective' and a surgical procedure for all public hospitals.

(e) Number of admissions for elective surgery reported to the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection.

(f) Crude rate.

n.a. not applicable.

n.p. not published because there was only one hospital in the peer group.

**Table 5.3: Additions to and removals from waiting lists, states and territories, 2001–02**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Additions</b>	<b>218,414</b>	<b>129,531</b>	<b>125,939</b>	<b>42,520</b>	<b>40,279</b>	<b>14,964</b>	<b>7,126</b>	<b>6,967</b>	<b>585,740</b>
<b>Removals<sup>(a)</sup></b>									
Admitted as an elective patient <sup>(b)</sup>	186,229	112,309	108,844	38,832	34,677	13,059	8,026	6,395	508,371
Admitted as an emergency admission	1,457	714	..	270	0	113	6	10	2,570
Could not be contacted/died	3,437	2,239	..	634	561	738	303	..	7,912
Treated elsewhere	8,444	3,666	..	1,000	868	463	737	..	15,178
Surgery not required or declined	13,717	11,857	..	5,541	2,244	996	1,406	..	35,761
Not reported <sup>(c)</sup>	n.a.	1,764	19,783	1,220	1,811	n.a.	n.a.	1,530	26,108
<b>Total removals</b>	<b>213,284</b>	<b>132,549</b>	<b>128,627</b>	<b>47,497</b>	<b>40,161</b>	<b>15,369</b>	<b>10,478</b>	<b>7,935</b>	<b>595,900</b>

(a) See Glossary for a full description of these categories.

(b) For Tasmania and the Northern Territory, small numbers of emergency admissions were included with the elective admissions.

(c) For the Australian Capital Territory, includes a small number of cases with invalid reason for removal codes.

.. not available.

n.a. not applicable.

**Table 5.4: Waiting list statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by speciality of surgeon, states and territories, 2001–02**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Cardio-thoracic</b>									
Admissions	4,226	3,395	3,407	952	721	502	265	0	13,468
Days waited at 50th percentile	13	8	11	12	13	28	19	n.a.	12
Days waited at 90th percentile	77	49	84	58	83	144	48	n.a.	75
Proportion waited more than 12 months	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	n.a.	0.2
<b>Ear, nose &amp; throat surgery</b>									
Admissions	13,882	11,823	8,638	3,658	3,795	818	796	565	43,975
Days waited at 50th percentile	48	36	32	59	49	33	50	70	42
Days waited at 90th percentile	322	287	285	364	280	331	343	395	311
Proportion waited more than 12 months	8.1	7.2	8.2	9.9	5.5	8.8	9.2	13.3	7.9
<b>General surgery</b>									
Admissions	56,963	26,958	28,581	8,993	8,214	3,149	1,235	1,985	136,078
Days waited at 50th percentile	22	24	23	19	30	32	26	61	23
Days waited at 90th percentile	132	182	114	131	155	277	162	281	146
Proportion waited more than 12 months	2.1	3.9	2.8	2.2	1.7	7.2	4.0	4.8	2.8
<b>Gynaecology</b>									
Admissions	32,427	13,112	17,242	6,066	4,860	2,483	1,224	1,846	79,260
Days waited at 50th percentile	23	29	23	17	26	26	29	7	23
Days waited at 90th percentile	115	175	86	58	124	135	143	71	109
Proportion waited more than 12 months	1.1	2.3	1.0	0.2	0.8	1.1	1.9	0.8	1.2
<b>Neurosurgery</b>									
Admissions	3,042	2,148	1,466	695	703	206	257	0	8,517
Days waited at 50th percentile	16	17	10	18	16	53	37	n.a.	17
Days waited at 90th percentile	68	128	123	131	113	300	144	n.a.	110
Proportion waited more than 12 months	0.7	1.4	2.9	0.9	0.7	7.8	1.2	n.a.	1.5
<b>Ophthalmology</b>									
Admissions	19,064	13,854	7,313	4,789	3,741	645	720	694	50,820
Days waited at 50th percentile	98	37	26	88	42	154	82	160	57
Days waited at 90th percentile	441	227	464	322	264	557	621	308	395
Proportion waited more than 12 months	19.0	4.3	12.9	5.8	4.3	36.3	27.1	5.5	11.9
<b>Orthopaedic surgery</b>									
Admissions	25,443	15,842	18,896	4,778	4,190	1,633	1,531	824	73,137
Days waited at 50th percentile	50	49	24	70	74	168	79	77	45
Days waited at 90th percentile	358	307	174	382	330	616	340	276	320
Proportion waited more than 12 months	9.6	7.4	3.9	10.9	7.9	28.5	8.8	5.0	8.0

(continued)

**Table 5.4 (continued): Waiting list statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by specialty of surgeon, states and territories, 2001–02**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Plastic surgery</b>									
Admissions	7,365	9,411	7,365	3,079	3,372	1,179	296	98	32,165
Days waited at 50th percentile	23	24	24	20	28	37	41	43	25
Days waited at 90th percentile	118	164	118	218	174	219	267	244	142
Proportion waited more than 12 months	1.2	3.6	2.0	4.8	4.3	3.9	4.4	7.1	2.9
<b>Urology</b>									
Admissions	16,428	11,216	8,034	4,126	4,097	1,717	977	88	46,683
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	27	25	17	41	28	34	57	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	131	180	117	74	201	221	164	243	147
Proportion waited more than 12 months	2.4	3.2	2.1	1.1	5.6	4.5	1.3	5.7	2.8
<b>Vascular surgery</b>									
Admissions	4,170	2,341	2,383	829	925	244	295	0	11,187
Days waited at 50th percentile	13	18	17	20	9	21	19	n.a.	14
Days waited at 90th percentile	77	257	113	183	46	189	334	n.a.	118
Proportion waited more than 12 months	1.1	7.0	5.5	3.0	0.6	1.6	8.8	n.a.	3.6
<b>Other</b>									
Admissions	3,219	2,209	5,519	867	59	483	430	93	12,879
Days waited at 50th percentile	7	23	15	8	5	5	38	10	13
Days waited at 90th percentile	106	116	113	34	31	20	206	88	112
Proportion waited more than 12 months	0.2	1.4	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	4.2	1.1	0.7
<b>Total</b>									
Admissions	186,229	112,309	108,844	38,832	34,677	13,059	8,026	6,395	508,371
Days waited at 50th percentile	28	28	23	25	34	34	40	29	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	220	210	132	217	203	339	268	230	203
Proportion waited more than 12 months	5.0	4.4	3.6	4.1	3.6	9.0	6.8	4.4	4.5

n.a. not applicable.

**Table 5.5: Waiting list statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2001–02**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Cataract extraction</b>									
Admissions	14,345	9,232	4,567	3,503	2,431	394	615	487	35,574
Days waited at 50th percentile	159	53	30	113	60	395	98	175	88
Days waited at 90th percentile	471	256	544	322	303	632	638	313	430
Proportion waited more than 12 months	24.1	5.1	16.8	5.2	5.9	56.6	31.2	6.4	15.4
<b>Cholecystectomy</b>									
Admissions	6,517	3,321	3,233	797	874	395	186	143	15,466
Days waited at 50th percentile	40	44	40	29	48	74	68	65	41
Days waited at 90th percentile	210	234	149	143	167	406	289	291	205
Proportion waited more than 12 months	4.6	4.6	2.9	1.3	0.8	11.9	7.5	7.0	4.1
<b>Coronary artery bypass graft</b>									
Admissions	1,691	1,465	1,497	408	428	328	168	0	5,985
Days waited at 50th percentile	21	10	17	17	16	39	16	n.a.	16
Days waited at 90th percentile	111	64	101	66	83	155	45	n.a.	96
Proportion waited more than 12 months	0.1	1.4	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	n.a.	0.4
<b>Cystoscopy</b>									
Admissions	10,600	6,531	4,775	1,703	1,887	592	559	245	26,892
Days waited at 50th percentile	28	28	27	18	52	32	41	47	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	119	165	134	94	233	210	177	247	145
Proportion waited more than 12 months	1.9	2.5	2.1	2.1	6.0	1.9	1.4	4.1	2.4
<b>Haemorrhoidectomy</b>									
Admissions	1,240	627	515	232	217	36	15	14	2,896
Days waited at 50th percentile	35	61	38	28	51	112	52	136	40
Days waited at 90th percentile	209	395	213	182	300	516	413	334	272
Proportion waited more than 12 months	4.4	10.5	7.4	3.9	4.1	25.0	13.3	7.1	6.5
<b>Hysterectomy</b>									
Admissions	4,320	1,664	2,154	1,076	609	378	177	26	10,404
Days waited at 50th percentile	38	40	34	27	41	67	52	46	36
Days waited at 90th percentile	176	238	107	79	152	221	251	146	162
Proportion waited more than 12 months	2.4	3.1	1.4	0.3	0.8	3.7	4.0	3.8	2.1
<b>Inguinal herniorrhaphy</b>									
Admissions	5,594	2,870	2,630	966	724	307	160	135	13,386
Days waited at 50th percentile	34	39	35	25	61	95	65	105	36
Days waited at 90th percentile	201	230	153	153	202	585	362	364	207
Proportion waited more than 12 months	3.3	5.4	3.8	2.2	2.3	16.3	10.0	9.6	4.2

(continued)

**Table 5.5 (continued): Waiting list statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2001–02**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Myringoplasty</b>									
Admissions	358	337	345	178	99	26	11	38	1,392
Days waited at 50th percentile	102	104	73	121	63	213	147	225	98
Days waited at 90th percentile	454	396	838	479	369	1610	760	643	503
Proportion waited more than 12 months	17.3	13.4	20.3	18.5	10.1	42.3	27.3	31.6	17.7
<b>Myringotomy</b>									
Admissions	648	2,498	1,705	715	638	119	154	9	6,486
Days waited at 50th percentile	24	25	36	47	44	18	50	n.p.	32
Days waited at 90th percentile	153	99	145	238	111	83	187	n.p.	137
Proportion waited more than 12 months	1.7	1.1	1.2	5.3	0.8	1.7	2.6	n.p.	1.6
<b>Prostatectomy</b>									
Admissions	2,339	1,281	773	341	490	11	12	25	5,272
Days waited at 50th percentile	31	28	27	19	41	35	98	74	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	179	233	123	88	408	47	219	228	191
Proportion waited more than 12 months	3.7	4.8	3.8	0.6	12.4	0.0	0.0	4.0	4.6
<b>Septoplasty</b>									
Admissions	1,068	1,351	618	496	187	36	66	29	3,851
Days waited at 50th percentile	106	114	59	73	168	228	183	309	105
Days waited at 90th percentile	430	583	910	511	494	838	480	451	546
Proportion waited more than 12 months	13.7	21.3	24.6	15.3	18.2	22.2	16.7	37.9	18.9
<b>Tonsillectomy</b>									
Admissions	3,833	3,225	2,662	907	787	36	160	87	11,697
Days waited at 50th percentile	87	47	45	85	72	83	113	135	63
Days waited at 90th percentile	401	288	365	378	342	345	425	398	368
Proportion waited more than 12 months	12.8	6.9	10.0	10.7	7.2	5.6	21.3	17.2	10.1
<b>Total hip replacement</b>									
Admissions	2,222	1,468	1,099	387	415	169	145	22	5,927
Days waited at 50th percentile	111	110	56	88	103	264	91	114	96
Days waited at 90th percentile	450	378	250	334	270	628	341	227	395
Proportion waited more than 12 months	14.8	10.8	6.3	8.0	6.7	38.5	6.9	4.5	11.7
<b>Total knee replacement</b>									
Admissions	3,191	1,399	1,360	372	495	126	199	22	7,164
Days waited at 50th percentile	174	129	69	174	135	404	139	102	131
Days waited at 90th percentile	598	448	350	524	338	774	361	243	524
Proportion waited more than 12 months	26.9	14.8	9.3	20.4	7.7	51.6	9.0	0.0	19.4

(continued)

**Table 5.5 (continued): Waiting list statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2001–02**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Varicose veins stripping &amp; ligation</b>									
Admissions	1,683	857	874	197	346	42	94	33	4,126
Days waited at 50th percentile	53	126	86	43	109	129	181	201	73
Days waited at 90th percentile	320	757	762	538	439	457	515	377	532
Proportion waited more than 12 months	7.4	25.1	24.3	17.3	13.3	16.7	26.6	12.1	16.2
<b>Not applicable/not stated</b>									
Admissions	126,580	74,183	80,037	26,554	24,050	10,064	5,305	5,080	346,773
Days waited at 50th percentile	21	23	20	20	27	28	29	29	22
Days waited at 90th percentile	135	176	109	166	165	254	196	222	146
Proportion waited more than 12 months	2.3	3.5	2.2	3.6	2.9	6.5	3.8	0.0	2.8
<b>Total</b>									
Admissions	186,229	112,309	108,844	38,832	34,677	13,059	8,026	6,395	508,371
Days waited at 50th percentile	28	28	23	25	34	34	40	41	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	220	210	132	217	203	339	268	254	203
Proportion waited more than 12 months	5.0	4.4	3.6	4.1	3.6	9.0	6.8	4.4	4.5

n.a. not applicable.

n.p. not published because the number of admissions was less than 10.