



Results from the 2017–18 patient survey **Emergency department**

Almost 16,000 people told us about their experiences at emergency departments in NSW in 2017–18

Emergency departments (EDs) are often the first contact many patients and their family members have with a hospital. Quality care in EDs is responsive to patients' needs, ensuring positive outcomes and transitions of care, supporting each patient and their family.

The results of the *Emergency Department Patient Survey (EDPS) 2017–18* reflect the experiences of 15,995 patients of all ages who attended one of 82 large EDs in NSW from July 2017 to June 2018. The survey's response rate was 24%. This Snapshot report highlights key findings about patient experiences.

Overall ratings of care: Almost nine in 10 patients (88%) said, overall, the care they received was 'very good' (59%), or 'good' (29%). When asked to rate how healthcare professionals worked together, more than half of patients (56%) said 'very good'.

Experiences of care: Around eight in 10 patients (81%) said ED professionals 'always' explained things in a way they could understand. More than eight in 10 (85%) said they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity.

Engagement with patients at discharge: Around seven in 10 patients (72%) said they were 'definitely' involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their discharge. About seven in 10 of those patients (71%) said they felt they were 'definitely' given enough information to manage their care at home.

Differences in ratings of care by patient group: Patient groups who tended to report less positive experiences include people aged 18–34, Aboriginal people, those with a mental health condition, women and people who speak a language other than English at home.

Overall, patients rated their care as

'very good'

59%

'good'

29%



Overall ratings of care

Overall ratings of care are an important reflection of patients' experiences in EDs.

Among patients attending an ED in 2017–18, almost nine in 10 (88%) said, overall, the care they received was 'very good' (59%) or 'good' (29%) (Figure 1a). The percentage of patients who said 'very good' was down from 62% in 2016–17. Results for those rating their care as 'very good' ranged from 38% to 80% across EDs (Figure 2a).

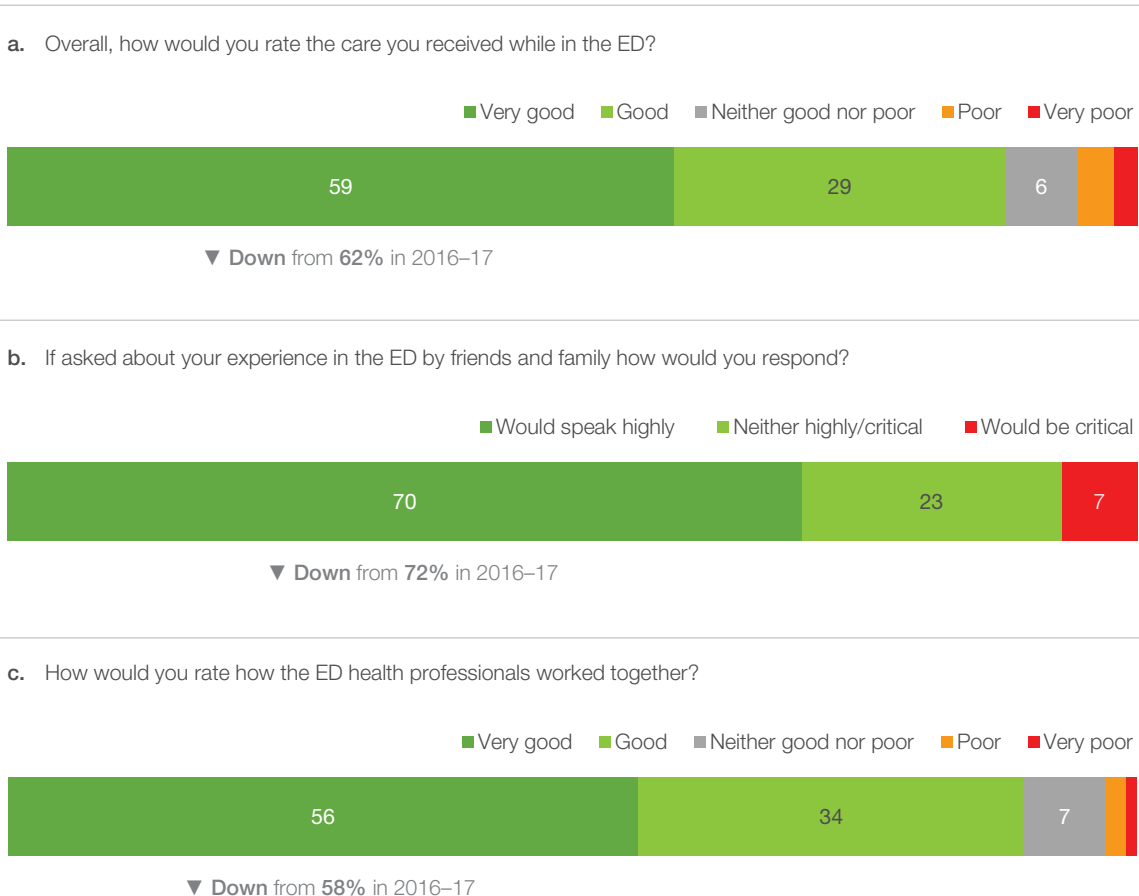
Seven in 10 patients (70%) said they would 'speak highly' of the care they received if asked by friends and family – down from 72% the year before (Figure 1b). Across EDs, results ranged from 53% to 91% (Figure 2b).

When asked to rate how healthcare professionals worked together, more than half of patients (56%) said 'very good' – down from 58% (Figure 1c). Across EDs, results ranged from 40% to 78% (Figure 2c).

Survey results are also available by quarter on BHI's interactive data portal, **Healthcare Observer**. During 2017–18, between 60% and 62% of patients in NSW rated their overall care as 'very good' for three quarters. The exception was July to September 2017 where overall ratings of care were 55%. This lower result had a notable impact on the decline in the annual result for overall ratings of care for 2017–18. More than 740,000 patients presented to NSW public hospital EDs in July to September 2017, the highest of any quarter in 2017–18, due in part to one of the state's most severe flu seasons.

For results of all survey questions and results from previous years, please see bhi.nsw.gov.au/nsw_patient_survey_program

Figure 1 **Percentage of patients in NSW, for all response categories, 2017–18**



Overall, patients rated health professionals as

'very good'



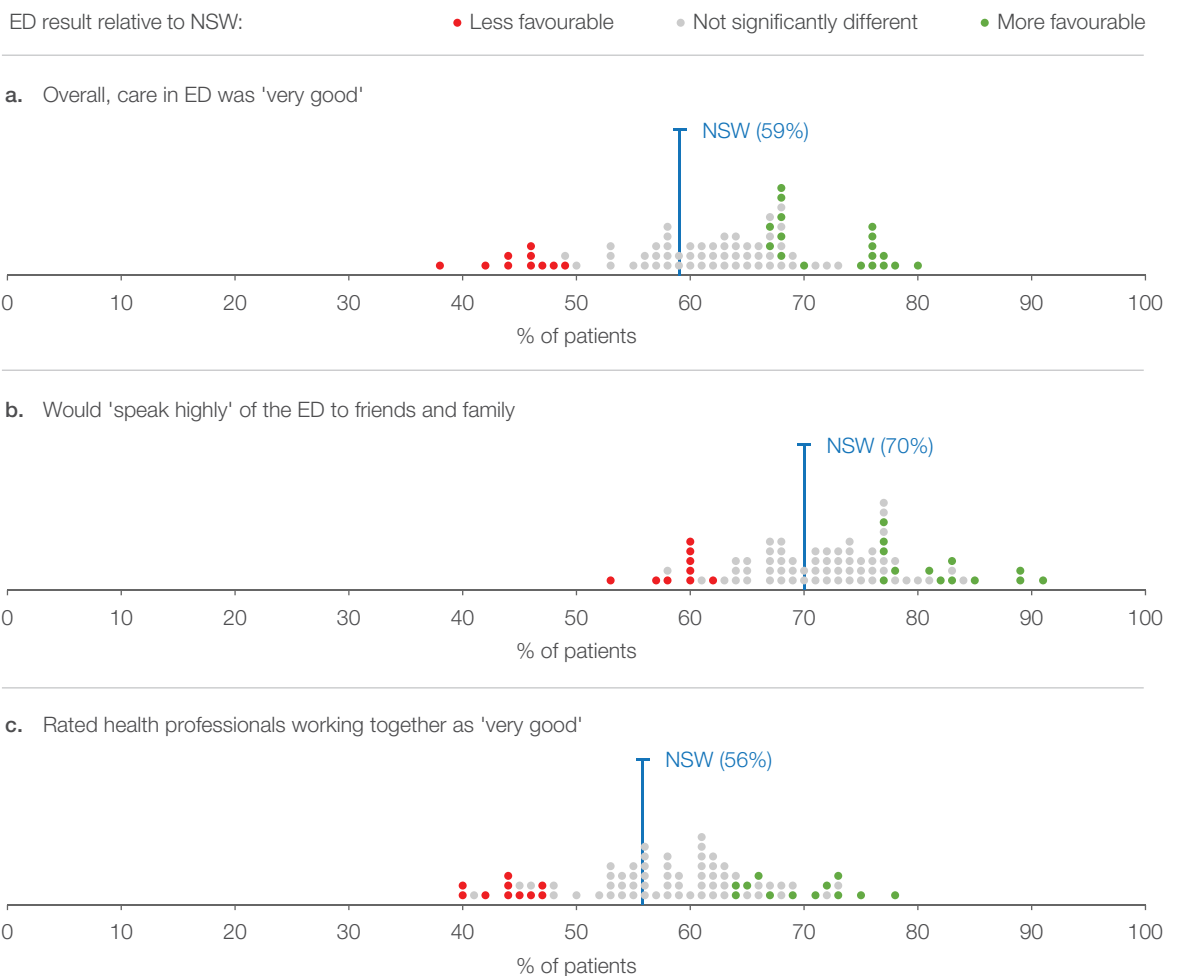
'good'



“ Nobody wants to go to an ED unless it is necessary. Overall, I think they do a very good job under the circumstances. ”

Results for 82 EDs are represented by dots in the figures below. Detailed results are available in the supplementary data tables on the survey page at bhi.nsw.gov.au and on BHI's online data portal, **Healthcare Observer**.

Figure 2 Percentage of patients in each emergency department who selected the most positive response, 2017–18



Experiences of care

Patients shared their experiences about different aspects of treatment and care, including how healthcare professionals treated them during their time in the ED.

Around eight in 10 patients (81%) said ED professionals 'always' explained things in a way they could understand (Figure 3a). Across EDs, results ranged from 66% to 97% (Figure 4a).

More than eight in 10 patients (85%) said they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity (Figure 3b). Results ranged from 68% to 96% across EDs (Figure 4b).

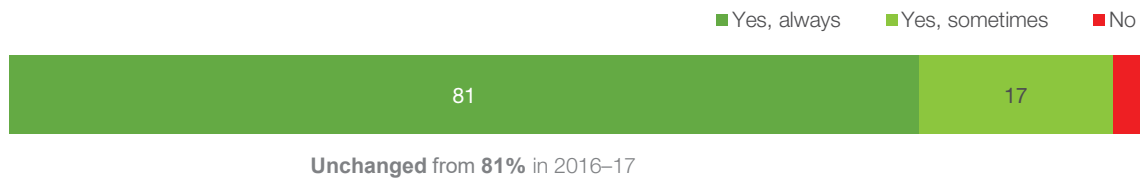
Similarly, around eight in 10 patients (83%) said healthcare professionals were 'always' kind and caring towards them (Figure 3c). Results ranged from 69% to 95% across EDs (Figure 4c).

In 2017–18, almost one in 10 patients (9%) said they experienced at least one problem or complication during or shortly after attending an ED – unchanged from 2016–17.

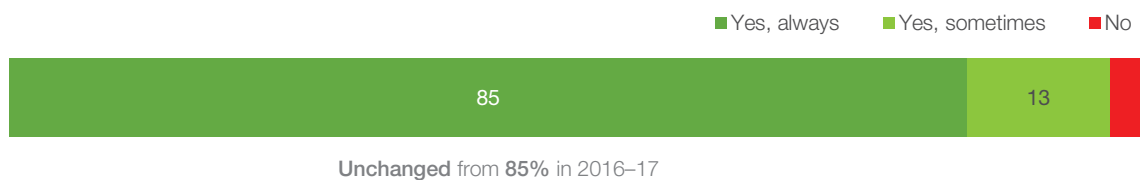
Of the options provided, the most common type of problem or complication reported was 'infection' (3%). Less than half of patients who experienced a problem during their visit (43%) said healthcare professionals were 'completely' open with them about their problem or complication (see supplementary data tables).

Figure 3 Percentage of patients in NSW, for all response categories, 2017–18

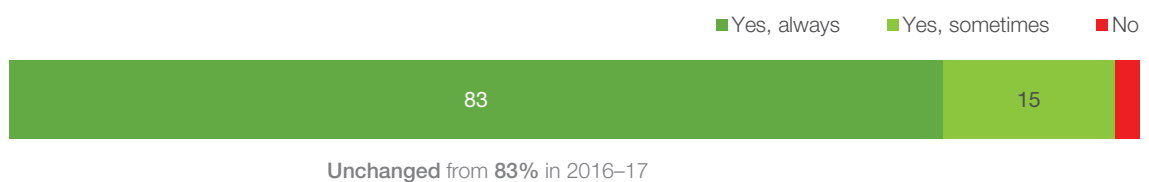
a. Did the ED health professionals explain things in a way you could understand?



b. Did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the ED?



c. Were the ED health professionals kind and caring towards you?



“

Even though the wait was extensive, the nurse who looked after me made sure to check up on me.

”

Three in four patients said someone checked on them while they were waiting



Figure 4

Percentage of patients in each emergency department who selected the most positive response, 2017–18

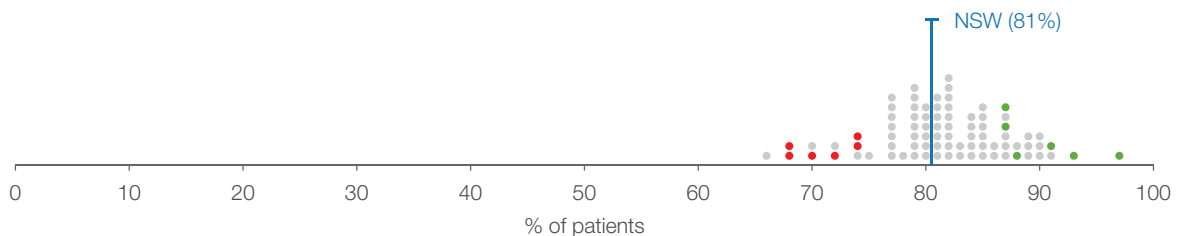
ED result relative to NSW:

• Less favourable

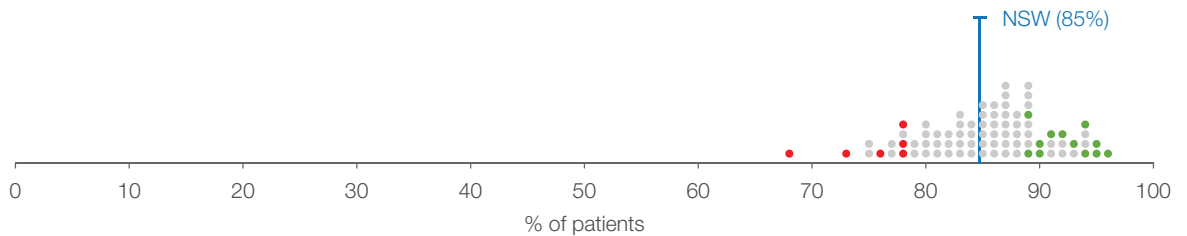
• Not significantly different

• More favourable

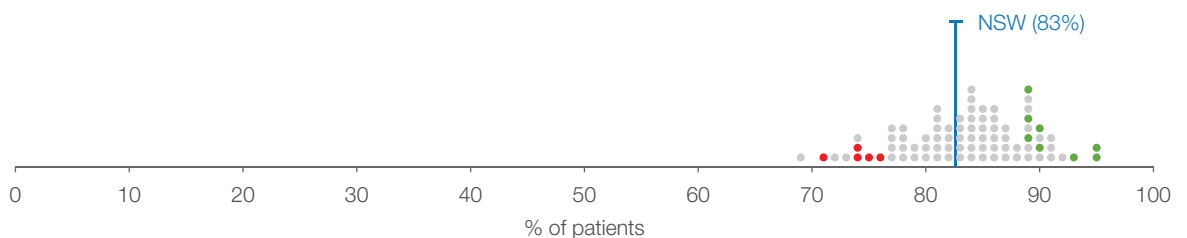
a. Health professionals 'always' explained things in an understandable way



b. 'Always' treated with respect and dignity



c. Health professionals were 'always' kind and caring



Engagement with patients at discharge

The survey also captured patients' experiences when leaving the ED including how well prepared they felt to continue to manage their condition at home.

A majority of patients leave the ED without being admitted to hospital. Around seven in 10 patients (72%) said that at the end of their ED visit they 'went home or to a friend or relatives or elsewhere'. This ranged from 56% to 93% across EDs (see supplementary data tables).

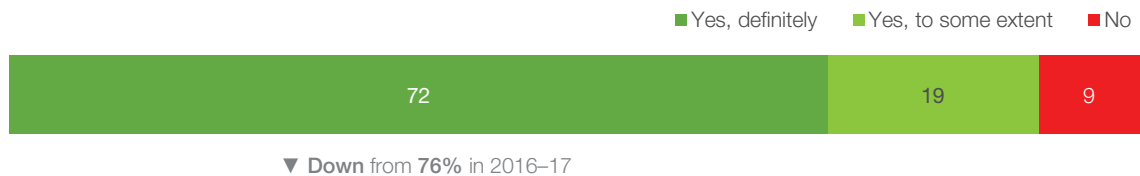
Almost all discharged patients (92%) said they wanted to be involved in decisions about their discharge. Around seven in 10 of those patients (72%) said they 'definitely' felt involved in decisions about their discharge – down from 76% in 2016–17 (Figure 5a). This result ranged from 56% to 91% across EDs (Figure 6a).

Of patients who were discharged, almost all (95%) said they needed information about how to manage their care at home. Around seven in 10 (71%) said they felt they were 'definitely' given enough information to manage their care at home (Figure 5b). Results ranged from 57% to 90% across EDs (Figure 6b).

Many patients need support from family and friends to help manage their care. More than half of the patients who were discharged (57%) said they had a family or home situation that needed to be considered when planning their discharge. And 71% said that staff 'completely' took their situation into account – up from 70% in 2016–17. (Figure 5c). This result ranged from 45% to 92% across EDs (Figure 6c).

Figure 5 Percentage of discharged patients in NSW, for all response categories, 2017–18

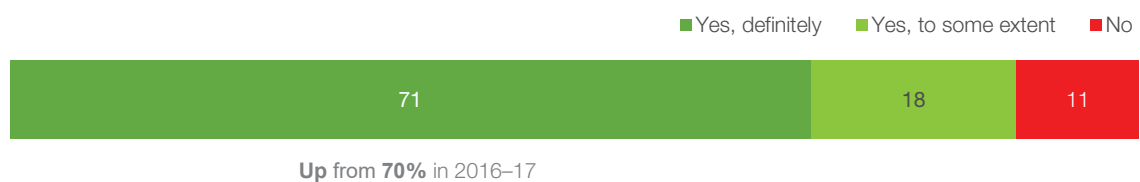
a. Did you feel involved in decisions about your discharge from hospital?



b. Thinking about when you left the ED, were you given enough information about how to manage your care at home?



c. Did ED staff take your family and home situation into account when planning your discharge?



Of the **30% of patients** prescribed a new medication to take home,



'completely' understood when health professionals explained **its purpose**

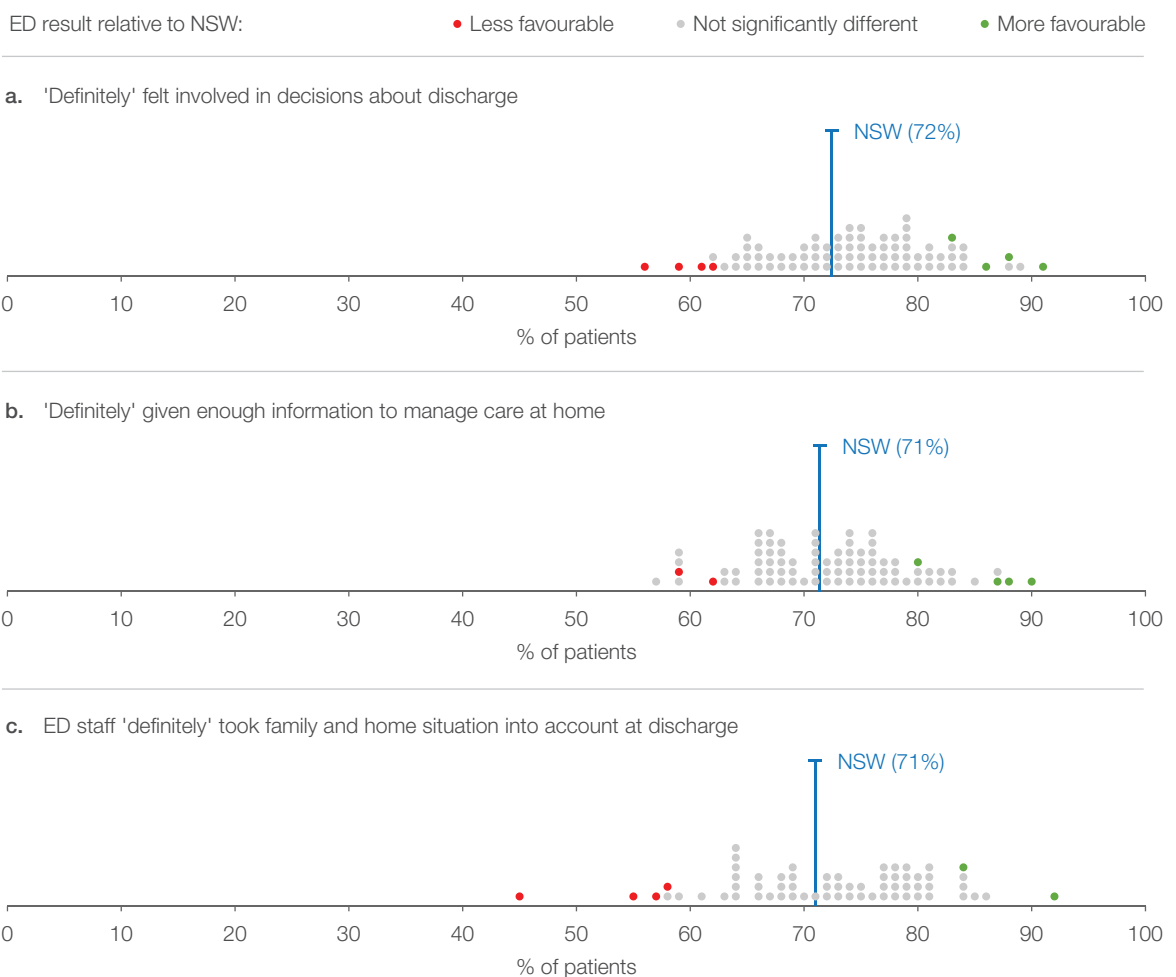


said health professionals 'completely' explained **side effects**

“ I had a wonderful nurse ... providing care and instruction on administering injections at home. Her warm, caring manner and humour ensured I was confident to do this. ”

Figure 6

Percentage of discharged patients in each emergency department who selected the most positive response, 2017–18



Differences in ratings of care by patient group

The survey results show that some patient groups often reported less positive experiences in EDs. These differences in reported experiences may reflect differences in their expectations of care or in the way they tend to respond to survey questions. However, they may also reflect real differences in the quality of patient-centred care they received. In either case, awareness of these differences may help healthcare professionals tailor their care for people in these groups.

The percentage of each selected patient group who rated their care as 'very good' ranged from 46% of people who speak a language other than English at home to 68% of those aged 75+ (Figure 8).

The percentage of each patient group who said they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity ranged from 79% of people aged 18–34 to 92% of patients aged 75+ years (Figure 9).

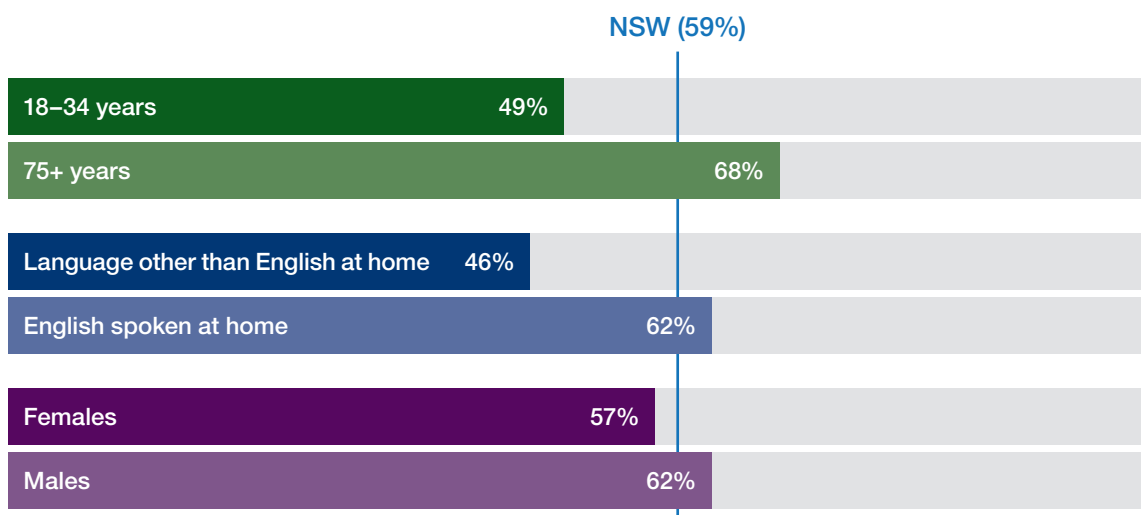
The percentage of patients who said they 'definitely' felt involved in decisions about their discharge ranged from 63% of people who speak a language other than English at home to 77% of those aged 75+ (Figure 10).

Across all three measures, people aged 75+ were the most positive of the three patient groups, while males reported more positive experiences than females, and people who speak English were more positive than those who speak a language other than English at home.

Results reflect the experiences of more than 2,000 respondents to the survey in each of these three patient groups. While the large number of responses provides a reasonable estimate of experiences of people in these groups, the sample is not selected to be representative of patient subgroups.

Survey results for individual EDs are influenced both by the quality of care they provide and their mix of patients. EDs that tend to see a greater proportion of older patients, for example, may have more positive results. BHI is working on methods to take into account key differences in patient mix when comparing results across facilities to make comparisons more fair. See BHI's interactive data portal, **Healthcare Observer**, and the supplementary data tables for more results on patient groups across EDs.

Figure 8 Percentage of patient group who rated overall care as 'very good', NSW, 2017–18



“
I just did what
the doctor told
me but I was not
sure what was
happening.
”

“
Patient who speaks a language
other than English at home

Overall care was rated
as **‘very good’** by



62%
of patients who
speak English
at home

46%
of patients who speak
a language other than
English at home

Figure 9 Percentage of patient group who said they were ‘always’ treated with respect and dignity, NSW, 2017–18

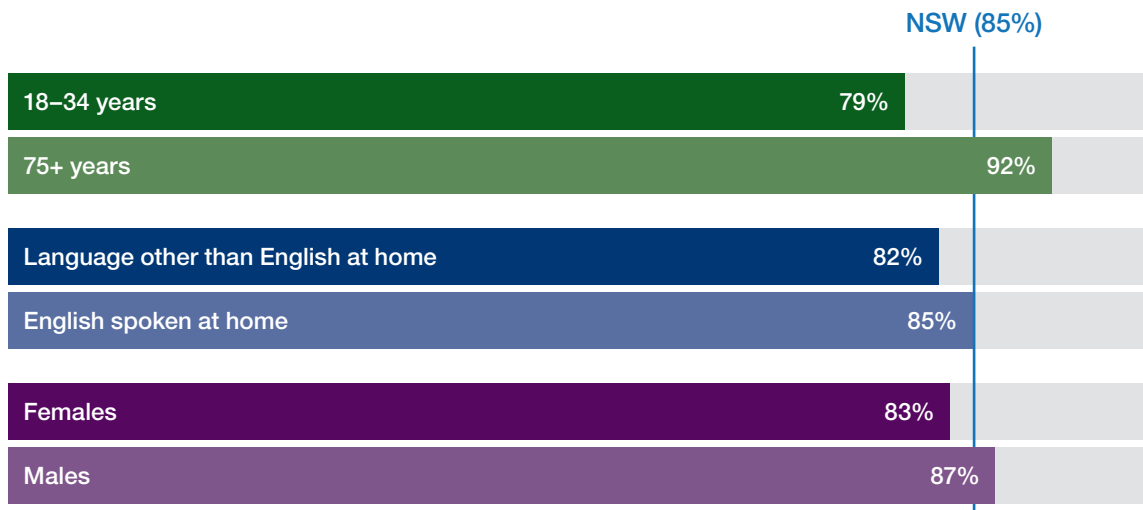
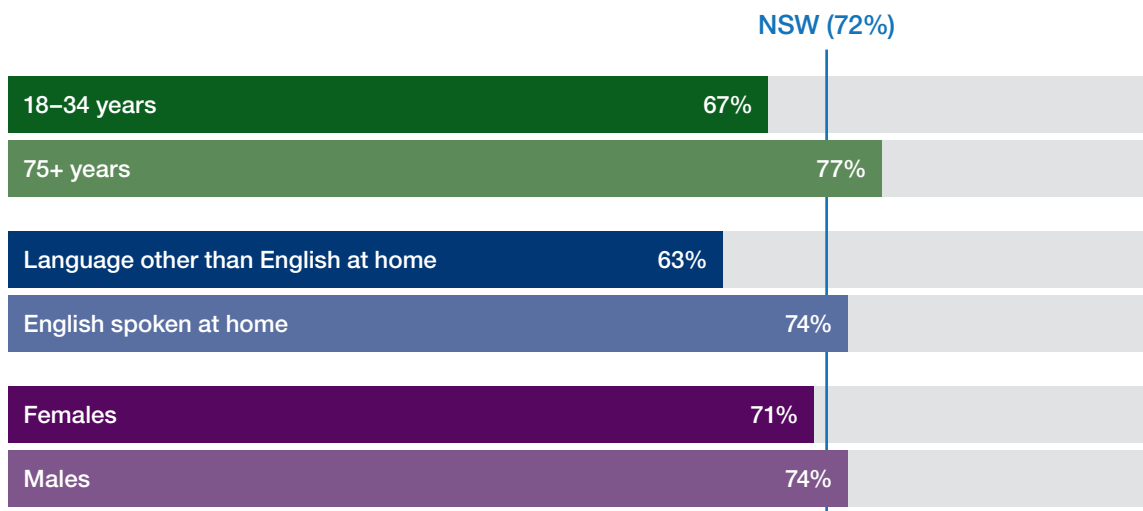


Figure 10 Percentage of patient group who said they were ‘definitely’ involved in decisions about discharge, NSW, 2017–18



Experiences of care for Aboriginal patients

An equitable health system provides fair access to quality healthcare, allowing everyone the opportunity to reach their full health potential. One way to assess patient-centred care is to ask people to rate their experiences.

In 2017–18, 459 Aboriginal people responded to the ED survey. While the results may not be representative of all Aboriginal patients, those who completed the survey report less positive experiences in many areas compared to non-Aboriginal patients.

For example, around five in 10 Aboriginal people (53%) rated their care as 'very good' compared with almost six in 10 non-Aboriginal patients (59%).

More than seven in 10 Aboriginal people (75%) said they were 'always' treated with respect compared with more than eight in 10 non-Aboriginal patients (85%).

Around six in 10 Aboriginal people (62%) said they 'definitely' felt involved in discharge decisions compared with around seven in 10 non-Aboriginal patients (73%).

BHI's *Healthcare in Focus 2017* reported on experiences of care among Aboriginal people in EDs, admitted patients and women receiving maternity care.

An upcoming BHI Snapshot report will include information about experiences of care among Aboriginal people across a number of sectors.

459 Aboriginal patients

responded to the survey.



What was the best part of care:

“The whole experience was professional and enjoyable as far as ED presentations can be...”

An Aboriginal patient

Experiences of care for people with mental health conditions

Understanding differences in experiences of care between patient groups can help healthcare professionals in their efforts to improve fair access to patient-centred care.

In 2017–18, 1,596 survey respondents who attended an ED reported that they had a long-standing mental health condition. They did not necessarily attend the ED for mental health-related reasons. While the results may not be representative of all people who have a lived experience of mental illness and presented to an ED, those who responded to the survey tended to report less positive experiences in many areas.

Around five in 10 people with a long-standing mental health condition (52%) said the care they received was 'very good' compared with six in 10 patients with no mental health condition (60%).

More than seven in 10 people with a long-standing mental health condition (76%) said they were 'always' treated with respect compared with more than eight in 10 patients with no mental health condition (86%). More than six in 10 people with a long-standing mental health condition (64%) said they 'definitely' felt involved in discharge decisions compared with around seven in 10 patients with no mental health condition (73%).

BHI's upcoming *Healthcare in Focus 2018* report will include information about experiences of care among people with a long-standing mental health condition across a number of sectors.

1,596 patients with a long-standing mental health condition responded to the survey.



What needs improving:

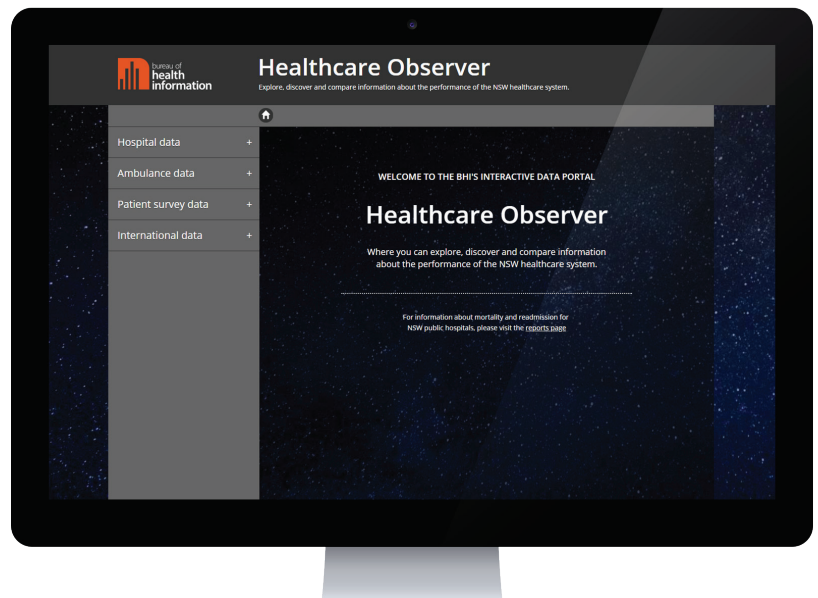
“ I had to wait to be assessed by a mental health professional and was in the ED for several hours ”

A patient with a long-standing mental health condition

Healthcare Observer

Healthcare Observer is the Bureau of Health Information's (BHI) online interactive data portal which lets you explore and download information about the performance of the NSW healthcare system.

For further detail on the Emergency Department Patient Survey 2017–18 and other patient survey results, please visit: bhi.nsw.gov.au/Healthcare_Observer



Adult Admitted Patient Survey



Emergency Department Patient Survey



Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey



Admitted Children and Young Patients Survey



Maternity Care Survey



Rural Hospital Adult Admitted Patient Survey



Rural Hospital Emergency Care Patient Survey

NSW Patient Survey Program

Each month we ask thousands of people in NSW to tell us about their recent experience with the public healthcare system as part of the NSW Patient Survey Program.

The surveys ask people questions about different aspects of their care such as accessibility and timeliness, the physical environment of the hospital, safety and hygiene, communication and information, and whether they were treated with respect and dignity.

Results from our surveys can be found via our website: bhi.nsw.gov.au/nsw_patient_survey_program

About the Bureau of Health Information

BHI is a board-governed organisation that publishes independent reports and information about the performance of the healthcare system in NSW.

We aim to provide the community, health professionals and policy makers with information that enhances visibility and understanding of the performance of the healthcare system, in order to inform actions to improve healthcare and strengthen accountability.



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