

How do outpatient cancer clinics perform?

Patient-reported experiences and outcomes of care

November 2016



How do outpatient cancer clinics perform?

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Please note that there is the potential for minor revisions of data in this chartpack.

Please check the online version at **bhi.nsw.gov.au** for any amendments.

The conclusions in this report are those of BHI and no official endorsement by the NSW Minister for Health, the NSW Ministry of Health or any other NSW public health organisation is intended or should be inferred.

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See bhi.nsw.gov.au for supplementary information on methods and data tables.

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Click on this icon where it appears in the chartpack for more detailed information on interpreting that graph.

Key findings

More than 12,000 patients told us about their experiences in outpatient cancer clinics in NSW and the findings in this chartpack reflect those experiences.

- Almost all patients rated the care they received as either 'very good' (85%) or 'good' (13%). Overall, 92% of patients said they would 'speak highly' of the clinic.
- In general, patients were positive about interpersonal aspects of care. For example, almost all patients (96%) said they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity.
- Patients responded less positively to questions regarding the ability of health professionals to be responsive to their physical and emotional needs. For example, two-thirds (65%) of patients said health professionals 'completely' discussed their worries and fears with them.
- Almost three-quarters (74%) of patients said they did not have any out-of-pocket expenses for consultations, treatment or tests in the previous six months, while 8% said they had out-of-pocket expenses in excess of \$500.*
- Results varied across hospital clinics. Patients who attended Campbelltown Hospital and Orange Health Service responded significantly more positively than the NSW result for 19 and 17 questions (out of 47 questions), respectively. Patients who attended Westmead and Bankstown–Lidcombe hospitals responded significantly less positively than the NSW result for 17 and 13 questions respectively.
- Patients were treated for many types of cancer. Patients with skin or prostate cancers were significantly more positive about their experiences of care for 16 questions, while patients with breast cancer were significantly less positive for 13 questions.

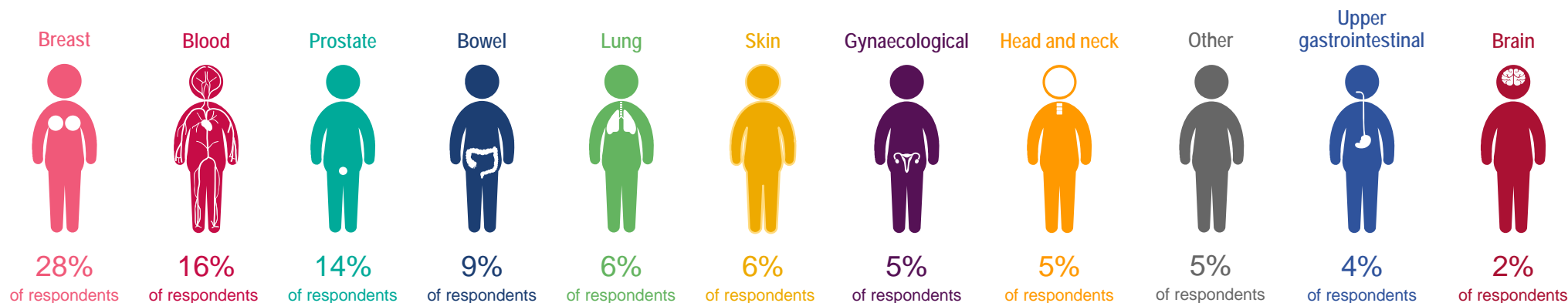
* The survey sampled all outpatients attending cancer clinics, regardless of funding sources. Therefore, out-of-pocket costs may vary across facilities depending on their mix of patients' funding sources (e.g. bulk-billed and fee-for-service). For this question, patients may have included expenses for medical services, such as those co-located in the same hospital or campus, which were not provided by the outpatient clinic they attended.

About this chartpack

Background

Each year almost 40,000 people in NSW are diagnosed with cancer. There are around 100 different types of cancer – the most common being prostate, breast and skin (melanoma) cancers. Patients attend outpatient cancer clinics for a range of diagnostic, therapeutic and consultation services, including some patients (11% of respondents) treated for conditions other than cancer, such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. The type of cancer reported by the 87% of respondents who said they had cancer is shown at the bottom of this page. The results in this chartpack reflect the experiences of patients receiving treatment for cancer as well as those being treated for other conditions.

The Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey 2016 included 78 questions about access to services, the clinic environment, interaction with healthcare professionals, care planning and coordination, complications, out-of-pocket costs and outcomes. Although the survey was first run in 2015, substantial changes were subsequently made to the questionnaire and sampling methods – therefore comparisons between 2015 and 2016 results are not reported.



About this chartpack

Data and methods

Results are based on the responses of 12,024 patients who attended a NSW outpatient cancer clinic in November 2016. The response rate was 56%.

Across NSW, 51 hospitals with outpatient cancer clinics were included in the survey – 48 public hospitals and three private facilities: Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, Sydney Adventist Hospital and the Riverina Cancer Care Centre.

Results for Sydney Adventist Hospital and Riverina Cancer Care Centre participated in the survey for the first time in 2016, as a pilot project, and their results contribute to the overall NSW results.

Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, who also participated in the 2015 survey, is the only private facility reported at the hospital level. This facility is a not-for-profit integrated cancer treatment centre, contracted to provide services for some public patients. It is not managed by Sydney LHD, despite being located within that LHD's boundaries. Therefore, caution is advised when comparing results from Chris O'Brien Lifehouse to public hospitals in the survey.

The survey sampled all outpatients attending cancer clinics, regardless of funding sources. Therefore, out-of-pocket costs may vary across facilities depending on their mix of patients' funding sources (e.g. bulk-billed and fee-for-service). Patients may have included expenses for medical services, such as those co-located in the same hospital or campus, which were not provided by the outpatient clinic they attended.

Results are only reported if hospitals have 30 or more respondents and were weighted so that the proportion of responses from each hospital reflects the size of their patient caseload. Statistically significant differences are reported where the 95% confidence intervals of two results do not overlap. Patient case mix (including cancer type) has not been taken into account when comparing hospitals with NSW results. Detailed information on analytic methods is included in the Technical Supplement, available at bhi.nsw.gov.au

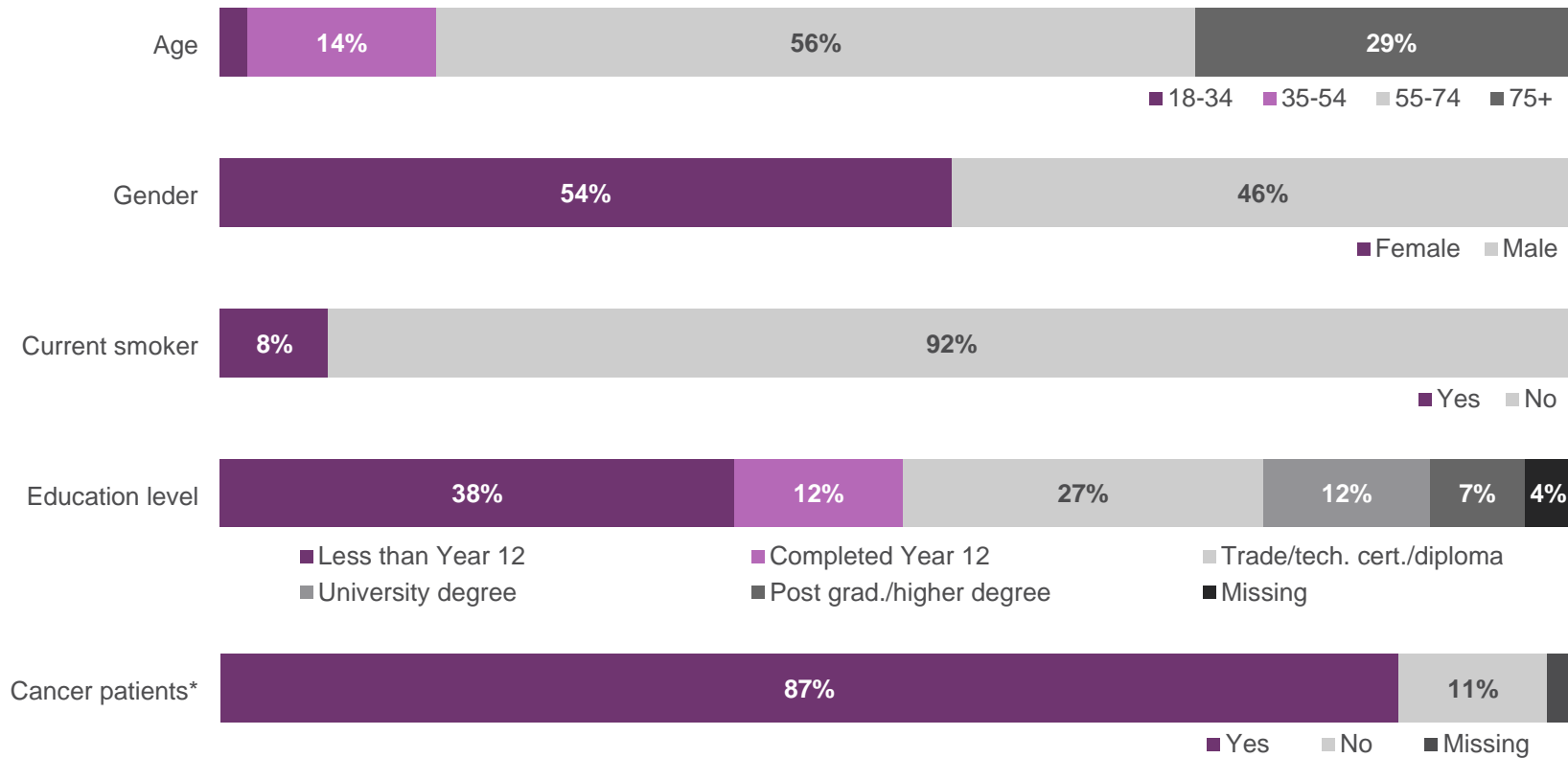
Of the 78 survey questions, 47 questions relate to specific measures of clinic performance, which relate to the care provided.

Three supplementary data tables accompany this chartpack:

- *Data table A: NSW results and hospital distribution by all 47 performance questions*
- *Data table B: Results for all 47 performance questions by hospital*
- *Data table C: Results for all 47 performance questions by cancer type.*

About the survey respondents

Respondent profiles by demographic characteristics



* Outpatient cancer clinics also provide treatment for patients who do not have cancer, for example, delivering chemotherapy to patients with rheumatoid arthritis and lupus.

Experiences of care

Thematic results – aspects of care

The Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey 2016 included questions that asked about patients' experiences and outcomes of care. Questions are grouped into 12 thematic areas (or aspects of care).

This chartpack presents a question from each thematic area. For results for all 47 performance questions, please refer to the supplementary data tables A–C. Results for all questions at the state, local health district (LHD) and hospital levels are available on BHI's interactive data portal, Healthcare Observer, at bhi.nsw.gov.au

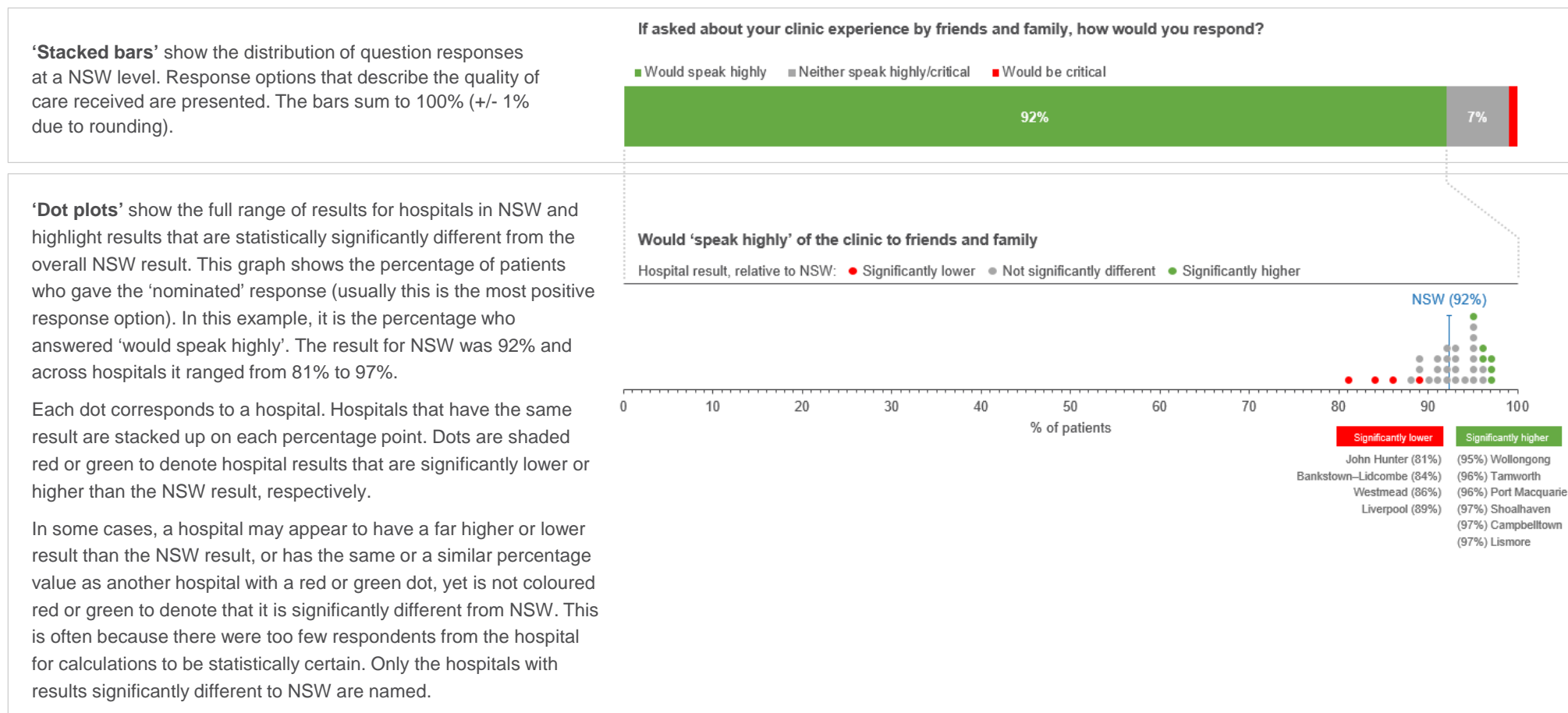
[Click on an aspect of care below to view a question belonging to that theme, then click on the menu icon in the top-right to return to this page]

Overall care ▶	Access and timeliness ▶	Physical environment and comfort ▶	Comprehensive and whole-person care ▶
Coordination and continuity ▶	Communication and information ▶	Engagement and participation ▶	Assistance and responsiveness ▶
Safety and hygiene ▶	Respect and dignity ▶	Trust and confidence ▶	Patient-reported outcomes ▶

Interpreting the graphs

Results shown in this section of the chartpack are presented as 'stacked bars' and 'dot plots'.

Example: 'If asked about your clinic experience by friends and family, how would you respond?', NSW, 2016



Overall, 85% of patients rated their care as 'very good' – ranging across hospitals from 69% to 93%

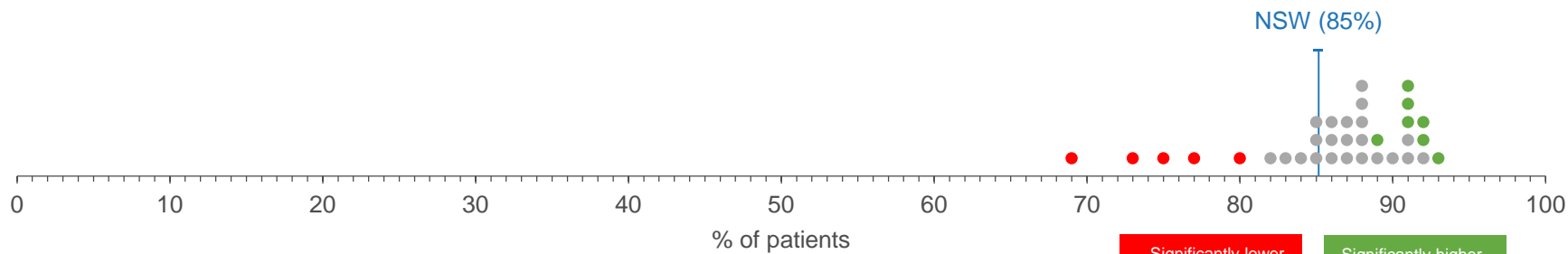
Overall, how would you rate the care you received in the clinic?

Very good Good Neither good nor poor Poor Very poor



Overall, care was rated as 'very good'

Hospital result, relative to NSW: Significantly lower Not significantly different Significantly higher

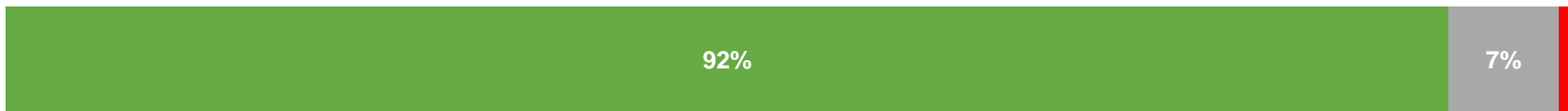


Significantly lower	Significantly higher
Bankstown–Lidcombe (69%)	(89%) Campbelltown
John Hunter (73%)	(91%) Royal Prince Alfred
Concord (75%)	(91%) Shoalhaven
Westmead (77%)	(91%) Wollongong
Liverpool (80%)	(92%) Orange Health Service
	(92%) Port Macquarie
	(93%) Lismore

Nine in 10 patients would ‘speak highly’ of the clinic to friends and family – ranging across hospitals from 81% to 97%

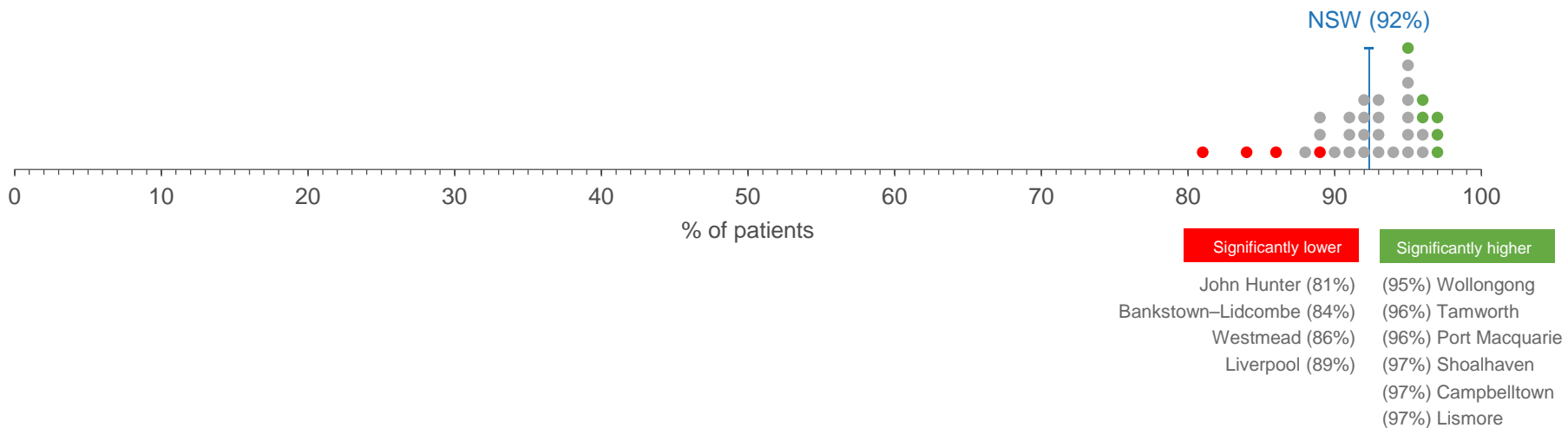
If asked about your clinic experience by friends and family, how would you respond?

■ Would speak highly
 ■ Neither speak highly/critical
 ■ Would be critical



Would ‘speak highly’ of the clinic to friends and family

Hospital result, relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher



Almost three-quarters of patients had no out-of-pocket costs for consultations, tests, surgery or treatment

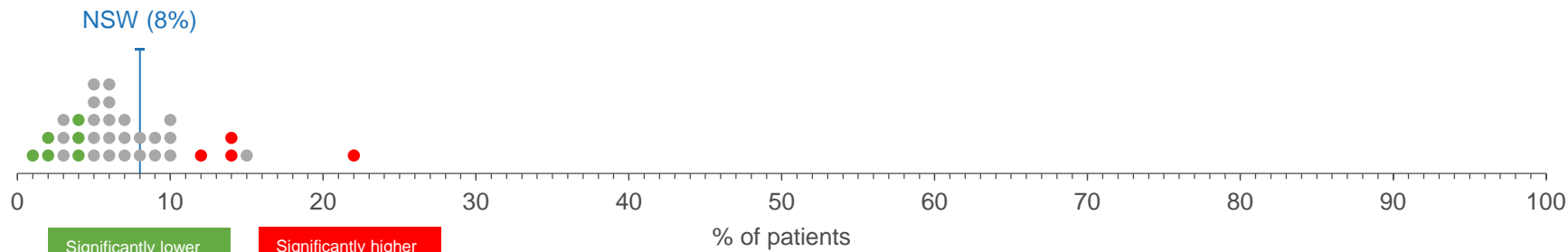
How much were your out-of-pocket expenses for consultations, tests, surgery or treatment related to [visits to this clinic over the past six months] (excluding medication)?

■ No out-of-pocket costs ■ Less than \$500 ■ \$500 or more



Out-of-pocket costs for consultations, tests, surgery or treatment at the clinic were \$500 or more over the past six months

Hospital result, relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher

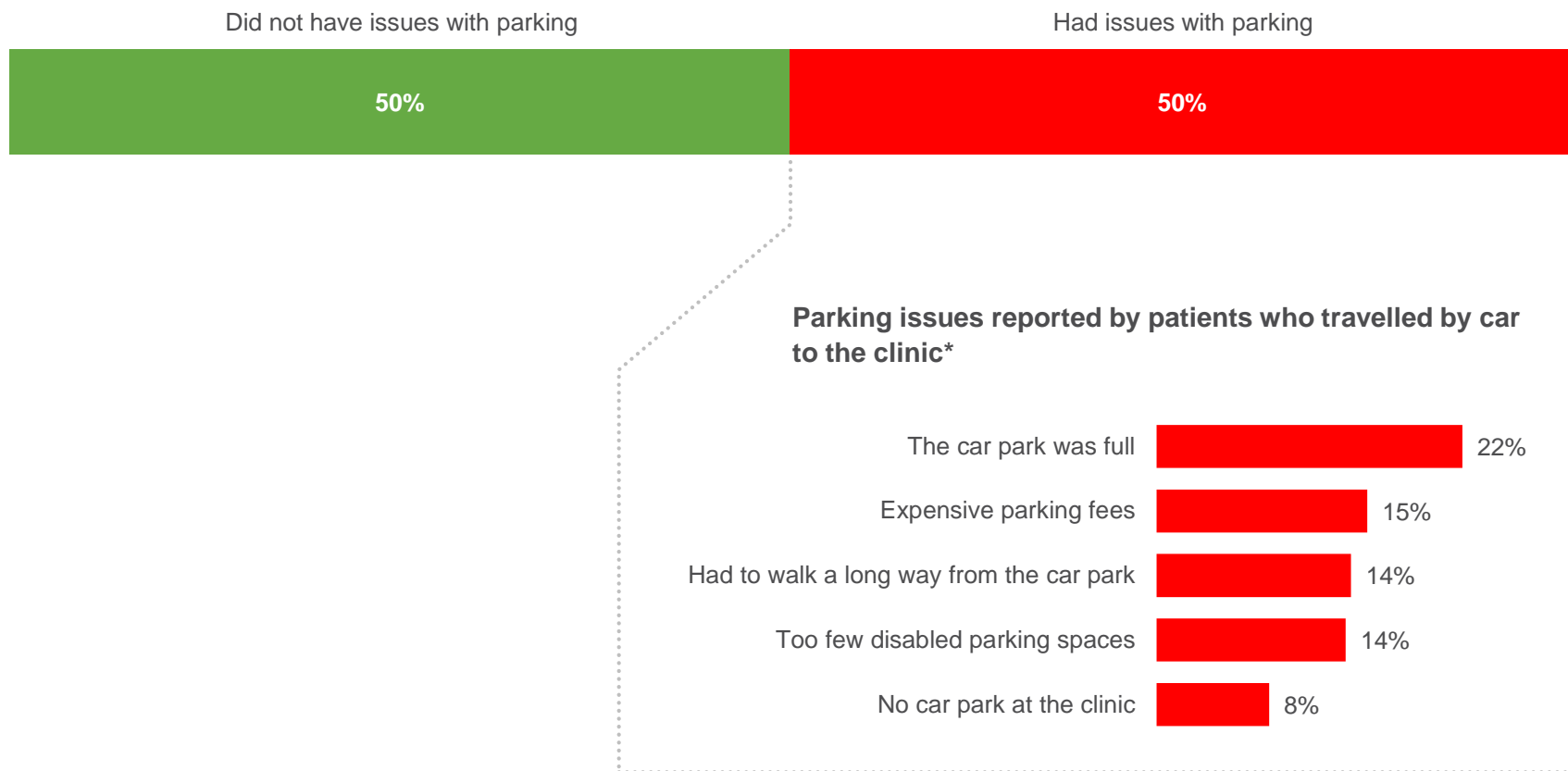


- Significantly lower: Manning (1%), The Tweed (2%), Calvary Mater (2%), Coffs Harbour (4%), Royal Prince Alfred (4%), Shoalhaven (4%)
- Significantly higher: Chris O'Brien Lifehouse (12%), Royal North Shore (14%), St Vincent's (14%), Bega Valley Community Health (22%)

Notes: The survey sampled all outpatients attending cancer clinics, regardless of funding sources. Therefore, out-of-pocket costs may vary across facilities depending on their mix of patients' funding sources (e.g. bulk-billed and fee-for-service). For this question, patients may have included expenses for medical services, such as those co-located in the same hospital or campus, which were not provided by the outpatient clinic they attended. Out-of-pocket costs are defined in the 2016 survey questionnaire as 'expenses that you don't get back from Medicare or a private health fund'.

Half of all patients who travelled to the clinic by car said they had issues with parking

Did you have any of the following issues with parking during this visit?



* These percentages do not sum to 50% as multiple responses were possible.

Note: Please refer to BHI's interactive data portal, Healthcare Observer, for a breakdown by hospital: bhi.nsw.gov.au

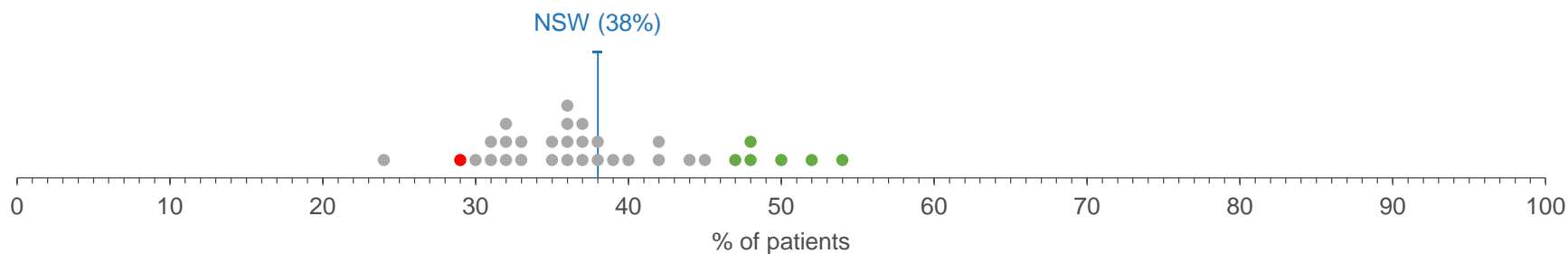
About four in 10 NSW patients have a written care plan* for their treatment – ranging across hospitals from 24% to 54%

Do you have a written care plan for your treatment?



Have a written care plan for treatment

Hospital result, relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher



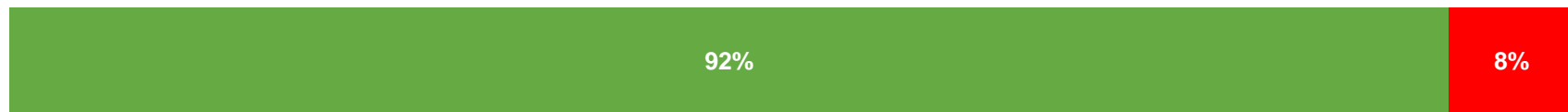
Significantly lower	Significantly higher
Nepean (29%)	(47%) Liverpool
	(48%) Blacktown
	(48%) Gosford
	(50%) Port Macquarie
	(52%) Wyong
	(54%) Orange Health Service

* A written care plan is a document that outlines the steps and goals in managing a medical condition.

Nine in 10 NSW patients said they did not receive conflicting information – ranging across hospitals from 85% to 97%

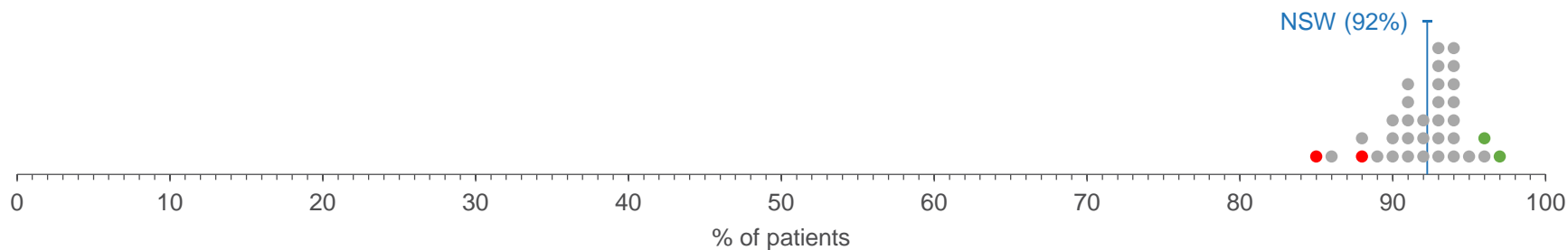
Did you ever receive conflicting information about your condition or treatment from the health professionals?

■ No ■ Yes



Did not receive conflicting information from health professionals

Hospital result, relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher



Significantly lower	Significantly higher
Eurobodalla Community Health (85%) Tamworth (88%)	(96%) Royal Prince Alfred (97%) Lismore

Three-quarters of patients were ‘completely’ told about how to manage possible side effects of treatment – ranging across hospitals from 63% to 87%

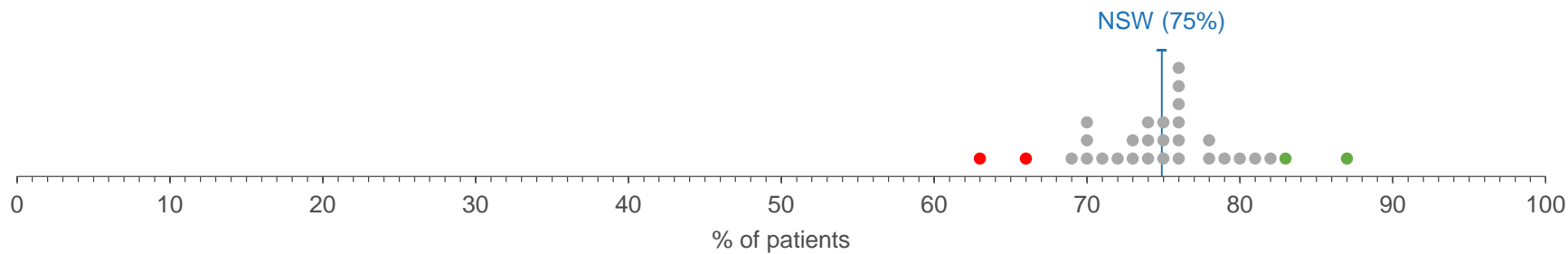
Were you given enough information about how to manage the side effects of your treatment?

■ Yes, completely ■ Yes, to some extent ■ No



‘Completely’ told about how to manage possible side effects of treatment

Hospital result, relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher



Significantly lower	Significantly higher
The Tweed (63%) Royal North Shore (66%)	(83%) Wollongong (87%) Orange Health Service

Almost eight in 10 patients were ‘definitely’ involved in decisions about their care – ranging across hospitals from 71% to 92%

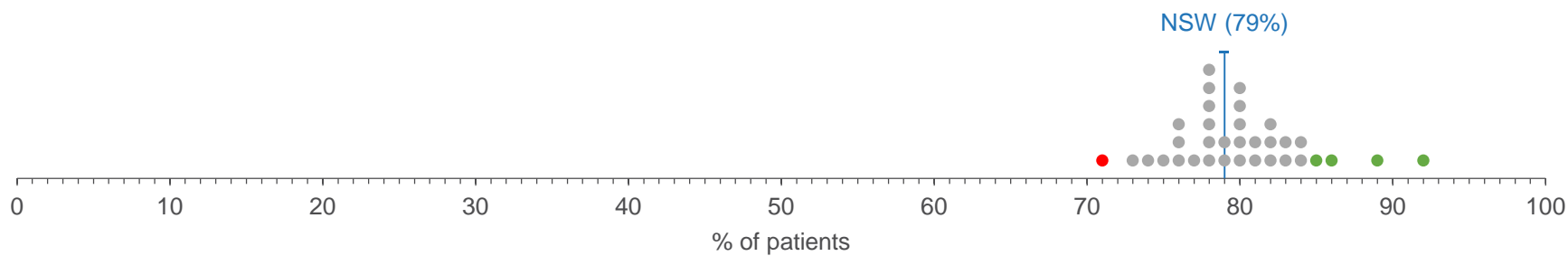
Were you involved, as much as you wanted to be, in decisions about your care and treatment?

■ Yes, definitely ■ Yes, to some extent ■ No



‘Definitely’ involved in decisions about care and treatment

Hospital result, relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher



Significantly lower	Significantly higher
Westmead (71%)	(85%) Royal Prince Alfred (86%) Lismore (89%) Manning (92%) Bourke Street Health Service

Almost two-thirds of patients said health professionals ‘completely’ discussed their worries or fears with them – ranging across hospitals from 47% to 75%

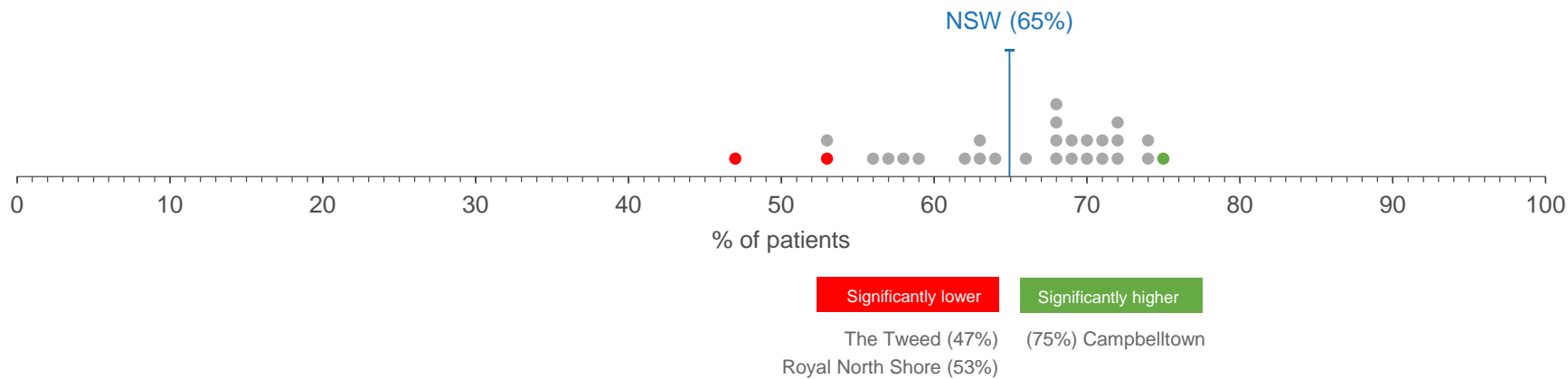
Did a health professional discuss your worries or fears with you? [of patients who said they had worries or fears about their condition or treatment]

■ Yes, completely ■ Yes, to some extent ■ No



Health professionals ‘completely’ discussed worries or fears

Hospital result, relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher



Seven in 10 patients said they ‘always’ saw health professionals wash their hands – ranging across hospitals from 55% to 89%

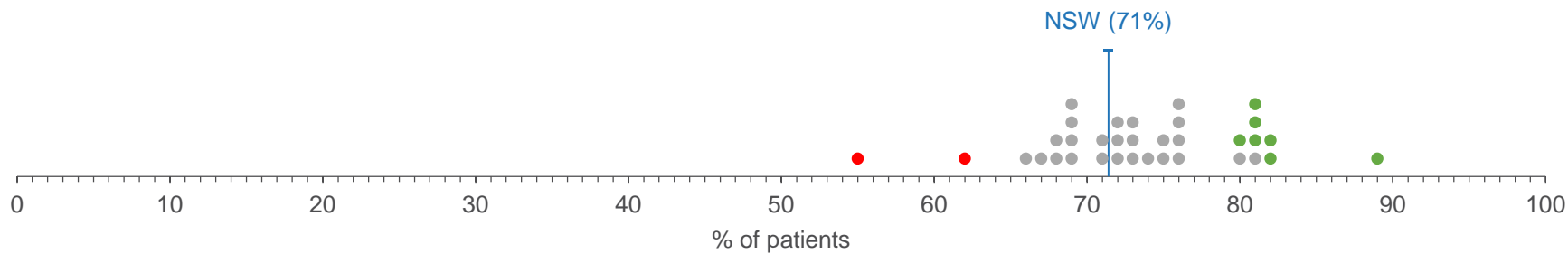
Did you see health professionals wash their hands, or use hand gel to clean their hands, before touching you?

■ Yes, always ■ Yes, sometimes ■ No ■ Can't remember



‘Always’ saw health professionals wash their hands

Hospital result, relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher

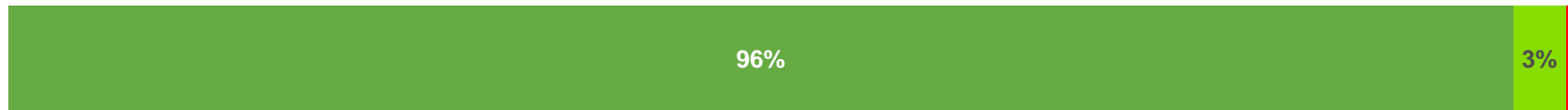


Significantly lower	Significantly higher
Royal North Shore (55%)	(80%) Lismore
Bankstown–Lidcombe (62%)	(81%) Manning
	(81%) Port Macquarie
	(81%) Dubbo
	(82%) Orange Health Service
	(82%) Wyong
	(89%) Grafton

Almost all patients said they were ‘always’ treated with respect and dignity – ranging across hospitals from 93% to 100%

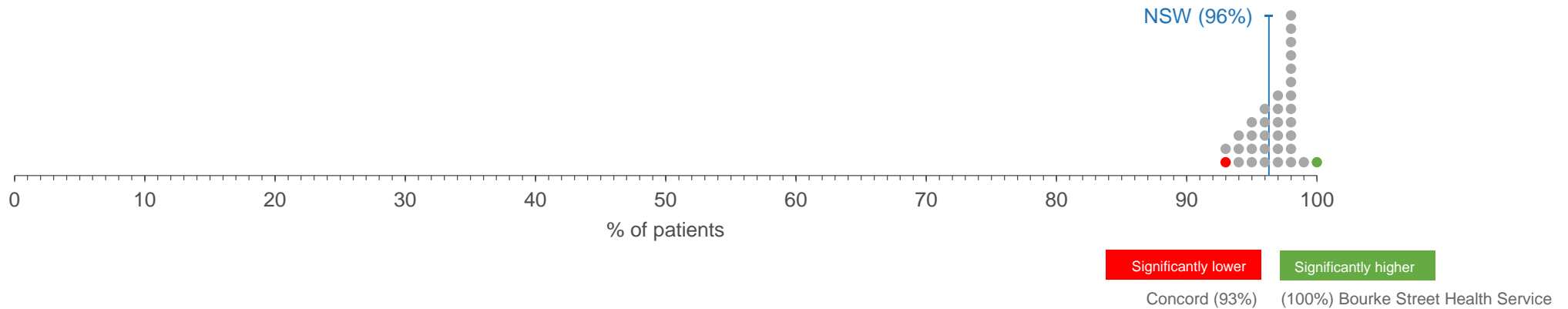
Were you treated with respect and dignity while you were at the clinic?

■ Yes, always ■ Yes, sometimes ■ No



‘Always’ treated with respect and dignity

Hospital result, relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher



Almost nine in 10 patients ‘definitely’ had confidence and trust in health professionals – ranging across hospitals from 77% to 96%

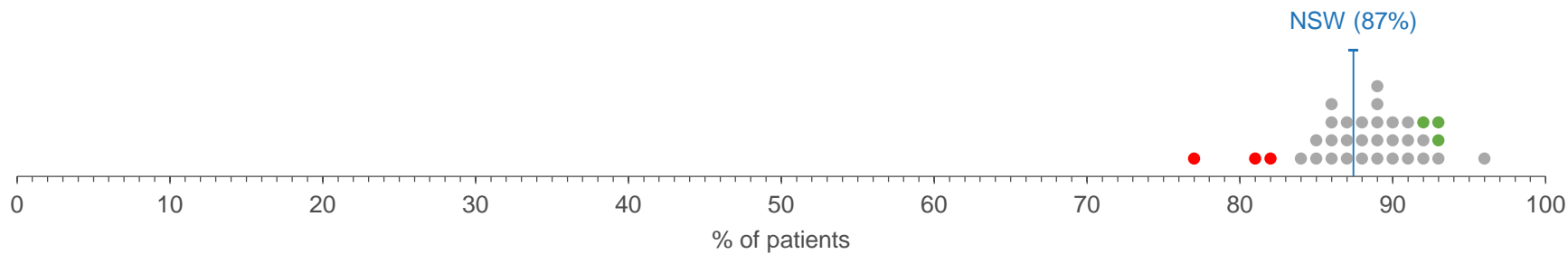
Did you have confidence and trust in the health professionals?

■ Yes, definitely ■ Yes, to some extent ■ No



‘Definitely’ had confidence and trust in health professionals

Hospital result, relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher



Significantly lower	Significantly higher
John Hunter (77%)	(92%) Port Macquarie
Westmead (81%)	(93%) Orange Health Service
Bankstown–Lidcombe (82%)	(93%) Campbelltown

More than one in 10 patients said they experienced a complication – ranging across hospitals from 4% to 22%

Overall, 12% of patients said they experienced a complication. Patients selected the following complications:

Complication	% of patients
Severe anxiety or worry	4%
An infection	3%
An unexpected negative reaction to medication	3%
Any other complication or problem	3%
Severe pain due to the treatment	2%
Complications as a result of tests or procedures	1%
Uncontrolled bleeding	0%

Note: These percentages do not sum to 12% as multiple responses were possible.

Of the patients who said they experienced a complication, 15% said the impact was ‘very serious’ and 44% said it was ‘fairly serious’.

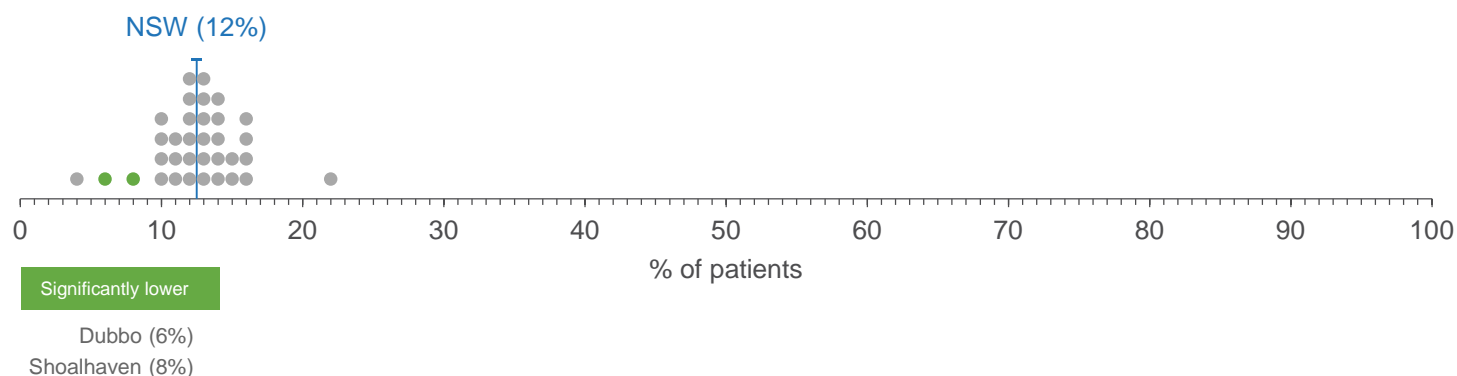
When patients were asked whether they thought health professionals were open with them about their complication or problem, 62% said ‘yes, completely’, 28% said ‘yes, to some extent’ and 10% said ‘no’.

During your visit or soon afterwards, did you experience any of the following complications or problems? (other than common side effects from treatment)



Experienced complications

Hospital result, relative to NSW: ● Significantly lower ● Not significantly different ● Significantly higher



Synthesis of results – experiences of care

Hospitals with significantly more positive and less positive results than NSW

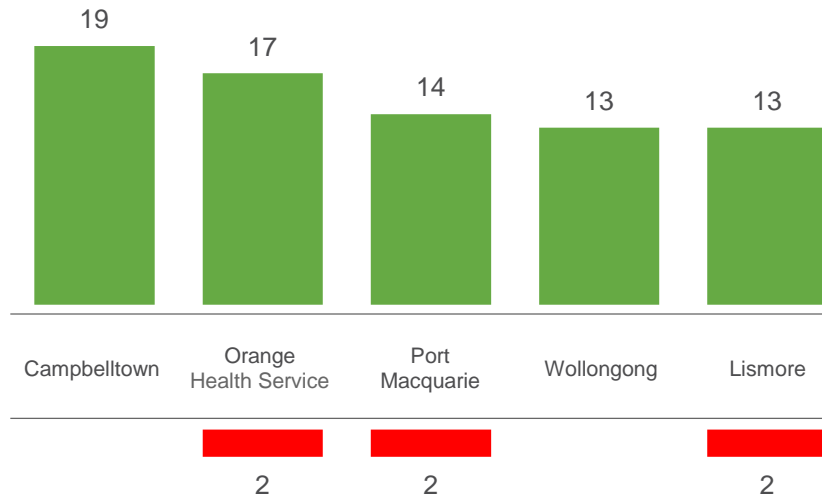
Patients' experiences of care in outpatient cancer clinics varied depending on the hospital where they were treated.

Patients who received treatment at Campbelltown Hospital responded significantly more positively than the NSW result for 19 questions (out of 47 performance questions), while patients at Orange Health Service responded

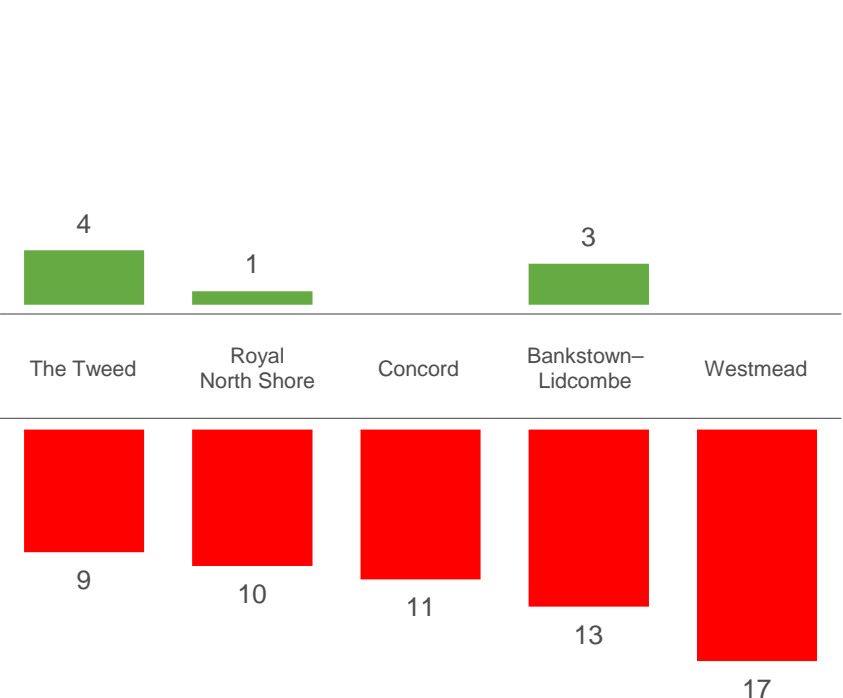
significantly more positively than the NSW result to 17 questions, and significantly less positively for two questions.

Patients at Westmead Hospital responded significantly less positively than the NSW result for 17 questions, while patients at Bankstown–Lidcombe Hospital responded significantly less positively than the NSW result for 13 questions and significantly more positively for three questions.

The five hospitals with the highest number of questions significantly **more positive** than NSW



The five hospitals with the highest number of questions significantly **less positive** than NSW



Note: A comparison of all 47 performance questions by hospital (including significance testing) is available as *Data table B: Results for all 47 performance questions by hospital* at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Symptom control and ability to cope with condition and treatment

Interpreting the graphs

The results shown in this section of the chartpack are presented as ‘heat maps’.

‘Heat maps’ identify where results are statistically significantly different from NSW and are used to quickly identify patterns of responses.

In this example, each box corresponds to a hospital’s result for a particular survey question. Boxes are shaded red or green to denote hospital results that are significantly lower or higher than the NSW result, respectively.

In some cases, a hospital may appear to have a much higher or lower result than the NSW result, or has the same or a similar percentage value as another hospital with a red or green box, yet is not coloured red or green to denote that it is significantly different from NSW. This is often because there were too few respondents from the hospital for calculations to be statistically certain.

Question Text	Most positive response option	NSW	Gosford Hospital	Wyong Hospital	Chris O'Brien Lifehouse*	Armidale and New England Hospital	Calvary Mater Newcastle	John Hunter Hospital	Manning Base Hospital	Tamworth Base Hospital	Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital
How long did it take you to travel to the clinic for this appointment?	Less than 30 minutes	48	56	67	36	48	39	35	55	50	48
Issues with parking	Didn't have issues with parking	50	55	46	51	58	45	60	28	85	70
Were the reception staff polite and courteous?	Yes, definitely	95	96	98	94	97	99	97	97	97	99
How long after the scheduled appointment time did your appointment actually start?	Within 30 mins	81	87	88	71	80	81	68	87	85	82
Were you told how long you had to wait [for appointment to start]?	Yes	29	28	23	32	43	26	19	32	37	39
How comfortable was the waiting area?	Very comfortable	52	63	46	64	59	61	24	31	70	64
How comfortable was the treatment area?	Very comfortable	61	65	72	69	73	61	46	72	79	70
How clean was the treatment area?	Very clean	88	92	93	90	95	93	83	93	96	99
Did you have enough time to discuss your health issue with the health professionals you saw?	Yes, definitely	88	89	88	88	88	92	80	89	88	88
Did the health professionals explain things in a way you could understand?	Yes, always	90	91	89	90	91	92	81	95	88	89

There was variation across NSW in patients' ability to understand and participate in their care, seek and obtain information and maintain a positive attitude

The survey asked cancer patients 12 questions about their self-efficacy and confidence at the time of completing the survey, based on the Communication and Attitudinal Self-Efficacy scale for cancer (CASE-cancer)*. Answers were grouped into three components: how well they understand and participate in their care, how easily they seek and obtain information, and whether they can maintain a positive attitude about their condition and treatment. A higher score,

out of a possible 10 points, indicates a better rating. For example, Lismore and Port Macquarie hospitals had scores higher than NSW for the three components as well as the overall CASE score. Bankstown–Lidcombe, Chris O'Brien Lifehouse and Liverpool hospitals had lower scores for two components and for the overall CASE score.

CASE-cancer scores (out of 10) by hospital, compared with NSW

	NSW	Armidale	Bankstown–Lidcombe	Bathurst	Bega Valley Community Health	Blacktown	Bourke Street Health Service	Calvary Mater	Campbelltown	Chris O'Brien Lifehouse	Coffs Harbour	Concord	Dubbo	Eurobodalla Community Health	Gosford	Grafton	John Hunter	Lismore	Liverpool	Manly	Manning	Nepean	Orange Health Service	Port Macquarie	Prince of Wales	Royal Hospital for Women	Royal North Shore	Royal Prince Alfred	Shoalhaven	St Vincent's	Tamworth	The Tweed	Westmead	Wollongong	Wyong
CASE – Overall summary mean	8.5	8.7	8.1	8.6	8.5	8.4	8.7	8.6	8.6	8.2	8.6	8.4	8.7	8.4	8.5	8.7	8.2	8.9	8.3	8.6	8.8	8.5	8.7	8.8	8.5	8.3	8.5	8.7	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.4	8.4	8.5	8.4
Maintain a positive attitude	8.1	8.4	7.9	8.2	7.7	8.1	8.2	8.1	8.2	7.7	8.2	8.0	8.3	7.9	8.0	8.4	7.9	8.3	8.0	8.0	8.3	8.0	8.4	8.4	8.1	7.6	8.0	8.2	8.2	8.0	8.3	7.8	8.0	8.1	8.0
Seek and obtain information	8.9	8.9	8.4	9.1	9.1	8.7	9.3	9.0	9.0	8.7	9.0	8.8	9.0	8.7	9.0	9.1	8.4	9.3	8.6	9.0	9.2	9.0	9.1	9.1	8.9	8.8	8.8	9.2	9.0	9.0	8.9	8.8	8.7	8.9	8.8
Understand and participate in care	8.5	8.5	8.0	8.5	8.7	8.3	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.2	8.6	8.5	8.9	8.6	8.5	8.6	8.4	8.9	8.1	8.8	8.8	8.5	8.7	8.8	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.7	8.7	8.5	8.4	8.5	8.3

■ Significantly lower than NSW
 ■ No significant difference
 ■ Significantly higher than NSW



*Source: Wolf S, Chang CH, Davis T, Makoul G. Development and validation of the Communication and Attitudinal Self-Efficacy scale for cancer (CASE-cancer). Patient Education and Counseling 2005; 57(3):333-41.
 Note: For patient CASE-cancer score assessment, statistical significance does not necessarily infer clinical significance.

There was variation across NSW in symptom severity scores for patients in active treatment

The Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS)* allows patients to rate the severity of nine possible symptoms on a 0–10 scale of severity (e.g. 0 = ‘no pain’ and 10 = ‘worst possible pain’). Lower scores indicate a better rating. Results reported here are for those patients who said they were currently in active treatment, i.e. those who were ‘still being treated’ (23% of the cancer cohort) or ‘being treated again’ (6%).

Symptom severity scores were assessed at the time of completing the survey. Patients’ ratings of symptom severity can be influenced by a number of factors and so ratings may be influenced by external factors that occurred subsequent to attending the clinic – for example, a deterioration or improvement in the patient’s health unrelated to their clinic visit.

Symptom severity scores (out of 10) by hospital, compared with NSW

	NSW	Bankstown–Lidcombe	Bathurst	Blacktown	Calvary Mater	Campbelltown	Chris O'Brien Lifehouse	Coffs Harbour	Concord	Dubbo	Eurobodalla Community Health	Gosford	Lismore	Liverpool	Manning	Nepean	Orange Health Service	Port Macquarie	Prince of Wales	Royal North Shore	Shoalhaven	St Vincent's	Tamworth	The Tweed	Westmead	Wollongong	Wyong
Tiredness	4.4	4.2	5.0	4.4	4.8	4.3	4.1	4.5	4.0	4.4	4.8	4.9	5.0	4.2	3.8	4.7	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.7	4.3	4.7	4.5	4.1	4.6	4.9
Wellbeing	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.8	4.1	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.8	4.5	3.9	3.8	3.5	3.5	4.1	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.3	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.5	3.8
Loss of appetite	3.1	3.4	3.2	3.0	3.7	3.2	2.9	3.3	2.9	3.7	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.0	2.7	3.2	2.6	2.9	2.6	3.2	3.4	3.0	3.4	2.8
Anxiety	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.5	2.5	1.7	2.7	2.1	2.5	1.9	3.1	2.4	2.0	2.5	1.3	2.8	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.1	2.7	1.9	2.0
Drowsiness	2.7	2.2	2.5	2.6	3.3	2.5	2.3	2.9	2.3	3.6	3.7	3.1	3.2	2.6	2.6	3.1	3.0	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.7	3.1	2.2	2.5	3.1
Shortness of breath	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.7	3.1	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.3	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.1	2.9	2.4	3.1	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.5	3.1	2.5	2.9	3.2	2.7	2.5	3.1
Depression	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.5	2.5	1.7	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.8	2.7	2.2	1.6	2.5	1.5	2.5	1.9	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.4	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.7	2.0	2.0
Pain	2.1	2.4	2.5	2.2	2.3	1.8	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.3	1.7	2.8	1.8	1.6	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.9
Nausea	1.4	1.3	0.9	1.5	2.0	1.1	1.6	1.3	1.1	1.8	2.1	1.3	1.0	1.4	0.8	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.1	1.6	

■ Significantly more severe than NSW
 ■ No significant difference
 ■ Significantly less severe than NSW

*Source: Bruera E, Kuehn N, Miller MJ, Selmser P, Macmillan K. The Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS): A simple method for the assessment of palliative care patients. Journal of Palliative Care 1991; 7(2):6-9.

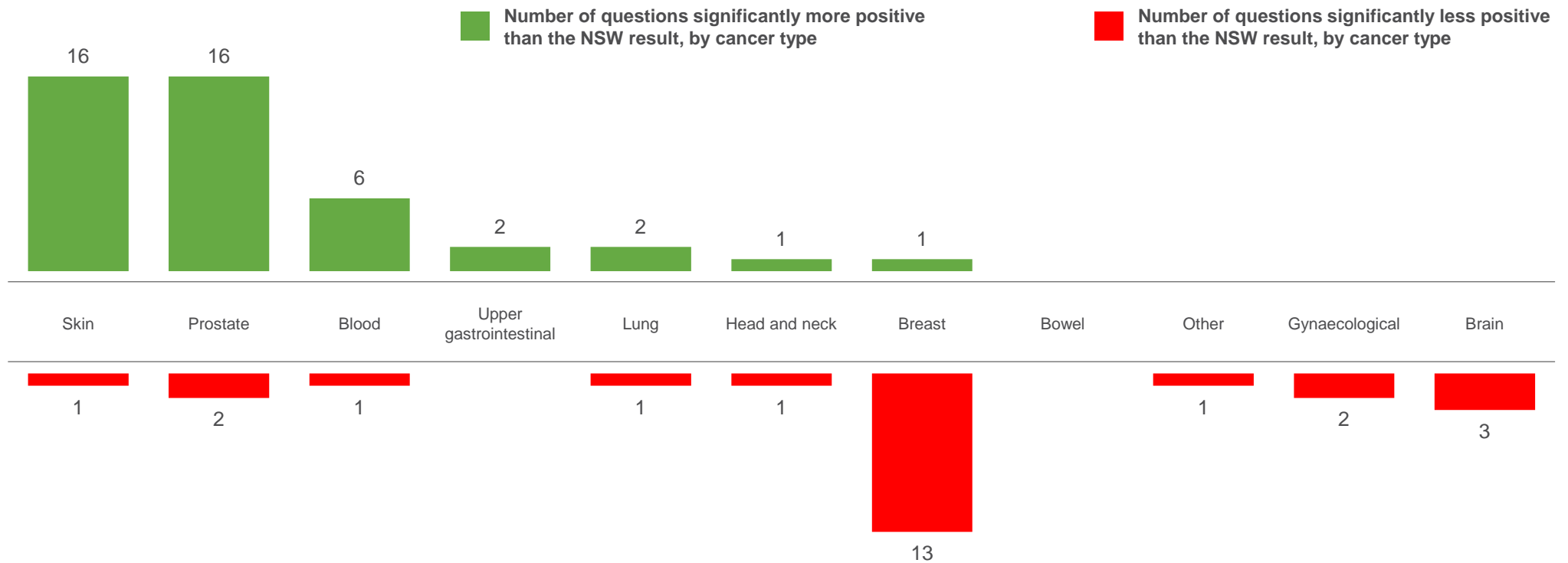
Note: For patient symptom severity assessment, statistical significance does not necessarily infer clinical significance.

Comparisons by cancer type

Patients' experiences of care differed by cancer type

Patients' experiences of care in outpatient cancer clinics varied across the 10 different cancer types in the figure below, as well as the group of patients who reported being treated for an 'other' type of cancer.

Patients with skin or prostate cancers rated the care they received significantly more positively than the NSW result for 16 questions each (out of 47 performance questions). However, patients with breast cancer were significantly less positive than the NSW result for 13 questions.



Note: A comparison of all 47 performance questions by cancer type (including significance testing) is available as *Data table C: Results for all 47 performance questions by cancer type* at bhi.nsw.gov.au

Results by cancer type

Results by cancer type for all 47 performance questions are available in a supplementary data table (*Data table C: Results for all 47 performance questions by cancer type*), including significance testing against all cancer types. These data can be used to identify which questions were significantly more or less positive than the NSW result for each cancer type.

Of the survey respondents receiving treatment for cancer, more than one-quarter (28%) said they had breast cancer – the most commonly-reported cancer type. There were 13 questions for which patients with breast cancer responded significantly less positively than NSW, which are shown in the table below.

Breast cancer: Questions with results that were significantly less positive than NSW

Question text	Response	Breast cancer patients %	NSW %
Were you treated with respect and dignity while you were at the clinic?	Yes, always	94	96
Were the health professionals kind and caring towards you?	Yes, always	91	95
Were the reception staff polite and courteous?	Yes, definitely	93	95
How clean was the treatment area?	Very clean	84	88
Did you have confidence and trust in the health professionals?	Yes, definitely	84	87
Overall, how would you rate the health professionals who treated you?	Very good	83	86
Overall, how would you rate the care you received in the clinic?	Very good	82	85
How well organised was the care you received in the clinic?	Very well organised	79	83
During this visit, did the health professionals know enough about your medical history?	Yes, definitely	79	82
How long after the scheduled appointment time did your appointment actually start?	Within 30 mins	76	81
How would you rate how well the health professionals worked together?	Very good	70	75
Did a health professional at the clinic give your family or someone close to you enough information to help care for you at home?	Yes, completely	60	67
How much were your out-of-pocket expenses for consultations, tests, surgery or treatment related to [visits to this clinic over the past six months] (excluding medication)?	\$500 or more	13	8

Differences in experiences of care across cancer types (bowel, breast, lung, prostate)*

Variation in the percentage of patients who chose the most positive response option for 13 out of 47 performance questions, by selected cancer types*



*Cancer types selected due to high prevalence in NSW and priority cancers identified by the Cancer Institute NSW.

Differences in symptom severity for patients in active treatment, by selected cancer type (bowel, breast, lung, prostate)*

Different cancers and their treatments differ in their impact on patients. This analysis is based on ESAS, or patient-reported symptom severity at the time of survey completion.

Patients' ratings of symptom severity can be influenced by a number of factors and so ratings may be influenced by external factors that occurred subsequent to attending the clinic – for example, a deterioration or improvement in the patient's health unrelated to their clinic visit.

The table below shows that patients in active treatment for prostate cancer had significantly lower symptom severity for eight of the nine symptoms.

Patients in active treatment for lung cancer had significantly higher symptom severity for two symptoms: shortness of breath and loss of appetite.

Symptom severity scores (out of 10) by patients with a specific cancer type, compared with NSW



	NSW	Bowel	Breast	Lung	Prostate
Tiredness	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.6	3.8
Wellbeing	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.3
Loss of appetite	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.8	2.4
Shortness of breath	2.8	2.6	2.5	3.9	2.3
Drowsiness	2.7	2.9	2.3	2.7	2.4
Anxiety	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.4	1.8
Depression	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.2	1.8
Pain	2.1	1.8	2.2	2.2	1.5
Nausea	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.4	0.8

■ Significantly more severe than NSW
 ■ No significant difference
 ■ Significantly less severe than NSW

*Cancer types selected due to high prevalence in NSW and priority cancers identified by the Cancer Institute NSW.
 Note: For patient symptom severity assessment, statistical significance does not necessarily infer clinical significance.

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About the Bureau of Health Information

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) is a board-governed organisation that provides independent information about the performance of the NSW public healthcare system.

BHI was established in 2009 to provide systemwide support through transparent reporting.

BHI supports the accountability of the healthcare system by providing regular and detailed information to the community, government and healthcare professionals. This in turn supports quality improvement by highlighting how well the healthcare system is functioning and where there are opportunities to improve.

BHI manages the NSW Patient Survey Program, gathering information from patients about their experiences in public hospitals and other healthcare facilities.

BHI publishes a range of reports and tools that provide relevant, accurate and impartial information about how the health system is measuring up in terms of:

- Accessibility – healthcare when and where needed
- Appropriateness – the right healthcare, the right way
- Effectiveness – making a difference for patients
- Efficiency – value for money
- Equity – health for all, healthcare that's fair
- Sustainability – caring for the future

BHI's work relies on the efforts of a wide range of healthcare, data and policy experts. All of our assessment efforts leverage the work of hospital coders, analysts, technicians and healthcare providers who gather, codify and report data.

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