

# 5 Waiting times for elective surgery

## Introduction

This chapter presents national statistics for elective surgery waiting times for the years 1999–00 to 2002–03, and a state and territory overview of elective surgery waiting times for 2002–03. 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 reason for removal from waiting lists, the specialty of the surgeon who was to perform the elective surgery and by indicator procedure.

The number of patients added to waiting lists and the number of patients removed from waiting lists for admission or another reason are presented in this chapter. This provides information about the movement of patients onto and off waiting lists.

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.

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 for patients who complete their wait and are admitted for their surgery on an elective basis are generally used as the main summary measure of elective surgery waiting times. Most patients are admitted after waiting; however, 7% to 20% 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.

*National Health Data Dictionary* definitions (AIHW 2002b) 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 2002–03 and in comparison with previous reporting periods. Comparisons between jurisdictions and between 2002–03 and previous reporting periods should therefore be made with reference to the notes on the definitions used and to previous reports (AIHW 2002a, 2002c, 2003a).

## 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.

For Queensland, waiting times for elective admissions were calculated using data for elective surgery waiting list records that were linked to the Queensland data in the National Hospital Morbidity Database. A total of 96.3% of the records were linked, so 3.7% of the records were not included in these calculations.

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, for example 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.

New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory were 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 these states and territories 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 ear, nose and throat surgery. The information presented by indicator procedure and public hospital peer groups is for all jurisdictions. The other information was only available for Queensland and South Australia 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 Queensland, a total of 96.3% of elective surgery waiting times records were linked, and 99.3% of records were linked for South Australia.

There were 44,146 admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for ear, nose and throat surgery in 2002–03. The median waiting time for these patients was 40 days and 7.0% of these patients waited more than 365 days for admission. *Tonsillectomy* was the indicator procedure with the highest number of admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for ear, nose and throat surgery.

For Queensland and South Australia combined, there were 12,402 admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for ear, nose and surgery and these accounted for 19,951 patient days. The average length of stay was 1.6 days.

The most common procedure reported was *Cerebral anaesthesia* (Block 1910), and the most common principal diagnosis reported was *Chronic diseases of tonsils and adenoids* (J35), followed by *Nonsuppurative otitis media* (H65). The most common AR-DRG reported was *Tonsillectomy and/or Adenoidectomy* (D11Z).

The age group with the highest proportion of separations was 5–14 years and more separations were for males than for females. A large proportion (98.8%) 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 in 2002–03 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 hospitals* peer group; only one hospital in this peer group was not included. For the *Large hospitals* peer group, data for six hospitals in Victoria and one hospitals in Western Australia were not reported. Data for 56 out of 106 hospitals in the *Medium hospitals* 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 and 2002–03 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 AIHW 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 AR-DRGs version 5.0 (DoHA 2003). 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 85%, and ranged from 100% in New South Wales, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory to about 64% in South Australia (Table 5.2). Coverage was highest for the *Principal referral and specialist women’s and children’s hospitals* peer group hospitals at about 99%, 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.

## **Admissions from waiting lists for elective surgery**

Hospitals in the *Principal referral and specialist women’s and children’s hospitals* peer group accounted for 65.6% of admissions from elective surgery waiting lists in 2002–03 compared with 62.4% in 2001–02, 65.5% in 2000–01 and 66.2% in 1999–00 respectively. Another 21.0% were reported for hospitals in the *Large hospitals* peer group in 2002–03, compared with 23.0% in 2001–02, 19.3% in 2000–01 and 18.2% in 1999–00. In 2002–03, 11.4% of admissions were in the *Medium hospitals* peer group, compared with 12.3% in 2001–02, 13.4% in 2000–01 and 14.0% in 1999–00 (Table 5.1). Overall, for 2002–03, the number of admissions from waiting lists ranged from 6,513 in the Northern Territory to 186,443 in New South Wales (Table 5.2).

There were 26.2 admissions reported for elective surgery per 1,000 population (crude rate) for Australia overall in 2002–03, compared with 26.0 in 2001–02, 26.4 in 2000–01 and 27.7 in 1999–00 (Table 5.1).

## **Distribution of days waited**

Overall, the median waiting time for patients who were admitted from waiting lists was 28 days in 2002–03, compared with 27 days in 1999–00, 2000–01 and 2001–02 (Table 5.1). In

2002–03, this ranged from 21 days in Queensland to 48 days in the Australian Capital Territory (Table 5.2). Ninety per cent of patients were admitted within 197 days in 2002–03, compared with 203 days in 2001–02, 202 days in 2000–01 and 175 days in 1999–00. In 2002–03 this ranged from 113 days in Queensland to 389 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 hospitals* peer group (26 days). In the *Large hospitals* and *Medium hospitals* peer groups, it was 31 days and 34 days, respectively.

### **Proportion waiting more than 365 days**

Overall, the proportion of patients admitted after waiting more than 365 days was 4.0% in 2002–03 compared with 4.5% in 2001–02, 4.4% in 2000–01 and 3.1% in 1999–00 (Table 5.1). In 2002–03 this proportion varied among the states and territories, ranging from 2.6% in Queensland to 10.9% in Tasmania (Table 5.2).

In the *Principal referral and specialist women's and children's hospitals* peer group, 3.9% of patients were admitted after waiting more than 365 days, as were 4.2% of patients in the *Large hospitals* peer group, and 3.6% of patients in the *Medium hospitals* peer group.

### **Additions and removals from waiting lists**

Table 5.3 includes data on the total number of patients added to and removed from waiting lists and the distribution of days waited by patients removed from waiting lists. Information on the waiting times for patients removed from waiting lists for all removal categories was available for the first time this year.

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 *National Health data Dictionary* for a full description of the categories).

Of total removals (elective admissions and other), elective admissions accounted for the greatest proportion overall (86.0%), ranging from 76.9% in the Northern Territory to 89.8% in South Australia.

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 (7.4%, 34,897 patients) following admissions as elective patients. A further 0.7% of patients (3,541) were admitted as emergency patients, 1.5% (7,142) could not be contacted and 3.0% (14,217) were treated elsewhere. The reason for removal was not reported for 1.2% (5,719) of patients who were removed from waiting lists. The Northern Territory collects data on all reason for removal categories, however data was only reported in three categories; elective admissions, emergency admissions and not reported. Data for the Northern Territory for all reason for removal categories is available on the website at <http://www.aihw.gov/au>.

## **Distribution of waiting times**

The reason for removal category with the shortest median waiting time was 'emergency admission' with 11 days, and the longest median waiting time was 292 days for 'not contactable/died'.

The length of time by which 90% of patients were removed from waiting lists varied between states and territories in most reason for removal categories. For example, for patients 'treated elsewhere' waiting times at the 90th percentile ranged from 401 days in New South Wales to 699 days in Western Australia and 1,083 days in Tasmania. As with median waiting times, the reason for removal category with the shortest waiting time by which 90% of patients were removed was 'emergency admission' (117 days) and the longest was 'not contactable/died' (917 days).

## **Proportion waiting more than 365 days**

The reason for removal category with the lowest proportion of patients waiting more than 365 days before removal was 'emergency admissions' with 2.1% and the category with the highest proportion was 'not contactable/died' with 41.1%.

The proportion of patients waiting more than 365 days for removal category 'no treatment required' varied markedly between states and territories, with 14.6% in New South Wales, 35.1% in Western Australia and 37.2% in Tasmania. Overall, variation was marked for all removal categories combined with 4.4% of patients in South Australia waiting more than 365 days compared with 15.7% in Tasmania.

## **Specialty of surgeon**

Table 5.4 shows the distribution of days waited by patients admitted from waiting lists, the proportion who waited more than 365 days and the total number of patients admitted from waiting lists in 2002–03, 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 (61 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 ophthalmology, with 50% of patients being admitted within 27 days in Queensland and within 193 days in the Australian Capital Territory. For urology, variation in the median waiting time was less marked, ranging from 20 days in Western Australia to 42 days in the Northern Territory.

The length of time by which 90% of patients had been admitted also varied by surgical specialty, from 79 days for cardio-thoracic surgery to 358 days for ophthalmology.

## **Proportion waiting more than 365 days**

Ophthalmology and orthopaedic surgery were the specialties with the highest proportion of patients who waited more than 365 days to be admitted (9.5% and 8.1% respectively).

Cardio-thoracic surgery had the lowest proportion of patients who waited more than 365 days (0.2%), followed by neurosurgery (1.0%) and gynaecology (1.1%).

There was marked variation among the states and territories in the proportion of patients who waited more than 365 days to be admitted for some surgical specialties. For example, 3.2% of patients admitted for orthopaedic surgery waited more than 365 days in Queensland, compared with 25.2% of patients in Tasmania. For ophthalmology, 2.5% of patients waited more than 365 days to be admitted in South Australia, compared with 42.1% of patients in Tasmania.

## **Admissions from waiting lists**

Nationally, the number of admissions from waiting lists were highest for general surgery (135,449) and lowest for neurosurgery (8,672). Admissions from waiting lists were highest for general surgery in most jurisdictions except the Australian Capital Territory where admissions were highest for orthopaedic surgery (1,420). Neurosurgery had the lowest number of admissions for most states and territories where it is undertaken. For Victoria admissions were lowest for vascular surgery (2,355).

## **Indicator procedures**

Indicator procedures are procedures that 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 365 days to be admitted from waiting lists and the total number of patients admitted from waiting lists for elective surgery in 2002–03, by indicator procedure.

## **Distribution of days waited**

Nationally, the indicator procedure with the lowest median waiting time was coronary artery bypass graft (18 days) and the indicator procedure with the highest median waiting time was total knee replacement (137 days).

There was marked variation among the states and territories in the median waiting time for septoplasty, ranging from 62 days in Queensland to 284 days in the Northern Territory and 307 days in the Australian Capital Territory.

The length of time by which 90% of patients had been admitted also varied by indicator procedure, from 105 days for coronary artery bypass graft to 531 days for septoplasty.

## **Proportion waiting more than 365 days**

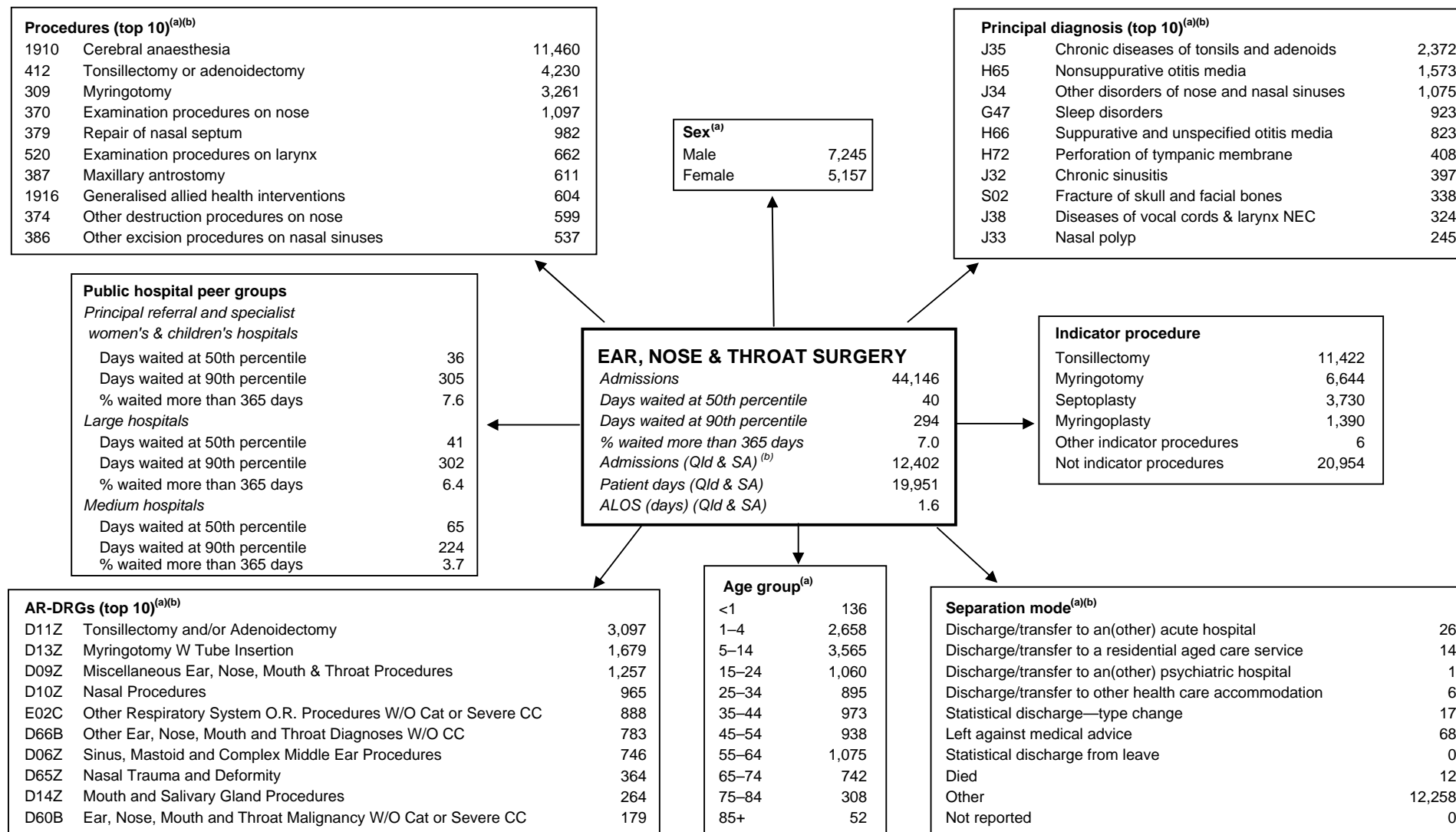
The indicator procedure with the highest proportion of patients waiting more than 365 days was total knee replacement (18.9%), followed by myringoplasty (18.3%). The lowest proportion of patients waiting more than 365 days were waiting for a coronary artery bypass graft (0.3%).

The proportion of patients admitted from waiting lists who waited more than 365 days varied among the states and territories. For example, 3.4% of patients waited more than 365 days for admission for cataract extraction in South Australia, compared with 60.4% in Tasmania. For total knee replacement, the proportion ranged from 10.9% in Queensland to 44.8% in Tasmania.

## **Admissions from waiting lists**

Overall, 31.3% of patients admitted for elective surgery were waiting for one of the indicator procedures. There was some variation among the states and territories: the Australian Capital Territory had the highest proportion of admissions for the indicator procedures (34.9%) and the Northern Territory had the lowest proportion (21.2%).

Cataract extraction was the highest volume indicator procedure for all jurisdictions. Myringoplasty was the lowest volume indicator procedure for all states and territories except the Northern Territory, where haemorrhoidectomy was the lowest. Coronary artery bypass grafts are not undertaken in the Northern Territory.



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

(b) Separations for which the care type was reported as *Newborn* with no qualified days, and records for *Hospital boarders* and *Posthumous organ procurement* have been excluded.

Note: Main abbreviations: CC—complications and comorbidities; W/O—without; W—with; Cat—catastrophic; NEC—not elsewhere classified; ALOS—average length of stay.

**Figure 5.1: Interrelationships of a speciality of surgeon (ear, nose and throat surgery) with other data elements, all hospitals, 2002-03**

**Table 5.1: Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by public hospital peer group<sup>(a)</sup>, Australia, 1999–00 to 2002–03**

	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
<b>Principal referral and specialist women's &amp; children's hospitals</b>				
Number of hospitals in peer group	66	68	66	70
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	65	67	66	69
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) <sup>(d)</sup>	100	99	100	99
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	349,477	333,013	317,275	339,370
Days waited at 50th percentile	24	26	24	26
Days waited at 90th percentile	177	194	184	182
% waited more than 365 days	3.4	4.2	4.2	3.9
<b>Large hospitals</b>				
Number of hospitals in peer group	45	46	47	48
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	35	37	40	41
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) <sup>(d)</sup>	77	79	84	82
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	96,104	98,315	116,882	108,742
Days waited at 50th percentile	31	30	33	31
Days waited at 90th percentile	174	207	229	213
% waited more than 365 days	2.7	4.6	5.0	4.2
<b>Medium hospitals</b>				
Number of hospitals in peer group	112	112	112	106
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	60	60	56	56
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) <sup>(d)</sup>	58	56	53	52
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	73,851	68,317	62,430	59,109
Days waited at 50th percentile	28	30	32	34
Days waited at 90th percentile	166	221	231	234
% waited more than 365 days	2.4	4.4	4.7	3.6
<b>Total<sup>(b)</sup></b>				
Total number of hospitals	722	719	723	726
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	191	195	193	199
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) <sup>(d)</sup>	85	85	84	85
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	527,910	508,290	508,371	517,503
Admissions per 1,000 population <sup>(f)</sup>	27.7	26.4	26.0	26.2
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	27	27	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	175	202	203	197
% waited more than 365 days	3.1	4.4	4.5	4.0

(a) The methodology used to assign public hospital peer groups was adjusted for 2001–02 and 2002–03 compared to 1999–00 and 2000–01.

(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 and 2002–03, 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, by hospital peer group, states and territories, 2002-03**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Principal referral &amp; women's &amp; children's hospitals</b>									
Number of hospitals in peer group	22	19	16	4	5	2	1	1	70
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	22	19	15	4	5	2	1	1	69
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations (%) <sup>(d)</sup>	100	100	98	100	100	100	100	100	99
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	101,424	85,537	81,290	22,857	29,178	10,363	4,535	4,186	339,370
Days waited at 50th percentile	26	27	20	29	34	42	n.p.	n.p.	26
Days waited at 90th percentile	189	203	109	208	187	364	n.p.	n.p.	182
% waited more than 365 days	3.8	4.5	2.7	4.4	2.9	10.0	n.p.	n.p.	3.9
<b>Large hospitals</b>									
Number of hospitals in peer group	21	12	8	2	2	1	1	1	48
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	21	6	8	1	2	1	1	1	41
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations (%) <sup>(d)</sup>	100	60	100	51	100	100	100	100	82
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	42,833	25,959	23,942	3,445	5,502	2,175	3,126	1,760	108,742
Days waited at 50th percentile	34	29	26	21	36	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	31
Days waited at 90th percentile	254	187	126	150	146	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	213
% waited more than 365 days	4.9	3.3	2.6	1.4	3.7	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	4.2
<b>Medium hospitals</b>									
Number of hospitals in peer group	36	30	16	11	13	0	0	0	106
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	36	3	9	8	0	..	..	..	56
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations (%) <sup>(d)</sup>	100	15	79	69	n.a.	..	..	..	52
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	34,231	5,571	4,720	14,587	n.a.	..	..	..	59,109
Days waited at 50th percentile	37	61	27	23	n.a.	..	..	..	34
Days waited at 90th percentile	267	169	141	190	n.a.	..	..	..	234
% waited more than 365 days	4.5	2.8	2.2	2.3	n.a.	..	..	..	3.6

(continued)

**Table 5.2 (continued): Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by hospital peer group, state and territories, 2002-03**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Total<sup>(a)(b)</sup></b>									
Total number of hospitals	221	145	156	94	79	24	2	5	726
Number of reporting hospitals <sup>(c)</sup>	106	28	32	16	7	3	2	5	199
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations( <sup>(d)</sup> )	100	71	96	77	64	100	100	100	85
Number of admissions <sup>(e)</sup>	186,443	117,067	109,952	42,649	34,680	12,538	7,661	6,513	517,503
Admissions per 1,000 population <sup>(f)</sup>	28.0	24.0	29.3	22.0	22.8	26.4	23.8	32.9	26.2
Days waited at 50th percentile	29	28	21	27	34	42	48	45	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	227	197	113	207	181	389	300	305	197
% waited more than 365 days	4.2	4.2	2.6	3.9	3.0	10.9	7.1	7.0	4.0

(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.

.. Not applicable.

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

**Table 5.3: Additions to waiting lists and waiting list statistics for patients removed from waiting lists, by reason for removal category, states and territories, 2002–03**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Additions</b>	214,298	133,666	125,530	45,768	39,512	14,597	6,160	7,213	586,744
<b>Removals<sup>(a)</sup></b>									
<b>Elective admission</b>	186,443	117,067	109,952	42,649	34,680	12,538	7,661	6,513	517,503
Days waited at 50th percentile	29	28	21	27	34	42	48	45	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	227	197	113	207	181	389	300	305	197
% waited more than 365 days	4.2	4.2	2.6	3.9	3.0	10.9	7.1	7.0	4.0
<b>Emergency admission</b>	2,001	813	n.a.	384	195	112	19	17	3,541
Days waited at 50th percentile	7	10	n.a.	22	21	30	22	16	11
Days waited at 90th percentile	97	137	n.a.	124	144	248	97	193	117
% waited more than 365 days	1.1	3.2	n.a.	3.6	1.0	5.4	5.3	5.9	2.1
<b>Not contactable/died<sup>(b)</sup></b>	2,013	3,161	n.a.	852	365	608	143	n.a.	7,142
Days waited at 50th percentile	237	326	n.a.	364	197	384	199	n.a.	292
Days waited at 90th percentile	605	988	n.a.	1,017	694	1,402	559	n.a.	917
% waited more than 365 days	30.2	45.7	n.a.	49.9	29.3	52.1	24.5	n.a.	41.1
<b>Treated elsewhere<sup>(b)</sup></b>	8,192	3,401	n.a.	957	644	450	573	n.a.	14,217
Days waited at 50th percentile	123	108	n.a.	174	109	244	255	n.a.	128
Days waited at 90th percentile	401	567	n.a.	699	483	1,083	635	n.a.	501
% waited more than 365 days	13.0	19.6	n.a.	27.8	16.6	38.2	40.5	n.a.	17.7
<b>No treatment required<sup>(b)</sup></b>	13,084	12,719	n.a.	5,223	1,571	1,098	1,202	n.a.	34,897
Days waited at 50th percentile	101	111	n.a.	207	111	253	131	n.a.	124
Days waited at 90th percentile	426	637	n.a.	748	473	1,091	571	n.a.	578
% waited more than 365 days	14.6	21.6	n.a.	35.1	16.6	37.2	19.9	n.a.	21.2
<b>Not reported</b>	25	1,518	18,953	786	1,152	304	n.a.	1,934	24,672
Days waited at 50th percentile	1	78	n.a.	111	78	191	n.a.	208	125
Days waited at 90th percentile	27	555	n.a.	846	465	996	n.a.	579	600
% waited more than 365 days	0.0	17.1	n.a.	28.8	14.8	30.9	n.a.	25.8	5.1
<b>Total</b>	211,758	138,679	128,905	50,851	38,607	15,110	9,598	8,464	601,972
Days waited at 50th percentile	33	34	n.a.	34	36	53	60	62	31
Days waited at 90th percentile	266	282	n.a.	325	218	518	398	386	257
% waited more than 365 days	5.4	7.3	n.a.	8.7	4.4	15.7	10.9	11.3	5.8

(a) See the *National Health Data Dictionary* for a full description of these categories.

(b) The Northern Territory collects data for all reason for removal categories, however this has not been reported for 2002–03.

Data on all reason for removal categories is available on the website version of this table at <http://www.aihw.gov.au>.

n.a. Not available.

**Table 5.4: Waiting list statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by specialty of surgeon, states and territories, 2002–03**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Cardio-thoracic</b>									
Admissions	4,084	3,087	3,217	854	801	497	244	0	12,784
Days waited at 50th percentile	15	6	11	14	16	34	24	..	12
Days waited at 90th percentile	97	34	83	58	86	245	89	..	79
% waited more than 365 days	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	3.2	0.0	..	0.2
<b>Ear, nose &amp; throat surgery</b>									
Admissions	13,466	12,141	8,791	3,979	3,602	688	823	656	44,146
Days waited at 50th percentile	53	38	20	56	44	47	70	79	40
Days waited at 90th percentile	351	269	147	334	276	237	346	421	294
% waited more than 365 days	9.1	6.4	4.0	8.7	5.4	5.2	9.0	15.7	7.0
<b>General surgery</b>									
Admissions	55,271	27,648	28,487	9,634	8,348	3,094	1,008	1,959	135,449
Days waited at 50th percentile	24	25	22	21	34	37	27	69	24
Days waited at 90th percentile	120	147	107	129	151	358	253	342	133
% waited more than 365 days	1.5	2.7	1.7	1.7	1.9	9.5	5.8	8.9	2.1
<b>Gynaecology</b>									
Admissions	32,433	13,717	17,368	6,146	5,085	1,857	1,090	1,867	79,563
Days waited at 50th percentile	24	29	22	18	27	38	35	9	24
Days waited at 90th percentile	115	139	90	61	129	179	162	70	110
% waited more than 365 days	1.1	1.5	1.0	0.3	0.9	1.6	1.3	0.7	1.1
<b>Neurosurgery</b>									
Admissions	2,892	2,450	1,507	672	768	161	222	0	8,672
Days waited at 50th percentile	17	18	10	26	12	52	46	..	16
Days waited at 90th percentile	71	143	99	170	130	284	191	..	122
% waited more than 365 days	0.5	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.7	3.1	0.9	..	1.0
<b>Ophthalmology</b>									
Admissions	20,234	15,074	7,553	5,316	3,890	914	763	700	54,444
Days waited at 50th percentile	107	38	27	78	51	188	193	142	61
Days waited at 90th percentile	389	211	443	288	187	721	669	376	358
% waited more than 365 days	12.8	4.5	11.9	4.5	2.5	42.1	25.3	10.7	9.5
<b>Orthopaedic surgery</b>									
Admissions	26,852	16,288	18,390	5,153	4,248	1,741	1,420	746	74,838
Days waited at 50th percentile	53	56	18	64	65	171	89	78	45
Days waited at 90th percentile	351	343	137	400	336	636	331	352	327
% waited more than 365 days	9.1	8.9	3.2	11.4	8.2	25.2	7.3	8.8	8.1

(continued)

**Table 5.4 (continued): Waiting list statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by specialty of surgeon, states and territories, 2002-03**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Plastic surgery</b>									
Admissions	7,465	10,438	8,076	3,379	3,423	1,234	337	30	34,382
Days waited at 50th percentile	25	22	27	24	27	41	30	178	26
Days waited at 90th percentile	133	159	101	182	156	255	344	375	140
% waited more than 365 days	1.9	3.5	1.6	3.2	2.8	8.0	8.3	13.3	2.8
<b>Urology</b>									
Admissions	16,941	11,683	7,737	6,032	3,502	1,539	982	164	48,580
Days waited at 50th percentile	28	24	24	20	29	29	37	42	26
Days waited at 90th percentile	133	182	108	109	122	123	165	218	138
% waited more than 365 days	1.9	4.1	1.6	2.7	2.3	2.4	0.8	3.7	2.5
<b>Vascular surgery</b>									
Admissions	4,117	2,355	2,188	787	852	303	306	0	10,908
Days waited at 50th percentile	14	20	15	20	8	26	17	..	15
Days waited at 90th percentile	77	293	101	197	34	337	438	..	116
% waited more than 365 days	0.6	7.5	3.6	2.4	0.2	9.2	12.7	..	3.4
<b>Other</b>									
Admissions	2,688	2,186	6,638	697	161	510	466	391	13,737
Days waited at 50th percentile	8	23	20	13	21	6	36	28	16
Days waited at 90th percentile	57	115	90	43	106	32	251	168	89
% waited more than 365 days	0.1	0.7	0.8	0.0	4.3	0.2	4.7	2.8	0.8
<b>Total</b>									
Admissions	186,443	117,067	109,952	42,649	34,680	12,538	7,661	6,513	517,503
Days waited at 50th percentile	29	28	21	27	34	42	48	45	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	227	197	113	207	181	389	300	305	197
% waited more than 365 days	4.2	4.2	2.6	3.9	3.0	10.9	7.1	7.0	4.0

.. Not applicable.

Table 5.5: Waiting list statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2002-03

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Cataract extraction</b>									
Admissions	15,635	10,236	4,825	3,929	2,368	614	659	509	38,775
Days waited at 50th percentile	165	57	34	98	66	440	211	176	88
Days waited at 90th percentile	405	230	553	299	212	883	680	412	390
% waited more than 365 days	15.5	5.1	16.0	4.7	3.4	60.4	27.5	13.2	11.9
<b>Cholecystectomy</b>									
Admissions	6,509	3,324	3,274	888	795	465	172	132	15,559
Days waited at 50th percentile	42	42	39	29	45	83	107	120	42
Days waited at 90th percentile	203	190	125	166	183	481	330	427	192
% waited more than 365 days	3.4	3.0	1.9	1.2	0.8	15.5	9.3	15.2	3.3
<b>Coronary artery bypass graft</b>									
Admissions	1,656	1,321	1,239	368	471	284	174	0	5,513
Days waited at 50th percentile	26	7	20	16	23	50	20	..	18
Days waited at 90th percentile	133	44	109	54	97	275	89	..	105
% waited more than 365 days	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	0.0	..	0.3
<b>Cystoscopy</b>									
Admissions	11,286	7,119	4,397	2,988	1,502	533	560	232	28,617
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	26	27	22	30	28	44	53	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	120	182	133	155	117	87	167	243	140
% waited more than 365 days	1.1	4.0	1.9	4.7	2.1	0.6	0.4	4.7	2.4
<b>Haemorrhoidectomy</b>									
Admissions	1,393	743	501	278	190	56	23	15	3,199
Days waited at 50th percentile	39	42	36	26	61	116	72	181	40
Days waited at 90th percentile	182	242	161	121	297	989	500	398	211
% waited more than 365 days	3.1	5.4	3.6	0.7	6.8	33.9	13.0	13.3	4.4
<b>Hysterectomy</b>									
Admissions	4,242	1,677	1,902	1,048	600	282	150	29	9,930
Days waited at 50th percentile	36	38	35	28	47	51	78	50	36
Days waited at 90th percentile	172	175	106	77	161	279	233	132	156
% waited more than 365 days	2.3	1.8	1.3	0.3	1.7	4.6	3.3	0.0	1.9
<b>Inguinal herniorrhaphy</b>									
Admissions	5,575	2,896	2,711	987	778	355	155	131	13,588
Days waited at 50th percentile	37	35	34	27	57	101	107	115	37
Days waited at 90th percentile	190	186	133	137	183	708	368	410	189
% waited more than 365 days	2.7	3.6	2.8	0.7	2.2	20.8	10.3	16.8	3.4

(continued)

Table 5.5 (continued): Waiting list statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2002-03

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Myringoplasty</b>									
Admissions	422	357	289	190	76	14	9	50	1,407
Days waited at 50th percentile	119	131	75	135	82	196	n.p.	154	108
Days waited at 90th percentile	481	571	483	551	308	518	n.p.	495	516
% waited more than 365 days	18.5	23.5	13.8	17.9	6.6	28.6	n.p.	22.0	18.3
<b>Myringotomy</b>									
Admissions	629	2,597	1,720	817	638	107	132	20	6,660
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	26	27	49	45	22	111	36	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	164	92	120	156	137	61	223	82	123
% waited more than 365 days	1.3	0.2	1.0	2.1	0.8	0.0	0.8	5.0	0.8
<b>Prostatectomy</b>									
Admissions	2,292	1,414	781	396	369	27	42	30	5,351
Days waited at 50th percentile	35	25	26	20	31	40	27	50	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	204	258	107	108	230	74	239	336	194
% waited more than 365 days	4.3	5.7	3.1	1.0	4.9	0.0	2.4	10.0	4.3
<b>Septoplasty</b>									
Admissions	1,099	1,497	470	416	167	22	69	36	3,776
Days waited at 50th percentile	116	102	62	73	136	272	307	284	106
Days waited at 90th percentile	451	540	857	518	598	1,467	608	430	531
% waited more than 365 days	14.9	17.2	21.1	17.1	18.6	45.5	30.4	30.6	17.6
<b>Tonsillectomy</b>									
Admissions	3,823	3,393	2,358	1,010	798	33	190	111	11,716
Days waited at 50th percentile	98	48	31	84	75	152	102	174	60
Days waited at 90th percentile	415	266	147	358	323	482	426	438	351
% waited more than 365 days	15.7	5.5	3.3	9.6	5.6	15.2	18.9	24.3	9.2
<b>Total hip replacement</b>									
Admissions	2,350	1,551	1,061	459	502	210	119	21	6,273
Days waited at 50th percentile	111	113	48	77	107	213	136	113	93
Days waited at 90th percentile	406	425	226	382	344	593	375	423	396
% waited more than 365 days	13.8	12.8	5.9	10.2	8.4	27.6	11.8	14.3	12.0
<b>Total knee replacement</b>									
Admissions	3,402	1,570	1,371	428	595	145	131	29	7,671
Days waited at 50th percentile	188	144	58	123	126	330	168	156	137
Days waited at 90th percentile	484	460	402	506	411	808	406	496	474
% waited more than 365 days	23.2	16.6	10.9	19.2	11.9	44.8	16.8	20.7	18.9

(continued)

Table 5.5 (continued): Waiting list statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2002-03

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
<b>Varicose veins stripping &amp; ligation</b>									
Admissions	1,559	873	751	201	284	30	87	35	3,820
Days waited at 50th percentile	61	103	69	41	79	705	326	206	71
Days waited at 90th percentile	262	886	661	409	449	1,621	741	559	525
% waited more than 365 days	5.0	23.0	17.0	11.4	13.4	66.7	44.8	34.3	14.1
<b>Not applicable/not stated</b>									
Admissions	124,571	76,499	82,302	28,246	24,547	9,361	4,989	5,133	355,648
Days waited at 50th percentile	22	23	18	22	28	34	32	34	22
Days waited at 90th percentile	136	164	97	162	156	276	212	246	140
% waited more than 365 days	2.2	3.3	1.5	3.3	2.6	6.9	3.7	5.0	2.6
<b>Total</b>									
Admissions	186,443	117,067	109,952	42,649	34,680	12,538	7,661	6,513	517,503
Days waited at 50th percentile	29	28	21	27	34	42	48	45	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	227	197	113	207	181	389	300	305	197
% waited more than 365 days	4.2	4.2	2.6	3.9	3.0	10.9	7.1	7.0	4.0

.. Not applicable.

n.p. Not published (because the number of admissions was less than 10).