

6 Waiting times for elective surgery

Introduction

This chapter presents national statistics for elective surgery waiting times for the years 1999–00 to 2003–04, and a state and territory overview of elective surgery waiting times for 2003–04. 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 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 coverage of the data collection.

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, some 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, had been transferred to another hospital's waiting list or had declined the surgery. Information on time spent on waiting lists is therefore also presented for those reasons for removals.

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

National Health Data Dictionary definitions (NHDC 2003) are the basis of the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection (see Chapter 1) and are summarised in the Glossary. However, some of the definitions used varied slightly among the states and territories in 2003–04 and in comparison with previous reporting periods. Comparisons between jurisdictions and between 2003–04 and previous reporting periods should therefore be made with reference to the notes on the definitions used and to previous reports (AIHW 2001a, 2002, 2003, 2004a).

Variation in methods to calculate waiting times

Waiting times were 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' were 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. These differences are described below.

For Queensland, information on the number of days waited at the 50th and 90th percentiles and the proportion of patients waiting greater than 365 days for elective admission was calculated using data that were linked to the Queensland data in the National Hospital Morbidity Database. A total of 95.9% of elective surgery records were linked, so 4.1% of elective surgery admissions were not included in the elective surgery waiting times data.

Changed clinical urgency category

For patients who changed clinical urgency category, two methods were used to calculate waiting times:

- (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 provided waiting times using method (a). South Australia provided waiting times calculated using method (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 included in the waiting time reported to the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection for all states and territories. Therefore, the number of days waited in those jurisdictions 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 by 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 and Queensland have 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 those jurisdictions.

Waiting times and other data elements reported for elective surgery

Figure 6.1 presents data on patients admitted to hospital from elective surgery waiting lists for cardio-thoracic 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 those jurisdictions provide data for elective surgery admissions linked with the Queensland and South Australian data in the National Hospital Morbidity Database, respectively, this allowed waiting times information for these patients to be related to other information relating to their admission for elective surgery. As noted above, 95.9% of elective surgery records were linked for Queensland, and 98.4% of elective surgery records were linked for South Australia.

Australia-wide there were 15,232 admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for cardio-thoracic surgery. The median waiting time for these patients was 11 days and 0.1% of these patients waited more than 365 days for admission. *Coronary artery bypass graft* was the indicator procedure with the highest number of admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for cardio-thoracic surgery.

For Queensland and South Australia combined, there were 3,938 admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for cardio-thoracic surgery and these accounted for 33,211 patient days. The average length of stay was 8.4 days.

The most common procedure reported was *Cerebral anaesthesia* (Block 1910), and the most common principal diagnosis reported was *Chronic ischaemic heart disease* (I25), followed by *Angina pectoris* (I20). The most common AR-DRG reported was *Coronary bypass without invasive cardiac investigation with catastrophic or severe complications or comorbidities* (F06A).

The age group with the highest proportion of separations was 65–74 years and more of the separations involved males than involved females. A large proportion (91.4%) 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. However, some public patients treated under contract in private hospitals in Victoria and Tasmania are included.

The data collection covered most public hospitals that undertake elective surgery. Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show 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* hospitals peer group with 68 of 69 hospitals reported in this peer group. The collection covered 42 of 50 hospitals in the *Large* hospitals peer group, and 58 of 107 hospitals in the *Medium* hospitals peer group. 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. 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 methodology for assigning public hospital peer groups was adjusted slightly for 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 compared with 1999–00 and 2000–01, so the data presented in Table 6.1 should be interpreted with reference to the information on public hospital peer groups provided in Appendix 4 and in previous *Australian Hospital Statistics* publications.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 also present 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 from the estimated coverage calculations.

The definition of ‘surgical procedure’ used for these estimates is detailed in the Glossary and based on the procedures used to define surgical in *Australian Refined Diagnosis Related Groups* version 5.0 (DoHA 2002). Information about ‘urgency of admission’ is detailed in Chapter 7.

Based on this measure, overall coverage of the National Elective Surgery Waiting Times Data Collection was about 87% in 2003–04, and ranged from 100% in New South Wales, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory to about 64% in South Australia (Table 6.2). Coverage was highest for the *Principal referral and specialist women’s and children’s* hospitals peer group at about 99%, and was progressively lower for the *Large* hospitals and *Medium* hospitals groups.

For 1999–00 and 2000–01 (Table 6.1), 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 solely on elective admissions. 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 due to concerns about 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 64.9% of admissions from elective surgery waiting lists in 2003–04 compared with 65.6% in 2002–03. Another 20.8% were reported for hospitals in the *Large* hospitals peer group in 2003–04, compared with 21.0% in 2002–03. In 2003–04, 13.0% of admissions were in the *Medium* hospitals peer group, compared with 11.4% in 2002–03 (Table 6.1). Overall, for 2003–04, 528,949 admissions from waiting lists were reported compared with 517,503 in 2002–03 (Table 6.2).

There were 26.5 admissions reported for elective surgery per 1,000 population (crude rate) for Australia overall in 2003–04, compared with 26.2 in 2002–03, 26.0 in 2001–02, 26.4 in 2000–01 and 27.7 in 1999–00 (Table 6.1).

Distribution of days waited

Overall, the median waiting time for patients who were admitted from waiting lists was 28 days in 2003–04 and 2002–03 and 27 days in 2001–02, 2000–01 and 1999–00 (Table 6.1). In

2003–04, this ranged from 22 days in Queensland to 46 days in the Australian Capital Territory (Table 6.2). Ninety per cent of patients were admitted within 193 days in 2003–04, compared with 197 days in 2002–03, 203 days in 2001–02, 202 days in 2000–01 and 175 days in 1999–00. In 2003–04, this ranged from 115 days in Queensland to 373 days in the Australian Capital Territory.

In 2003–04, the median waiting time for patients admitted from waiting lists in hospitals in the *Principal referral and specialist women's and children's* hospitals peer group (27 days) was shorter than in hospitals in the *Large* hospitals and *Medium* hospitals peer groups (30 days and 34 days respectively).

Proportion waiting more than 365 days

Overall, the proportion of patients admitted after waiting more than 365 days was 3.9% in 2003–04 compared with 4.0% in 2002–03, 4.5% in 2001–02, 4.4% in 2000–01 and 3.1% in 1999–00 (Table 6.1). In 2003–04, this proportion ranged from 2.8% in Queensland to 10.4% in the Australian Capital Territory (Table 6.2).

In the *Principal referral and specialist women's and children's* hospitals peer group in 2003–04, 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 3.3% of patients in the *Medium* hospitals peer group.

Additions to and removals from waiting lists

Table 6.3 shows the movement of patients on and off waiting lists in 2003–04. This includes data on the total number of patients added to and removed from waiting lists, the distribution of days waited by patients removed from waiting lists and the proportion of patients waiting greater than 365 days before being removed from waiting lists.

In 2003–04 a total of 608,680 patients were added to elective surgery waiting lists and 618,180 patients were removed from elective surgery waiting lists. 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 patient not being able to be contacted by the hospital (includes patients who have died); the patient having the surgery elsewhere; the surgery not being required or the patient declining the surgery (see the Glossary for a full description of the categories). An additional reason for removal category, *Transferred to another hospital's waiting list*, was included in version 12 of the *National Health Data Dictionary* (NHDC 2003). In 2003–04, only Victoria, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory reported removals from waiting lists for transfers to another hospital's waiting list. This could have an effect of reducing the waiting times reported for overall removals for those two jurisdictions relative to others.

Elective admissions accounted for the most removals from waiting lists in 2003–04 (85.6%), ranging from 75.8% in Western Australia to 88.2% in New South Wales.

Information on reasons 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* accounted for the next largest number of removals in 2003–04 (6.9%, 33,733 patients) following admissions as elective patients. A further 0.8% of patients (3,985) were admitted as emergency patients, 1.4% (6,832) could not be contacted, and 3.2% (15,842) were *Treated elsewhere*.

Distribution of waiting times

Information on the waiting times for all removal categories other than elective admissions was not available for Queensland. For the other states and territories, the reason for removal category with the shortest median waiting time in 2003–04 was *Emergency admission* (10 days), and the category with longest median waiting time was *Not contactable/died* (258 days).

As was the case with median waiting times, the reason for removal category with the shortest waiting time by which 90% of patients were removed was *Emergency admission* (118 days) and the category with the longest waiting was *Not contactable/died* (971 days). The length of time by which 90% of patients were removed from waiting lists varied substantially between states and territories in most reason for removal categories. For example, waiting times at the 90th percentile in the *Treated elsewhere* category ranged from 408 days in New South Wales to 763 days in the Australian Capital Territory and 1,203 days in Tasmania

Proportion waiting more than 365 days

In 2003–04 the reason for removal category with the lowest proportion of patients waiting more than 365 days before removal was *Emergency admission* (1.6%) and the category with the highest proportion was *Not contactable/died* (37.7%). *Elective admissions* had 3.9% of patients waiting more than 365 days before removal.

The proportion of patients waiting more than 365 days differed substantially between individual states and territories in 2003–04. Overall, it ranged from 5.4% in New South Wales to 15.2% in the Australian Capital Territory. For the removal category *Not contactable/died* it ranged from 28.5% in New South Wales to 49.9% in Western Australia.

Specialty of surgeon

Table 6.4 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 2003–04, 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 in 2003–04 (60 and 46 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 (11 days).

There was a marked variation between states and territories in the median waiting time for *Ophthalmology*, with 50% of patients being admitted within 31 days in Victoria and within 234 days in Tasmania. There was less variation between states and territories in the median waiting time for *Urology*, with waiting times ranging from 22 days in Western Australia to 42 days in the South Australia.

The length of time by which 90% of patients had been admitted also varied by surgical specialty in 2003–04, from 72 days for *Cardio-thoracic surgery* to 343 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 (8.7% and 7.8% respectively). *Cardio-thoracic surgery* had the lowest proportion of patients who waited more than 365 days (0.1%), followed by *Gynaecology* (1.2%) and *Neurosurgery* (1.4%).

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, 2.7% of patients admitted for *Ophthalmology* in 2003–04 waited more than 365 days in Victoria and South Australia, compared with 43.3% of patients in Tasmania.

Admissions from waiting lists

Nationally, admissions from waiting lists were highest for *General surgery* (138,894) and lowest for *Neurosurgery* (9,910). Admissions from waiting lists were also highest for *General surgery* in all jurisdictions except the Northern Territory where admissions were highest for *Gynaecology* (1,694). *Neurosurgery* had the lowest number of admissions for most states and territories where it is undertaken. For Victoria and Western Australia admissions were lowest for *Vascular surgery* (2,460 and 846 admissions, respectively).

Indicator procedures

Indicator procedures are procedures which are of high volume and are often associated with long waits. Table 6.5 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 2003–04, by indicator procedure.

Distribution of days waited

Nationally, the indicator procedure with the lowest median waiting time in 2003–04 was *Coronary artery bypass graft* (18 days) and the indicator procedure with the highest median waiting time was *Total knee replacement* (134 days).

There was marked variation among the states and territories in the median waiting time for *Septoplasty*, ranging from 36 days in Queensland to 253 days in the Northern Territory and 506 days in the Australian Capital Territory.

The length of time by which 90% of patients had been admitted also varied by indicator procedure, from 100 days for *Coronary artery bypass graft* to 690 days for *Varicose veins stripping and ligation*.

Proportion waiting more than 365 days

The indicator procedure with the highest proportion of patients waiting more than 365 days was *Septoplasty* (19.8%), followed by *Total knee replacement* (19.6%). The lowest proportion of patients waiting more than 365 days were waiting for a *Coronary artery bypass graft* (0.2%).

The proportion of patients admitted from waiting lists who waited more than 365 days varied substantially in some cases between the states and territories. For example, 3.0% of

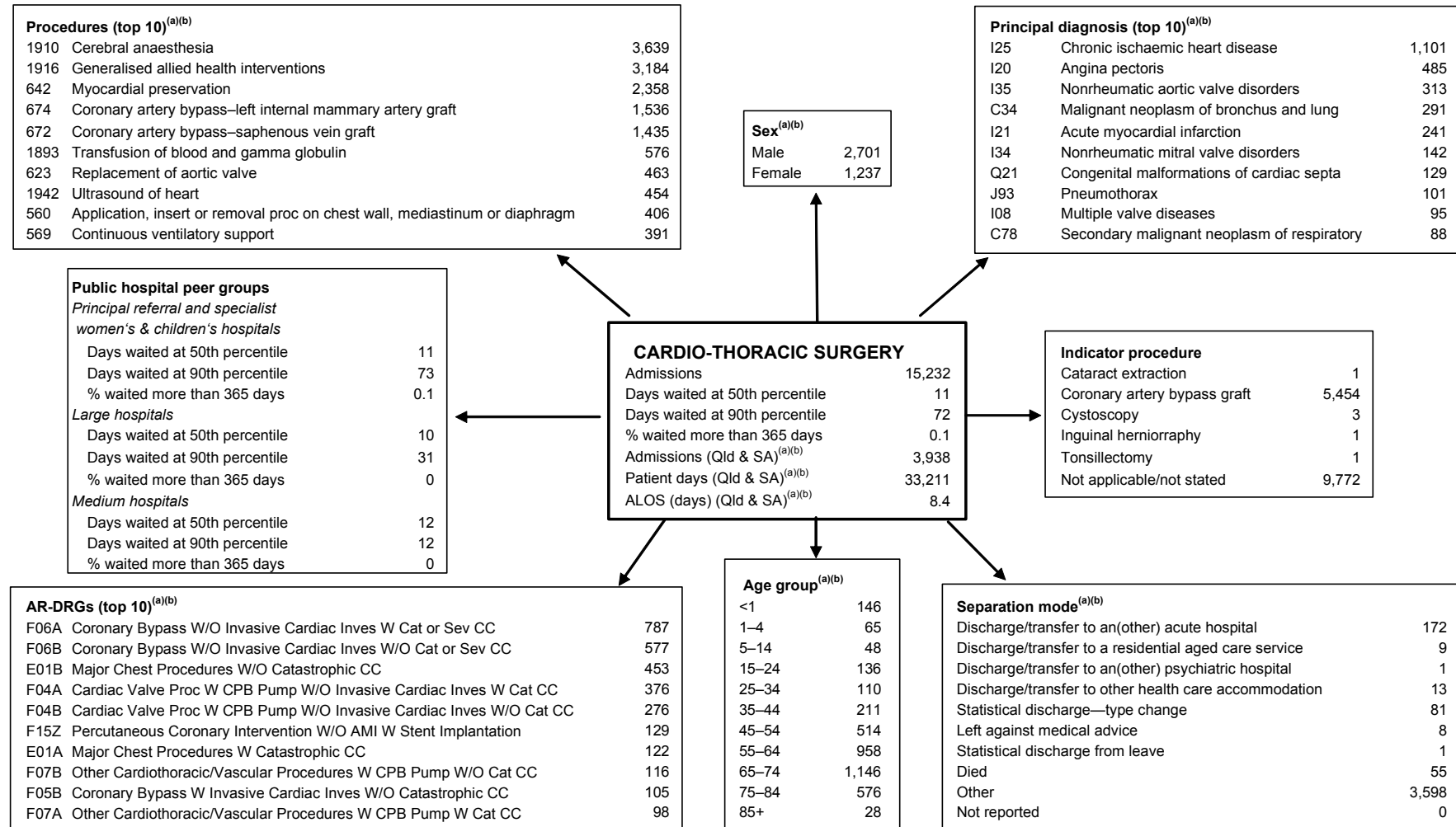
patients waited more than 365 days for admission for *Cataract extraction* in Victoria, compared with 58.2% in Tasmania. For *Septoplasty*, the proportion ranged from 15.8% in Victoria to 70.1% in the Australian Capital Territory.

Admissions from waiting lists

Overall, 31.8% of patients admitted for elective surgery had been 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 (38.2%) and the Northern Territory had the lowest proportion (21.9%).

Cataract extraction was the highest volume indicator procedure for all jurisdictions.

Myringoplasty was the lowest volume indicator procedure for all states and territories except Western Australia and the Northern Territory, where *Varicose veins stripping and ligation* and *Haemorrhoidectomy* were the lowest, respectively. Coronary artery bypass grafts are not done in the Northern Territory.



Note: Main abbreviations: CC—complications and comorbidities; W/O—without; W—with; Cat—catastrophic; NEC—not elsewhere classified; ALOS—average length of stay; Sev—severe; Proc—procedures; Inves—investigation; CPB—Cardiopulmonary Bypass.

(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.

Figure 6.1: Interrelationships of a specialty of surgeon (cardio-thoracic surgery) with other data elements, all hospitals, 2003–04

Table 6.1: Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by public hospital peer group^(a), Australia, 1999–00 to 2003–04

	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Principal referral and specialist women's & children's hospitals					
Number of hospitals in peer group	66	68	66	70	69
Number of reporting hospitals ^(c)	65	67	66	69	68
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) ^(d)	100	99	100	99	99
Number of admissions ^(e)	349,477	333,013	317,275	339,370	343,430
Days waited at 50th percentile	24	26	24	26	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	177	194	184	182	182
% waited more than 365 days	3.4	4.2	4.2	3.9	3.9
Large hospitals					
Number of hospitals in peer group	45	46	47	48	50
Number of reporting hospitals ^(c)	35	37	40	41	42
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) ^(d)	77	79	84	82	85
Number of admissions ^(e)	96,104	98,315	116,882	108,742	110,284
Days waited at 50th percentile	31	30	33	31	30
Days waited at 90th percentile	174	207	229	213	206
% waited more than 365 days	2.7	4.6	5.0	4.2	4.2
Medium hospitals					
Number of hospitals in peer group	112	112	112	106	107
Number of reporting hospitals ^(c)	60	60	56	56	58
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) ^(d)	58	56	53	52	59
Number of admissions ^(e)	73,851	68,317	62,430	59,109	68,790
Days waited at 50th percentile	28	30	32	34	34
Days waited at 90th percentile	166	221	231	234	215
% waited more than 365 days	2.4	4.4	4.7	3.6	3.3
Total^(b)					
Total number of hospitals	722	719	723	726	758
Number of reporting hospitals ^(c)	191	195	193	199	196
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) ^(d)	85	85	84	85	87
Number of admissions ^(e)	527,910	508,290	508,371	517,503	528,949
Admissions per 1,000 population ^(f)	27.7	26.4	26.0	26.2	26.5
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	27	27	28	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	175	202	203	197	193
% waited more than 365 days	3.1	4.4	4.5	4.0	3.9

(a) The methodology used to assign public hospital peer groups was adjusted for 2001–02 and later years 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, 2002–03 and 2003–04, 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 the number 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 based on the Australian estimated resident population as at 31 December of the period in question.

Table 6.2: Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by hospital peer group, states and territories, 2003–04

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Principal referral and specialist women's & children's hospitals									
Number of hospitals in peer group	20	19	16	4	5	2	1	2	69
Number of reporting hospitals ^(b)	20	19	15	4	5	2	1	2	68
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations (%) ^(c)	100	100	97	100	100	100	100	100	99
Number of admissions ^(d)	92,850	84,822	89,308	26,695	30,267	10,304	4,686	4,498	343,430
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	28	21	26	36	44	n.p.	29	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	188	200	116	181	197	348	n.p.	236	182
% waited more than 365 days	3.7	4.2	3.0	3.9	3.6	9.5	n.p.	5.2	3.9
Large hospitals									
Number of hospitals in peer group	22	13	7	4	2	1	1	0	50
Number of reporting hospitals ^(b)	22	8	7	1	2	1	1	..	42
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations (%) ^(c)	100	73	100	31	100	100	100	..	85
Number of admissions ^(d)	46,249	31,649	16,560	3,474	6,382	2,109	3,861	..	110,284
Days waited at 50th percentile	36	22	23	n.p.	48	n.p.	n.p.	..	30
Days waited at 90th percentile	270	127	106	n.p.	214	n.p.	n.p.	..	206
% waited more than 365 days	5.4	1.8	2.3	n.p.	4.5	n.p.	n.p.	..	4.2
Medium hospitals									
Number of hospitals in peer group	40	30	15	9	13	0	0	0	107
Number of reporting hospitals ^(b)	40	4	9	5	0	..	..	..	58
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations (%) ^(c)	100	30	81	80	0	..	..	..	59
Number of admissions ^(d)	39,666	10,166	5,325	13,633	n.a.	..	..	..	68,790
Days waited at 50th percentile	41	29	27	27	n.a.	..	..	..	34
Days waited at 90th percentile	242	122	140	216	n.a.	..	..	..	215
% waited more than 365 days	4.0	1.5	1.4	3.3	n.a.	..	..	..	3.3

(continued)

Table 6.2 (continued): Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by hospital peer group, state and territories, 2003-04

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Total^(a)									
Total number of hospitals	230	143	178	93	80	27	2	5	758
Number of reporting hospitals ^(b)	105	31	31	12	7	3	2	5	196
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations(%) ^(c)	100	78	96	76	64	100	100	100	87
Number of admissions ^(d)	182,400	126,637	111,193	46,056	36,649	12,413	8,547	5,054	528,949
Admissions per 1,000 population ^(e)	27.2	25.6	28.9	23.4	23.9	25.9	26.5	25.4	26.5
Days waited at 50th percentile	32	27	22	27	37	42	46	34	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	222	175	115	200	201	372	373	245	193
% waited more than 365 days	4.1	3.3	2.8	4.0	3.8	10.3	10.4	5.3	3.9

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

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

(c) 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 of 'elective' and a surgical procedure for all public hospitals.

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

(e) Crude rate based on the Australian estimated resident population as at 31 December 2003.

.. Not applicable.

n.a. Not available.

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

Table 6.3: Additions to waiting lists, and waiting time statistics for patients removed from waiting lists, by reason for removal, states and territories, 2003–04

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Additions	210,744	146,227	125,075	51,976	42,935	14,498	10,244	6,981	608,680
Removals^(a)									
Elective admission	182,400	126,637	111,193	46,056	36,649	12,413	8,547	5,054	528,949
Days waited at 50th percentile	32	27	22	27	37	42	46	34	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	222	175	115	200	201	372	373	245	193
% waited more than 365 days	4.1	3.3	2.8	4.0	3.8	10.3	10.4	5.3	3.9
Emergency admission	2,051	1,072	n.a.	429	252	154	6	21	3,985
Days waited at 50th percentile	6	13	n.a.	12	16	35	4	10	10
Days waited at 90th percentile	100	166	n.a.	99	89	226	22	102	118
% waited more than 365 days	0.9	2.7	n.a.	2.1	0.4	3.9	0.0	4.8	1.6
Not contactable/died	1,815	2,308	n.a.	1,354	586	499	270	n.a.	6,832
Days waited at 50th percentile	239	236	n.a.	362	279	252	298	n.a.	258
Days waited at 90th percentile	572	986	n.a.	1,098	1,005	1,285	1,012	n.a.	971
% waited more than 365 days	28.5	36.4	n.a.	49.9	38.9	38.7	43.7	n.a.	37.7
Treated elsewhere	8,957	3,521	n.a.	1,819	867	392	286	n.a.	15,842
Days waited at 50th percentile	119	94	n.a.	127	125	212	206	n.a.	118
Days waited at 90th percentile	408	518	n.a.	553	589	1,203	763	n.a.	465
% waited more than 365 days	13.4	17.0	n.a.	20.2	20.1	31.4	29.0	n.a.	16.1
Surgery not required or declined	11,527	12,003	n.a.	5,730	2,186	1,069	1,218	n.a.	33,733
Days waited at 50th percentile	133	99	n.a.	162	151	246	117	n.a.	128
Days waited at 90th percentile	428	602	n.a.	723	687	932	683	n.a.	567
% waited more than 365 days	15.5	19.9	n.a.	30.2	24.2	36.6	23.0	n.a.	21.1
Transferred to another hospital's waiting list	n.a.	1,223	n.a.	3,510	n.a.	n.a.	360	n.a.	5,093
Days waited at 50th percentile	n.a.	98	n.a.	175	n.a.	n.a.	603	n.a.	151
Days waited at 90th percentile	n.a.	560	n.a.	908	n.a.	n.a.	834	n.a.	848
% waited more than 365 days	n.a.	15.8	n.a.	35.2	n.a.	n.a.	71.4	n.a.	33.1
Not reported	n.a.	1,107	18,054	1,840	1,525	n.a.	51	1,169	23,746
Days waited at 50th percentile	n.a.	56	n.a.	126	90	n.a.	0	168	101
Days waited at 90th percentile	n.a.	428	n.a.	1,148	691	n.a.	110	644	817
% waited more than 365 days	n.a.	13.0	n.a.	36.5	23.7	n.a.	3.9	22.0	6.0
Total	206,750	147,871	129,247	60,738	42,065	14,527	10,738	6,244	618,180
Days waited at 50th percentile	35	31	n.a.	37	42	51	58	43	32
Days waited at 90th percentile	262	233	n.a.	385	264	456	504	327	252
% waited more than 365 days	5.4	5.7	n.a.	10.7	6.3	13.7	15.2	8.4	5.8

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

n.a. Not available.

Table 6.4: Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by specialty of surgeon, states and territories, 2003–04

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Cardio-thoracic surgery									
Admissions	4,170	3,124	3,115	3,257	823	490	253	0	15,232
Days waited at 50th percentile	14	6	11	9	20	24	29	..	11
Days waited at 90th percentile	76	49	103	36	89	84	106	..	72
% waited more than 365 days	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.4	..	0.1
Ear, nose & throat surgery									
Admissions	12,750	12,980	9,867	3,751	4,037	621	728	530	45,264
Days waited at 50th percentile	55	29	13	57	48	62	85	67	35
Days waited at 90th percentile	352	174	110	379	341	267	656	381	274
% waited more than 365 days	9.3	4.0	3.7	10.5	8.7	5.8	21.3	11.1	6.8
General surgery									
Admissions	55,310	29,733	28,825	10,229	8,775	3,064	1,429	1,529	138,894
Days waited at 50th percentile	26	26	23	21	30	33	27	56	26
Days waited at 90th percentile	134	159	102	131	151	246	275	296	139
% waited more than 365 days	1.9	2.7	1.9	1.5	1.9	5.7	6.0	6.5	2.2
Gynaecology									
Admissions	30,973	16,128	18,106	5,558	5,190	1,836	1,198	1,694	80,683
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	25	21	22	29	46	31	6	25
Days waited at 90th percentile	127	110	90	73	144	166	166	57	113
% waited more than 365 days	1.4	1.2	1.4	0.3	0.9	1.4	1.4	0.4	1.2
Neurosurgery									
Admissions	3,128	2,587	1,498	1,482	780	184	251	0	9,910
Days waited at 50th percentile	18	18	11	29	25	50	28	..	19
Days waited at 90th percentile	99	140	84	125	160	337	287	..	127
% waited more than 365 days	0.8	1.4	0.9	1.8	2.4	8.2	2.8	..	1.4
Ophthalmology									
Admissions	19,496	16,233	8,201	5,125	3,720	982	1,021	547	55,325
Days waited at 50th percentile	105	31	33	82	62	234	198	134	60
Days waited at 90th percentile	392	162	396	292	212	639	693	375	343
% waited more than 365 days	12.1	2.7	10.8	4.8	2.7	43.3	31.3	10.8	8.7
Orthopaedic surgery									
Admissions	26,304	15,978	19,383	5,151	4,263	1,456	1,417	527	74,479
Days waited at 50th percentile	52	62	21	67	75	176	98	52	46
Days waited at 90th percentile	328	335	138	414	366	689	392	283	316
% waited more than 365 days	8.0	8.6	3.3	11.5	10.0	32.3	13.0	6.1	7.8

(continued)

Table 6.4 (continued): Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by specialty of surgeon, states and territories, 2003-04

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Plastic surgery									
Admissions	7,897	10,742	8,223	3,238	3,640	1,210	367	16	35,333
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	22	27	32	32	31	52	28	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	132	152	102	279	182	201	444	374	151
% waited more than 365 days	1.5	2.2	1.2	7.5	4.0	3.7	13.1	12.5	2.7
Urology									
Admissions	15,779	13,773	8,439	6,292	4,339	1,592	1,022	108	51,344
Days waited at 50th percentile	31	24	24	22	42	36	28	28	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	146	177	102	118	180	158	136	232	148
% waited more than 365 days	1.6	3.3	1.8	2.2	2.6	1.5	0.6	5.6	2.2
Vascular surgery									
Admissions	4,149	2,460	2,224	846	924	506	336	0	11,445
Days waited at 50th percentile	15	20	16	15	8	45	18	..	16
Days waited at 90th percentile	88	228	108	87	47	371	327	..	119
% waited more than 365 days	1.0	6.8	4.8	3.0	0.2	10.3	9.2	..	3.7
Other									
Admissions	2,444	2,899	3,312	1,127	158	472	525	103	11,040
Days waited at 50th percentile	8	23	26	10	29	5	28	21	15
Days waited at 90th percentile	55	86	126	42	105	27	224	219	99
% waited more than 365 days	0.1	0.3	2.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	6.5	4.9	1.1
Total									
Admissions	182,400	126,637	111,193	46,056	36,649	12,413	8,547	5,054	528,949
Days waited at 50th percentile	32	27	22	27	37	42	46	34	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	222	175	115	200	201	372	373	245	193
% waited more than 365 days	4.1	3.3	2.8	4.0	3.8	10.3	10.4	5.3	3.9

.. Not applicable.

Table 6.5: Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2003–04

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Cataract extraction									
Admissions	15,166	10,951	5,354	3,719	2,271	716	907	388	39,472
Days waited at 50th percentile	154	42	40	96	83	393	234	149	83
Days waited at 90th percentile	415	180	502	295	238	745	707	378	379
% waited more than 365 days	14.6	3.0	13.9	4.5	3.7	58.2	33.5	11.3	10.9
Cholecystectomy									
Admissions	6,640	3,610	3,409	821	885	476	279	118	16,238
Days waited at 50th percentile	44	43	38	29	43	92	65	91	42
Days waited at 90th percentile	216	181	107	149	164	396	400	359	188
% waited more than 365 days	4.0	2.9	1.9	1.3	1.1	11.1	12.9	9.3	3.4
Coronary artery bypass graft									
Admissions	1,576	1,227	1,418	344	420	301	178	0	5,464
Days waited at 50th percentile	21	8	20	16	27	33	26	..	18
Days waited at 90th percentile	102	68	119	74	93	91	112	..	100
% waited more than 365 days	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.6	..	0.2
Cystoscopy									
Admissions	10,509	8,589	4,712	3,256	2,060	577	626	165	30,494
Days waited at 50th percentile	32	26	27	24	53	35	35	41	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	138	176	119	155	191	146	156	218	156
% waited more than 365 days	1.0	2.7	1.8	3.6	3.1	0.2	0.6	3.6	2.0
Haemorrhoidectomy									
Admissions	1,271	841	493	254	391	35	47	14	3,346
Days waited at 50th percentile	38	51	34	37	29	101	123	104	39
Days waited at 90th percentile	209	274	152	229	134	933	714	256	223
% waited more than 365 days	4.6	7.3	3.4	3.9	0.8	17.1	21.3	7.1	5.0
Hysterectomy									
Admissions	4,246	2,114	2,160	1,068	549	320	137	37	10,631
Days waited at 50th percentile	40	30	34	29	62	79	69	40	37
Days waited at 90th percentile	183	145	105	83	212	213	260	91	156
% waited more than 365 days	2.6	1.6	1.4	0.2	1.5	4.4	2.9	0.0	1.9
Inguinal herniorrhaphy									
Admissions	5,681	3,122	2,888	981	776	373	186	104	14,111
Days waited at 50th percentile	42	41	35	29	44	70	58	84	40
Days waited at 90th percentile	200	190	126	149	185	394	377	457	189
% waited more than 365 days	2.9	3.4	2.3	1.2	0.9	11.0	10.8	18.3	3.1

(continued)

Table 6.5 (continued): Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2003–04

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Myringoplasty									
Admissions	381	426	341	214	97	16	21	39	1,535
Days waited at 50th percentile	122	69	43	125	124	167	327	168	89
Days waited at 90th percentile	498	382	692	720	461	691	1061	1163	516
% waited more than 365 days	16.8	11.0	16.1	18.2	23.7	31.3	47.6	23.1	16.4
Myringotomy									
Admissions	548	2,750	1,745	949	830	70	87	16	6,995
Days waited at 50th percentile	42	23	21	34	34	40	62	45	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	224	74	94	156	98	124	319	135	105
% waited more than 365 days	3.5	0.4	1.0	1.2	0.1	1.4	6.9	0.0	0.9
Prostatectomy									
Admissions	2,165	1,535	957	409	388	37	46	27	5,564
Days waited at 50th percentile	40	25	25	23	34	41	21	28	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	194	286	99	119	210	75	97	272	193
% waited more than 365 days	4.5	7.6	2.3	1.5	4.4	0.0	2.2	3.7	4.7
Septoplasty									
Admissions	1,054	1,546	411	217	192	19	67	32	3,538
Days waited at 50th percentile	138	70	36	241	170	204	506	253	98
Days waited at 90th percentile	518	553	819	882	640	847	1,045	465	609
% waited more than 365 days	18.0	15.8	18.5	33.6	28.1	31.6	70.1	34.4	19.8
Tonsillectomy									
Admissions	3,570	3,710	2,528	1,022	1,014	23	189	111	12,167
Days waited at 50th percentile	99	36	27	91	78	134	148	132	50
Days waited at 90th percentile	445	164	158	404	385	574	646	412	327
% waited more than 365 days	14.6	2.0	4.2	13.1	10.6	17.4	28.6	16.2	8.4
Total hip replacement									
Admissions	2,243	1,694	1,296	473	606	142	183	18	6,655
Days waited at 50th percentile	91	127	52	98	132	233	154	121	92
Days waited at 90th percentile	392	402	188	396	378	714	427	472	378
% waited more than 365 days	11.9	12.4	3.8	10.8	12.0	35.2	18.6	16.7	11.1
Total knee replacement									
Admissions	3,383	1,647	1,746	476	638	149	247	16	8,302
Days waited at 50th percentile	168	152	68	135	160	434	204	157	134
Days waited at 90th percentile	497	448	388	557	441	964	526	314	484
% waited more than 365 days	24.6	16.2	10.7	20.2	16.0	55.0	25.1	6.3	19.6

(continued)

Table 6.5 (continued): Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2003-04

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Varicose veins stripping & ligation									
Admissions	1,435	1,083	789	148	247	42	63	20	3,827
Days waited at 50th percentile	63	81	74	44	151	106	346	210	75
Days waited at 90th percentile	322	920	827	882	695	1,062	925	686	690
% waited more than 365 days	7.9	23.6	24.0	20.9	26.3	35.7	47.6	45.0	18.5
Not applicable/not stated									
Admissions	122,532	81,792	80,946	31,705	25,285	9,117	5,284	3,949	360,610
Days waited at 50th percentile	24	23	19	21	30	34	28	24	22
Days waited at 90th percentile	144	149	98	159	168	248	241	188	141
% waited more than 365 days	2.1	2.6	1.8	3.4	3.0	6.3	5.0	3.4	2.5
Total									
Admissions	182,400	126,637	111,193	46,056	36,649	12,413	8,547	5,054	528,949
Days waited at 50th percentile	32	27	22	27	37	42	46	34	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	222	175	115	200	201	372	373	245	193
% waited more than 365 days	4.1	3.3	2.8	4.0	3.8	10.3	10.4	5.3	3.9

.. Not applicable.