

6 Waiting times for elective surgery

Introduction

This chapter presents national statistics for elective surgery waiting times for the years 2000–01 to 2004–05, and a state and territory overview of elective surgery waiting times for 2004–05. 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 have been 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, such as, 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 2004–05 and in comparison with previous reporting periods. Comparisons between jurisdictions and between 2004–05 and previous reporting periods should therefore be made with reference to the notes on the definitions used and to previous reports (AIHW 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2005a).

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 a patient was admitted. Days on which the patient was 'not ready for care' were excluded.

For previous reporting periods two methods were used to calculate waiting times for patients who changed clinical urgency category, one by South Australia and the other by all other states/territories. However, for the current reporting period, South Australia was able to report waiting times as per the agreed national standard for calculating waiting times, that is:

Counting the time waited in the most recent urgency category plus any time waited in more urgent categories, e.g. time waiting in category 2, plus time spent previously in category 1.

This would have the effect of decreasing the apparent waiting time for South Australian admissions in 2004–05 compared with previous reporting periods. In previous periods South Australia counted the waiting time in all urgency categories.

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 some 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 has the effect of shortening the reported waiting time compared with the time actually waited by these patients.

New South Wales, Victoria, 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 orthopaedic surgery. The information presented by indicator procedure and public hospital peer groups is for all jurisdictions. The other information provided in Figure 6.1 was available only for those jurisdictions that also included data for elective surgery waiting times for the National Hospital Morbidity Database, thus allowing waiting times information for patients to be related to other information concerning their admission for elective surgery. For the 2004–05 collection year, Queensland, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory provided elective surgery waiting times data to the National Hospital Morbidity Database. Queensland provided 100.0% of elective surgery records linked, with South Australia providing 98.7%, the Australian Capital Territory providing 83.0% and the Northern Territory providing 66.2%.

Australia-wide there were 79,064 admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for orthopaedic surgery. The median waiting time for these patients was 48 days and 9.6% of these patients waited more than 365 days for admission. *Total knee replacement* was the indicator procedure with the highest number of admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for orthopaedic surgery.

For Queensland, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory combined, there were 26,898 admissions from elective surgery waiting lists for orthopaedic surgery and these accounted for 94,143 patient days. The average length of stay was 3.5 days.

For these states and territories the most common procedure reported to the National Hospital Morbidity Database was *Cerebral anaesthesia* (Block 1910), and the most common principal diagnosis reported was *Gonarthrosis* (M17), followed by *Other orthopaedic follow-up care* (Z47). The most common AR-DRG reported was *Other knee procedures* (I18Z).

The age group with the highest proportion of separations was 55–64 years and more of the separations involved males than females. A large proportion (93.7%) 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 75 hospitals reported in this peer group. The collection covered 36 hospitals in the *Large* hospitals peer group, and 58 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 with 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, 2003–04 and 2004–05 compared with 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 86% in 2004–05, and ranged from 100% in the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory to 62% 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 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 67.7% of admissions from elective surgery waiting lists in 2004–05 compared with 64.9% in 2003–04. Another 18.4% were reported for hospitals in the *Large hospitals* peer group in 2004–05, compared with 20.8% in 2003–04. In 2004–05, 12.7% of admissions were in the *Medium hospitals* peer group, compared with 13.0% in 2003–04 (Table 6.1). Overall, for 2004–05, 549,746 admissions from waiting lists were reported compared with 528,949 in 2003–04 (Table 6.1).

There were 27.2 admissions reported for elective surgery per 1,000 population (crude rate) for Australia overall in 2004–05, compared with 26.5 in 2003–04, 26.2 in 2001–02, 26.0 in 2001–02 and 26.4 in 2000–01 (Table 6.1).

Distribution of days waited

Overall, the median waiting time for patients who were admitted from waiting lists was 29 days in 2004–05, 28 days in 2003–04 and 2002–03 and 27 days in 2001–02 and 2000–01 (Table 6.1). In 2004–05, this ranged from 22 days in Queensland to 45 days in the Australian Capital Territory (Table 6.2). Ninety per cent of patients were admitted within 217 days in 2004–05, compared with 193 days in 2003–04, 197 days in 2002–03, 203 days in 2001–02 and 202 days in 2000–01. In 2004–05, this ranged from 105 days in Queensland to 368 days in the Australian Capital Territory.

In 2004–05, the median waiting time for patients admitted from waiting lists for hospitals in the *Principal referral and specialist women's and children's hospitals* peer group (28 days) was shorter than for *Large hospitals* and *Medium hospitals* peer groups (29 days and 37 days respectively).

Proportion waiting more than 365 days

Overall, the proportion of patients admitted after waiting more than 365 days was 4.8% in 2004–05 compared with 3.9% in 2003–04, 4.0% in 2002–03, 4.5% in 2001–02 and 4.4% in 2000–01 (Table 6.1). In 2004–05, this proportion ranged from 1.8% in Queensland to 10.1% in the Australian Capital Territory (Table 6.2).

In the *Principal referral and specialist women's and children's hospitals* peer group in 2004–05, 4.6% of patients were admitted after waiting more than 365 days, as were 4.8% of patients in the *Large hospitals* peer group, and 6.1% 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 2004–05. 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 more than 365 days before being removed from waiting lists.

In 2004–05 a total of 621,015 patients were added to elective surgery waiting lists and 645,340 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). In 2004–05, 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 three jurisdictions relative to others.

Elective admissions accounted for the most removals from waiting lists in 2004–05 (85.2%), ranging from 79.1% in the Australian Capital Territory to 86.8% in Western Australia.

Surgery not required or declined accounted for the next largest number of removals in 2004–05 (7.2%, 46,450 patients) following admissions as elective patients. A further 3.5% of patients (22,537 patients) were *Treated elsewhere*, 1.3% (8,488) were *Not contactable*, and 1.0% (6,757) were *Emergency admissions*.

Distribution of waiting times

Overall, the reason for removal category with the shortest median waiting time in 2004–05 was *Emergency admission* (2 days), and the category with longest median waiting time was *Not contactable/died* (226 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* (84 days) and the category with the longest waiting time was *Not contactable/died* (798 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 *Emergency admission* category ranged from 12 days in Queensland to 177 days in Western Australia and 1,447 days in the Australian Capital Territory.

Proportion waiting more than 365 days

In 2004–05 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* (33.6%). *Elective admissions* had 4.8% 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 2004–05. Overall, it ranged from 4.0% in Queensland to 14.1% in the Australian Capital Territory. For the removal category *Surgery not required or declined* it ranged from 13.1% in Queensland to 42.9% in Tasmania.

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 2004–05, 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 2004–05 (66 and 48 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 28 days in Queensland and within 209 days in the Australian Capital Territory. There was less variation between states and territories in the median waiting time for *Plastic surgery*, with waiting times ranging from 22 days in Tasmania to 39 days in the Northern Territory.

The length of time by which 90% of patients had been admitted also varied by surgical specialty in 2004–05, from 62 days for *Cardio-thoracic surgery* to 364 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 (9.8% and 9.6% respectively). *Cardio-thoracic surgery* had the lowest proportion of patients who waited more than 365 days (0.1%), followed by *Gynaecology* (1.5%) and *Neurosurgery* (1.7%).

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, 1.7% of patients admitted for *Ophthalmology* in 2004–05 waited more than 365 days in Victoria, compared with 35.0% of patients in Tasmania.

Admissions from waiting lists

Nationally, admissions from waiting lists were highest for *General surgery* (141,830) and lowest for *Neurosurgery* (10,652). Admissions from waiting lists were also highest for *General surgery* across all jurisdictions. *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* (2,500 and 855 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 2004–05, by indicator procedure.

Distribution of days waited

Nationally, the indicator procedure with the lowest median waiting time in 2004–05 was *Coronary artery bypass graft* (14 days) and the indicator procedure with the highest median waiting time was *Total knee replacement* (152 days).

There was marked variation among the states and territories in the median waiting time for *Varicose veins stripping and ligation*, ranging from 29 days in Western Australia to 243 days in the Northern Territory and 519 days in the Australian Capital Territory.

The length of time by which 90% of patients had been admitted also varied by indicator procedure, from 89 days for *Coronary artery bypass graft* to 775 days for *Varicose veins stripping and ligation*.

Proportion waiting more than 365 days

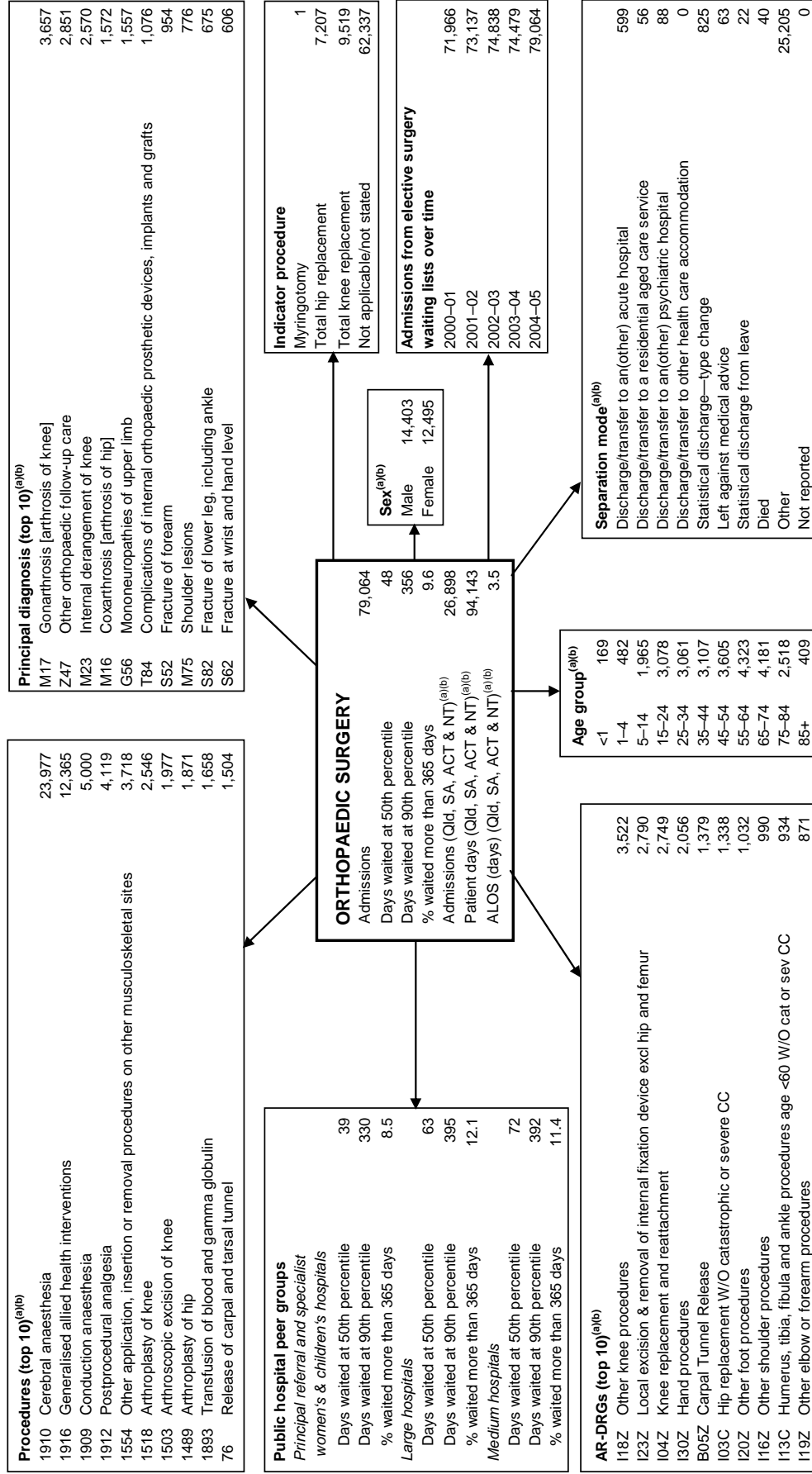
The indicator procedure with the highest proportion of patients waiting more than 365 days was *Septoplasty* (24.2%), followed by *Total knee replacement* (23.5%). The lowest proportion of patients waiting more than 365 days were waiting for a *Coronary artery bypass graft* (0.2%).

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, 4.0% of patients waited more than 365 days for admission for *Total hip replacement* in Queensland, compared with 48.5% in Tasmania. For *Septoplasty*, the proportion ranged from 13.0% in the Northern Territory to 50.0% in the Australian Capital Territory

Admissions from waiting lists

Overall, 32.9% 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 (37.8%) and the Northern Territory had the lowest proportion (19.4%).

Cataract extraction was the highest volume indicator procedure for the majority of jurisdictions, with the exception of *Cystoscopy* being the highest for South Australia and Tasmania. *Myringoplasty* was the lowest volume indicator procedure for all states and territories except Western Australia and Tasmania, where *Varicose veins stripping and ligation* and *Septoplasty* were the lowest, respectively.



(a) These data are supplied to the National Hospital Morbidity Database for Queensland, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory 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.
 Abbreviations: CC—complications and comorbidities; W/O—without; cat—catastrophic; ALOS—average length of stay; sev—severe; Inves—investigation.

Figure 6.1: Interrelationships of a specialty of surgeon (orthopaedic surgery) with other data elements, all hospitals, 2004-05

Table 6.1: Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists for elective surgery, by public hospital peer group^(a), Australia, 2000–01 to 2004–05

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Principal referral and specialist women's & children's hospitals					
Number of reporting hospitals ^(b)	67	66	69	68	75
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) ^(c)	99	100	99	99	99
Number of admissions ^(d)	333,013	317,275	339,370	343,430	372,085
Days waited at 50th percentile	26	24	26	27	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	194	184	182	182	203
% waited more than 365 days	4.2	4.2	3.9	3.9	4.6
Large hospitals					
Number of reporting hospitals ^(b)	37	40	41	42	36
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) ^(c)	79	84	82	85	82
Number of admissions ^(d)	98,315	116,882	108,742	110,284	100,916
Days waited at 50th percentile	30	33	31	30	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	207	229	213	206	227
% waited more than 365 days	4.6	5.0	4.2	4.2	4.8
Medium hospitals					
Number of reporting hospitals ^(b)	60	56	56	58	59
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) ^(c)	56	53	52	59	62
Number of admissions ^(d)	68,317	62,430	59,109	68,790	69,830
Days waited at 50th percentile	30	32	34	34	37
Days waited at 90th percentile	221	231	234	215	272
% waited more than 365 days	4.4	4.7	3.6	3.3	6.1
Total^(f)					
Number of reporting hospitals ^(b)	195	193	199	196	195
Estimated coverage of surgical separations (%) ^(c)	85	84	85	87	87
Number of admissions ^(d)	508,290	508,371	517,503	528,949	549,746
Admissions per 1,000 population ^(e)	26.4	26.0	26.2	26.5	27.2
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	27	28	28	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	202	203	197	193	217
% waited more than 365 days	4.4	4.5	4.0	3.9	4.8

(a) The methodology used to assign public hospital peer groups was adjusted for 2001–02 and later years compared to 2000–01.

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

(c) For 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, 2003–04 and 2004–05 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.

(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 of the period in question.

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

Table 6.2: Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists for elective surgery, by hospital peer group, states and territories, 2004-05

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Principal referral and specialist women's & children's hospitals									
Number of reporting hospitals ^(a)	26	19	16	4	5	2	1	2	75
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations (%) ^(b)	100	100	97	100	100	100	100	100	99
Number of admissions ^(c)	117,762	84,230	90,171	29,258	30,193	10,451	4,994	5,026	372,085
Days waited at 50th percentile	29	28	22	26	36	41	n.p.	25	28
Days waited at 90th percentile	274	216	105	184	203	373	n.p.	252	203
% waited more than 365 days	6.7	4.3	1.9	3.4	3.9	10.3	n.p.	5.5	4.6
Large hospitals									
Number of reporting hospitals ^(a)	16	8	6	2	2	1	1	..	36
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations (%) ^(b)	100	73	100	48	100	66	100	..	82
Number of admissions ^(c)	34,153	32,307	13,272	7,696	6,511	3,354	3,623	..	100,916
Days waited at 50th percentile	41	23	22	n.p.	30	n.p.	n.p.	..	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	330	159	95	n.p.	179	n.p.	n.p.	..	227
% waited more than 365 days	7.6	2.3	1.5	n.p.	4.5	n.p.	n.p.	..	4.8
Medium hospitals									
Number of reporting hospitals ^(a)	41	5	9	4	0	..	..	..	59
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations (%) ^(b)	100	37	83	75	0	..	..	..	62
Number of admissions ^(c)	41,509	12,668	5,433	10,220	n.a.	..	..	..	69,830
Days waited at 50th percentile	47	34	28	23	n.a.	..	..	..	37
Days waited at 90th percentile	316	213	137	182	n.a.	..	..	..	272
% waited more than 365 days	7.3	6.0	1.5	4.0	n.a.	..	..	..	6.1
Total^(d)									
Number of reporting hospitals ^(a)	104	32	31	11	7	3	2	5	195
Estimated coverage of elective surgical separations (%) ^(b)	100	79	96	72	62	90	100	100	87
Number of admissions ^(c)	197,600	129,205	108,876	49,295	36,704	13,805	8,617	5,644	549,746
Admissions per 1,000 population ^(e)	29.3	25.9	27.7	24.7	23.9	28.5	26.6	28.1	27.2
Days waited at 50th percentile	34	28	22	27	35	34	45	29	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	294	200	105	197	201	352	368	266	217
% waited more than 365 days	6.9	4.0	1.8	3.8	4.0	9.5	10.1	5.9	4.8

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

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

(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 2004.

.. 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 for elective surgery, by reason for removal, states and territories, 2004–05

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Additions	216,213	147,821	127,796	52,441	42,188	16,883	10,637	7,036	621,015
Removals^(a)									
Elective admission	197,600	129,205	108,876	49,295	36,704	13,805	8,617	5,644	549,746
Days waited at 50th percentile	34	28	22	27	35	34	45	29	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	294	200	105	197	201	352	368	266	217
% waited more than 365 days	6.9	4.0	1.8	3.8	4.0	9.5	10.1	5.9	4.8
Emergency admission	2,120	1,172	2,788	163	283	207	10	14	6,757
Days waited at 50th percentile	6	11	0	39	14	27	13	13	2
Days waited at 90th percentile	114	176	12	177	90	225	1,447	39	84
% waited more than 365 days	1.5	3.7	0.3	4.9	1.1	4.8	20.0	0.0	1.6
Not contactable/died	2,968	2,274	1,074	598	694	664	216	n.a.	8,488
Days waited at 50th percentile	235	249	152	235	138	237	272	n.a.	226
Days waited at 90th percentile	638	895	1,314	718	778	1,122	805	n.a.	798
% waited more than 365 days	30.2	37.6	33.1	35.6	29.1	38.1	38.0	n.a.	33.6
Treated elsewhere	11,871	4,166	3,426	1,177	1,041	389	467	n.a.	22,537
Days waited at 50th percentile	149	113	68	180	128	174	202	n.a.	128
Days waited at 90th percentile	478	543	517	527	845	562	651	n.a.	518
% waited more than 365 days	19.1	19.0	15.9	25.4	26.3	22.9	28.1	n.a.	19.5
Surgery not required or declined	17,210	12,443	8,309	3,243	2,592	1,311	1,342	n.a.	46,450
Days waited at 50th percentile	135	120	57	199	127	293	204	n.a.	115
Days waited at 90th percentile	509	627	463	613	677	1,252	682	n.a.	575
% waited more than 365 days	20.5	22.1	13.1	30.8	23.7	42.9	29.4	n.a.	21.4
Transferred to another hospital's waiting list	n.a.	1,302	n.a.	1,520	n.a.	n.a.	106	n.a.	2,928
Days waited at 50th percentile	n.a.	106	n.a.	245	n.a.	n.a.	231	n.a.	153
Days waited at 90th percentile	n.a.	468	n.a.	690	n.a.	n.a.	580	n.a.	631
% waited more than 365 days	n.a.	13.5	n.a.	35.9	n.a.	n.a.	32.1	n.a.	25.8
Not reported	n.a.	1,553	2,948	786	1,794	n.a.	129	1,224	8,434
Days waited at 50th percentile	n.a.	70	120	182	84	n.a.	107	220	119
Days waited at 90th percentile	n.a.	486	1,008	668	601	n.a.	652	744	771
% waited more than 365 days	n.a.	14.1	36.2	29.1	21.1	n.a.	15.5	30.7	27.1
Total	231,769	152,115	127,421	56,782	43,108	16,376	10,887	6,882	645,340
Days waited at 50th percentile	39	33	24	34	40	42	63	39	34
Days waited at 90th percentile	343	265	140	294	266	454	443	374	293
% waited more than 365 days	8.8	6.6	4.0	7.3	6.8	13.6	14.1	10.3	7.3

(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 for elective surgery, by specialty of surgeon, states and territories, 2004-05

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Cardio-thoracic surgery									
Admissions	4,257	2,820	3,493	3,563	935	411	250	0	15,729
Days waited at 50th percentile	14	5	8	13	12	24	17	..	11
Days waited at 90th percentile	69	66	69	42	70	86	35	..	62
% waited more than 365 days	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	..	0.1
Ear, nose & throat surgery									
Admissions	14,561	13,269	9,301	3,688	4,039	529	689	488	46,564
Days waited at 50th percentile	60	29	15	83	50	39	116	55	37
Days waited at 90th percentile	446	192	105	351	314	448	689	384	322
% waited more than 365 days	14.1	4.9	2.9	9.6	8.6	13.0	17.3	10.7	8.4
General surgery									
Admissions	56,862	31,392	27,499	10,800	8,306	3,731	1,410	1,830	141,830
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	26	25	20	31	28	28	51	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	163	194	99	120	142	199	201	315	155
% waited more than 365 days	3.1	3.7	1.6	1.5	1.9	3.3	2.8	8.1	2.8
Gynaecology									
Admissions	30,418	14,960	17,278	5,468	5,303	2,001	1,054	1,707	78,189
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	28	21	19	28	29	30	6	25
Days waited at 90th percentile	133	139	87	68	128	141	160	66	113
% waited more than 365 days	2.2	1.7	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.2	1.5
Neurosurgery									
Admissions	3,120	2,539	1,360	2,467	762	183	221	0	10,652
Days waited at 50th percentile	21	21	11	34	21	42	70	..	22
Days waited at 90th percentile	129	149	78	134	153	436	337	..	141
% waited more than 365 days	1.9	1.2	0.4	1.2	2.0	13.7	9.0	..	1.7
Ophthalmology									
Admissions	23,967	17,296	8,397	5,536	3,803	961	1,127	541	61,628
Days waited at 50th percentile	140	34	28	78	71	115	209	145	66
Days waited at 90th percentile	450	179	189	314	255	554	531	356	364
% waited more than 365 days	18.2	1.7	2.8	6.1	2.9	35.0	28.4	9.1	9.8
Orthopaedic surgery									
Admissions	29,308	15,945	20,273	5,436	4,195	1,928	1,396	583	79,064
Days waited at 50th percentile	61	64	22	81	69	160	112	36	48
Days waited at 90th percentile	410	358	123	396	363	648	404	289	356
% waited more than 365 days	12.7	9.6	2.3	11.2	9.8	30.8	13.0	7.9	9.6

(continued)

Table 6.4 (continued): Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists for elective surgery, by speciality of surgeon, states and territories, 2004-05

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Plastic surgery									
Admissions	8,204	11,174	8,248	3,324	3,665	1,233	407	48	36,303
Days waited at 50th percentile	28	24	25	25	31	22	35	39	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	140	187	97	245	213	192	463	294	162
% waited more than 365 days	2.0	3.8	1.7	5.4	7.2	5.6	13.3	8.3	3.6
Urology									
Admissions	19,607	14,280	8,155	6,700	4,480	1,839	1,024	122	56,207
Days waited at 50th percentile	28	23	26	21	28	37	33	50	26
Days waited at 90th percentile	163	182	109	126	119	174	191	188	155
% waited more than 365 days	3.4	4.0	1.4	2.2	2.7	3.1	2.6	5.7	3.0
Vascular surgery									
Admissions	4,698	2,500	2,256	855	1,002	420	393	0	12,124
Days waited at 50th percentile	18	23	16	16	8	40	23	..	18
Days waited at 90th percentile	101	298	92	66	39	203	534	..	121
% waited more than 365 days	2.4	8.4	2.3	1.2	0.6	5.2	14.2	..	3.9
Other^(a)									
Admissions	2,598	3,030	2,616	1,458	214	569	646	325	11,456
Days waited at 50th percentile	7	21	26	9	22	6	35	13	14
Days waited at 90th percentile	66	81	116	43	90	32	332	98	96
% waited more than 365 days	0.4	0.9	3.1	0.1	0.5	0.2	7.4	0.9	1.5
Total									
Admissions	197,600	129,205	108,876	49,295	36,704	13,805	8,617	5,644	549,746
Days waited at 50th percentile	34	28	22	27	35	34	45	29	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	294	200	105	197	201	352	368	266	217
% waited more than 365 days	6.9	4.0	1.8	3.8	4.0	9.5	10.1	5.9	4.8

(a) Includes speciality of surgeon of Not reported.

.. Not applicable.

Table 6.5: Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists for elective surgery, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2004-05

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Cataract extraction									
Admissions	19,264	11,723	5,623	3,985	2,275	619	1,007	350	44,846
Days waited at 50th percentile	182	44	33	94	99	368	240	167	92
Days waited at 90th percentile	475	187	209	317	272	595	531	365	388
% waited more than 365 days	21.2	1.9	2.6	6.1	2.9	51.1	29.9	9.7	12.1
Cholecystectomy									
Admissions	6,793	3,943	3,367	954	909	515	227	132	16,840
Days waited at 50th percentile	50	49	40	28	40	64	57	92	46
Days waited at 90th percentile	274	236	104	165	132	217	334	367	217
% waited more than 365 days	6.1	4.4	1.2	2.2	0.8	3.5	6.6	10.6	4.2
Coronary artery bypass graft									
Admissions	1,466	1,023	1,636	303	387	224	171	0	5,210
Days waited at 50th percentile	17	7	11	20	20	28	12	..	14
Days waited at 90th percentile	94	129	84	53	78	86	33	..	89
% waited more than 365 days	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	..	0.2
Cystoscopy									
Admissions	13,498	8,843	4,269	3,482	2,311	661	566	178	33,808
Days waited at 50th percentile	27	23	29	23	22	37	44	47	27
Days waited at 90th percentile	146	174	160	187	100	179	197	182	158
% waited more than 365 days	2.2	3.6	1.4	3.5	1.6	3.0	2.5	3.4	2.6
Haemorrhoidectomy									
Admissions	1,240	833	524	278	262	54	33	7	3,231
Days waited at 50th percentile	49	58	40	33	35	104	105	n.p.	45
Days waited at 90th percentile	338	308	201	170	92	638	370	n.p.	294
% waited more than 365 days	8.7	7.6	6.3	4.3	0.8	27.8	12.1	n.p.	7.4
Hysterectomy									
Admissions	4,314	2,287	1,876	1,015	546	315	100	26	10,479
Days waited at 50th percentile	40	35	34	25	53	45	44	43	36
Days waited at 90th percentile	189	173	105	78	168	161	186	389	153
% waited more than 365 days	3.7	2.2	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.6	2.0	11.5	2.4
Inguinal herniorrhaphy									
Admissions	6,047	3,441	2,897	1,118	839	428	229	141	15,140
Days waited at 50th percentile	47	48	38	25	45	72	77	84	43
Days waited at 90th percentile	246	255	111	151	153	273	311	379	216
% waited more than 365 days	4.7	5.3	1.5	2.6	1.1	5.6	3.5	11.3	4.0

(continued)

Table 6.5 (continued): Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists for elective surgery, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2004–05

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Myringoplasty									
Admissions	452	419	294	199	92	20	10	42	1,528
Days waited at 50th percentile	210	64	46	123	115	38	96	49	88
Days waited at 90th percentile	629	434	489	419	544	489	1093	730	550
% waited more than 365 days	32.5	12.4	12.6	14.1	26.1	15.0	30.0	23.8	19.9
Myringotomy									
Admissions	541	2,660	1,744	743	848	53	76	21	6,686
Days waited at 50th percentile	34	23	21	77	43	46	127	65	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	200	80	103	168	111	157	241	263	119
% waited more than 365 days	3.3	0.6	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	3.9	4.8	0.9
Prostatectomy									
Admissions	2,391	1,667	971	470	383	22	81	31	6,016
Days waited at 50th percentile	40	25	28	28	39	36	30	53	32
Days waited at 90th percentile	265	267	98	123	155	52	162	188	216
% waited more than 365 days	6.9	6.5	1.9	1.1	3.1	0.0	3.7	3.2	5.2
Septoplasty									
Admissions	1,186	1,546	442	217	219	9	42	23	3,684
Days waited at 50th percentile	179	63	46	176	173	n.p.	354	149	96
Days waited at 90th percentile	662	565	1,031	649	614	n.p.	952	433	642
% waited more than 365 days	30.4	19.0	20.4	29.0	24.7	n.p.	50.0	13.0	24.2
Tonsillectomy									
Admissions	4,186	3,789	2,279	964	931	20	174	76	12,419
Days waited at 50th percentile	110	39	28	127	73	75	173	76	62
Days waited at 90th percentile	516	205	128	406	306	402	734	369	360
% waited more than 365 days	19.1	3.1	2.0	14.0	7.0	15.0	22.4	10.5	9.8
Total hip replacement									
Admissions	2,747	1,705	1,295	515	514	227	186	24	7,213
Days waited at 50th percentile	106	141	50	114	125	355	173	96	102
Days waited at 90th percentile	481	400	179	377	375	668	427	402	433
% waited more than 365 days	18.9	12.8	4.0	10.5	10.9	48.5	15.1	16.7	14.4
Total knee replacement									
Admissions	4,270	1,625	1,857	540	725	216	272	21	9,526
Days waited at 50th percentile	218	176	60	165	140	411	207	217	152
Days waited at 90th percentile	604	463	267	450	418	747	587	503	542
% waited more than 365 days	33.1	17.6	7.2	17.8	14.2	57.9	28.7	33.3	23.5

(continued)

Table 6.5 (continued): Waiting time statistics for patients admitted from waiting lists for elective surgery, by indicator procedure, states and territories, 2004-05

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total
Varicose veins stripping & ligation									
Admissions	1,695	1,244	634	83	280	27	82	21	4,066
Days waited at 50th percentile	68	90	68	29	169	96	519	243	78
Days waited at 90th percentile	483	1,145	808	147	688	510	1,087	876	775
% waited more than 365 days	13.8	27.9	20.0	4.8	26.1	22.2	67.1	47.6	21.1
Not applicable/not stated									
Admissions	127,510	82,457	79,168	34,429	25,183	10,395	5,361	4,551	369,054
Days waited at 50th percentile	25	23	19	21	29	27	29	21	23
Days waited at 90th percentile	173	174	93	150	163	245	262	212	154
% waited more than 365 days	3.6	3.3	1.4	3.0	3.8	6.4	5.6	4.7	3.1
Total									
Admissions	197,600	129,205	108,876	49,295	36,704	13,805	8,617	5,644	549,746
Days waited at 50th percentile	34	28	22	27	35	34	45	29	29
Days waited at 90th percentile	294	200	105	197	201	352	368	266	217
% waited more than 365 days	6.9	4.0	1.8	3.8	4.0	9.5	10.1	5.9	4.8

.. Not applicable.

n.p. Not published