

Information Release

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
An Roinn Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta agus Sábháilteacht Phoiblí

13th March 2001

Northern Ireland Waiting Lists – December 2000

This information release gives details of the number of people waiting for inpatient or outpatient treatment at hospitals in Northern Ireland at the end of December 2000, the most recent quarter for which figures are available.

Inpatients

Headline Totals – Table 1

The total number of patients waiting to be admitted to hospitals in Northern Ireland at the end of December 2000 stood at 49,920.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of December 2000 with the end of September 2000 (50,184), the total number waiting has fallen by 264 (<1%).

Over the year, comparing the end of December 2000 with the end of December 1999 (46,090), the total number waiting increased by 3,830 (8.3%).

Table 1: Quarterly Waiting Lists – December 2000

Waiting for:	Quarter ending December 2000	Change compared with end previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter – previous year
Ordinary admissions	25,400	- 423	+ 1,256
Day case admissions	24,520	+ 159	+ 2,574
Total Waiting	49,920	- 264	+ 3,830

Source: CHI

Detailed notes and definitions are shown in the attached Notes to editors.



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Numbers Waiting for Ordinary Admission and Day Case Treatment

People on the inpatient waiting list in Northern Ireland can be waiting for admission to hospital as day cases or as ordinary admissions.

Of the 49,920 people waiting for admission to hospital at the end of December 2000, 25,400 (50.9%) were waiting for ordinary admission and 24,520 (49.1%) were waiting for day case admission (Table 1).

Since the end of September 2000, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has decreased by 423 (-1.6%) and the number waiting for day case admission has increased by 159 (<+1%).

In comparison with December 1999, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has increased by 1,256 (5.2%) and the number waiting for day case admission has increased by 2,574 (11.7%).

Excess Waiters¹ – Table 2

The number of excess waiters at the end of December 2000 stood at 6,274 or 12.6% of the total waiting.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of December 2000 with the end of September 2000, the number of excess waiters increased by 35 (<+1%).

Over the year, comparing the end of December 2000 with the end of December 1999, the number of excess waiters increased by 993 (18.8%).

Table 2 Excess Waiters¹ – December 2000

Waiting for:	Quarter ending December 2000	Change compared with end previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter – previous year
Ordinary admissions	4,402	- 106	+ 654
Day case admissions	1,872	+ 141	+ 339
Total Waiting	6,274	+ 35	+ 993

¹See Notes to Editors (paragraph 4) for definition of Excess waiters.

Source: CH1

Peak Figures

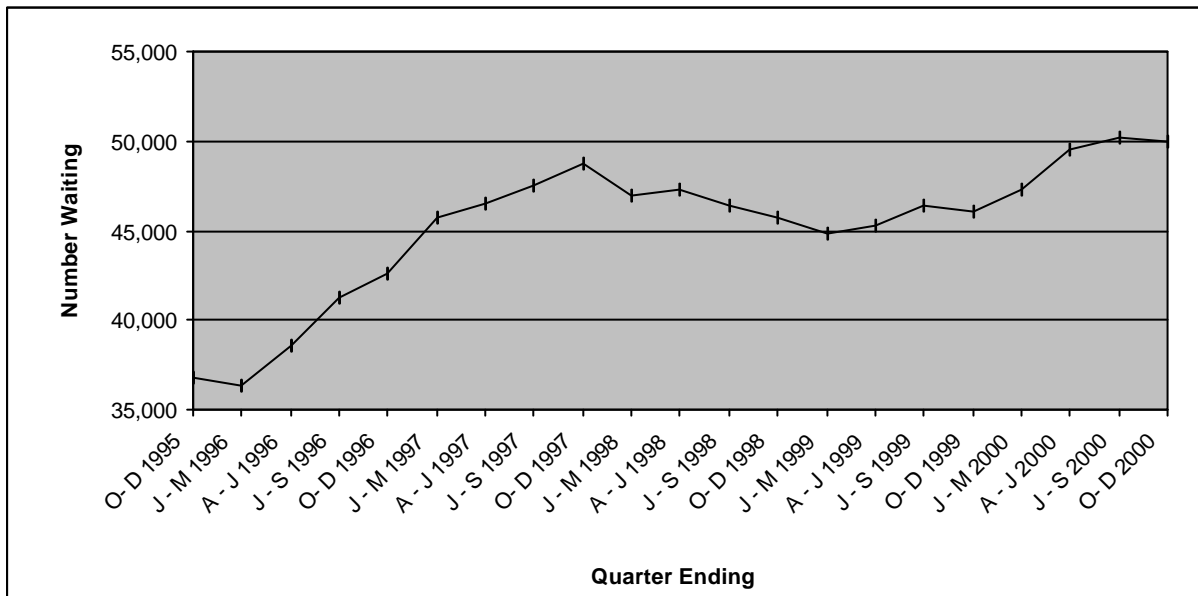
The end of December 2000 total of 49,920 on the inpatient waiting list represents a fall of 264 (<1%) on the peak waiting list figure of 50,184 (end September 2000).

Although the number of excess waiters has continued to rise to 6,274 at the end of December 2000, it is still 321 (4.9%) below the peak of 6,595 recorded at the end of December 1997.

Trends

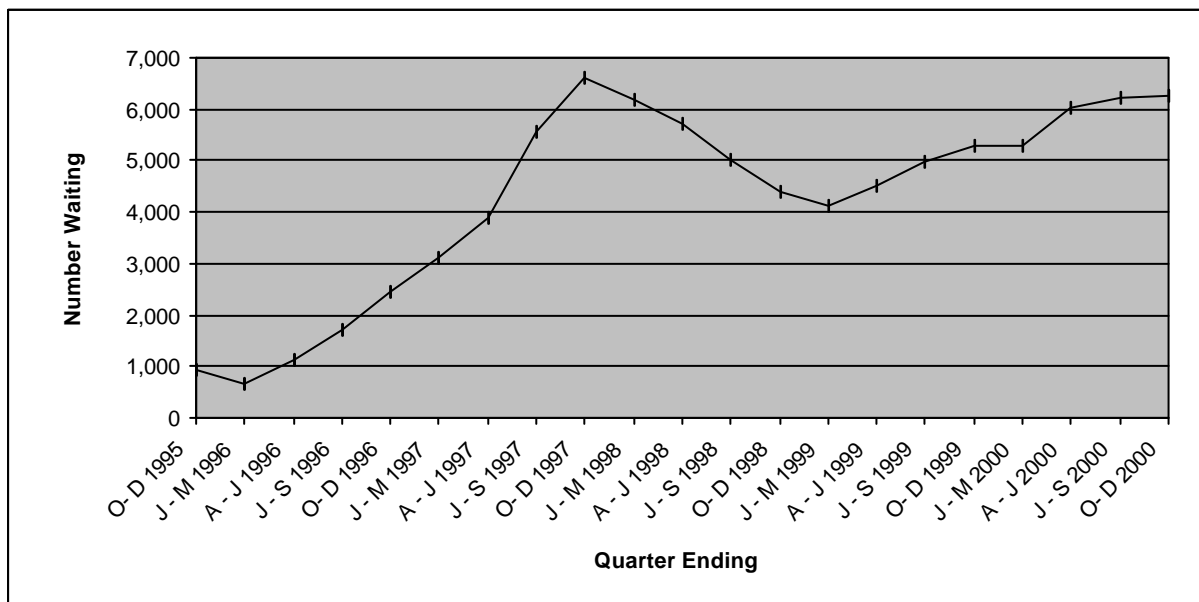
Over the past five years both the total numbers waiting and the numbers of excess waiters were on a generally upward trend until December 1997. Subsequently the total waiting went on a generally downward trend until September 1999. Since then the total waiting rose to its peak last quarter before falling slightly this quarter (Figure 1). Excess waiters have followed a similar trend but have not yet reached their previous peak at December 1997 (Figure 2).

Figure 1 Quarterly waiting lists – Five yearly trends December 1995 –December 2000



Source: CH1

Figure 2 Excess Waiters¹ - Five yearly trends December 1995 –December 2000



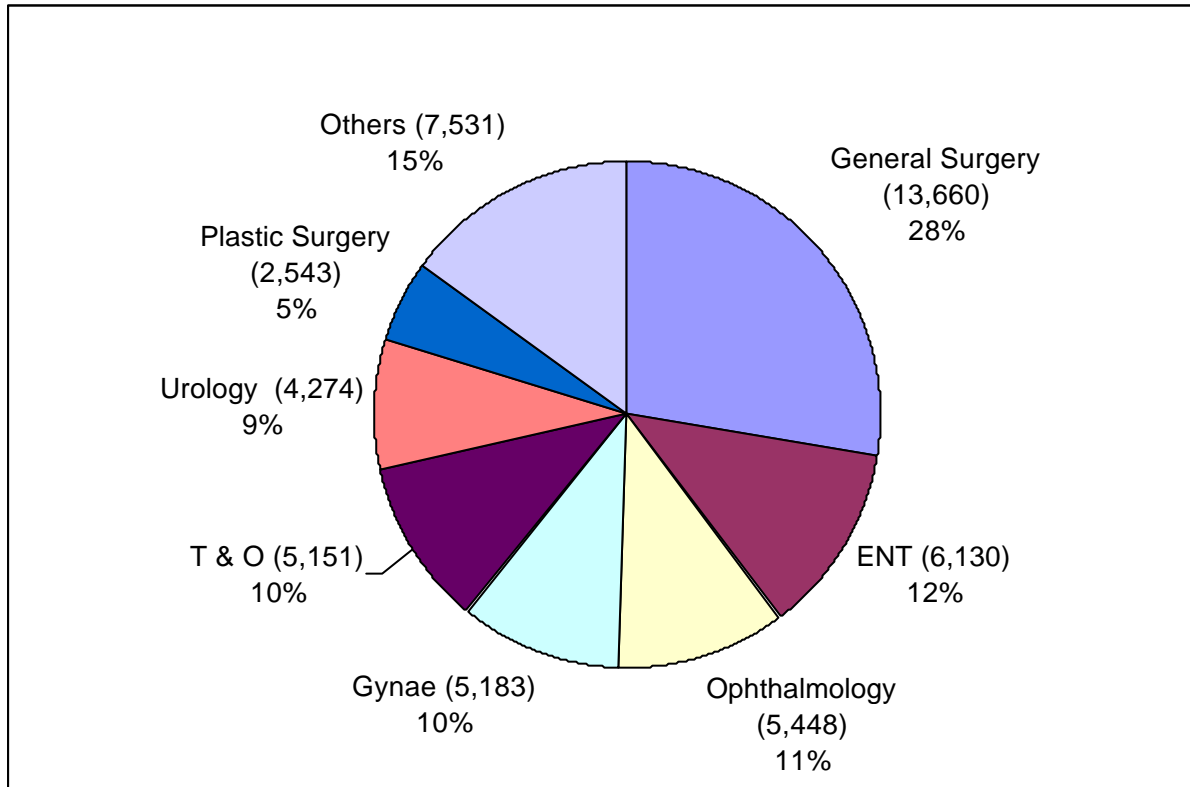
¹See Notes to Editors (paragraph 4) for definition of Excess waiters.

Source: CHI

Inpatients Waiting by Specialty

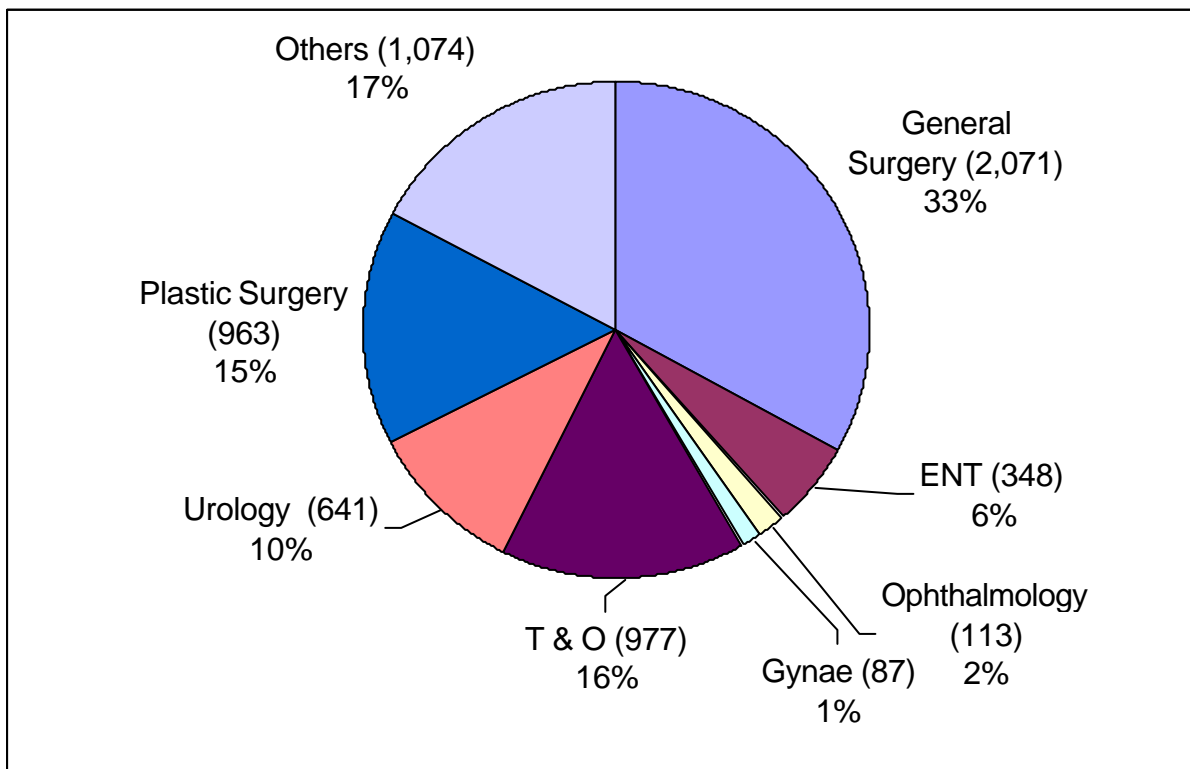
The overwhelming majority of those waiting (85%) were within seven specialties: General Surgery; ENT; Ophthalmology; Gynae; T&O; Urology and Plastic Surgery (Figure 3a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure 3b.

Figure 3a Inpatients - Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of December 2000



Source: CHI

Figure 3b Inpatients – Excess Waiters¹ by Specialty at the end of December 2000



¹See notes to editors (paragraph 4) for definition of Excess Waiters.

Source: CHI

Inpatients Waiting by Health Board Provider

Table 3 shows the total number waiting for admission to hospitals in each of the four Health Boards at the end of the December 2000 quarter.

Table 3: Inpatients Waiting by Health Board Provider – December 2000

Board	Total Waiting		Excess Waiters	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Eastern	30,519	61%	4,999	80%
Northern	6,606	13%	345	5%
Southern	7,063	14%	891	14%
Western	5,732	11%	39	1%
Total	49,920	100%	6,274	100%

Source: CHI

Completed Waits

Waiting times for completed inpatient waits are shown in Table 4. A total of 37,183 inpatients were admitted to hospital (excluding those who had previously refused an offer of attendance) during the December 2000 quarter.

Table 4 Completed Inpatient Waits

Quarter	Time Waiting in Months (Percentage of total waits in each time band)					Total
	0-2	3-11	12-17	18-23	24+	
O – D 1997	76.7%	18.4%	3.2%	1.3%	0.5%	36,495
J – M 1998	73.8%	19.6%	4.0%	1.6%	1.0%	38,848
A – J 1998	74.5%	19.9%	3.1%	1.2%	1.2%	40,637
J – S 1998	73.5%	21.1%	2.9%	1.2%	1.2%	34,067
O – D 1998	75.1%	19.6%	3.2%	1.0%	1.1%	37,192
J – M 1999	75.5%	19.8%	2.9%	0.8%	1.0%	38,185
A – J 1999	75.6%	20.0%	3.0%	0.7%	0.8%	36,171
J – S 1999	75.8%	20.2%	2.7%	0.7%	0.6%	33,518
O – D 1999	77.0%	18.7%	2.7%	0.8%	0.7%	35,765
J – M 2000	75.4%	20.1%	3.0%	0.8%	0.7%	35,637
A – J 2000	76.4%	19.5%	2.6%	0.8%	0.7%	36,307
J – S 2000	74.2%	21.2%	2.9%	1.0%	0.7%	33,322
O – D 2000	76.7%	18.9%	2.9%	0.8%	0.7%	37,183

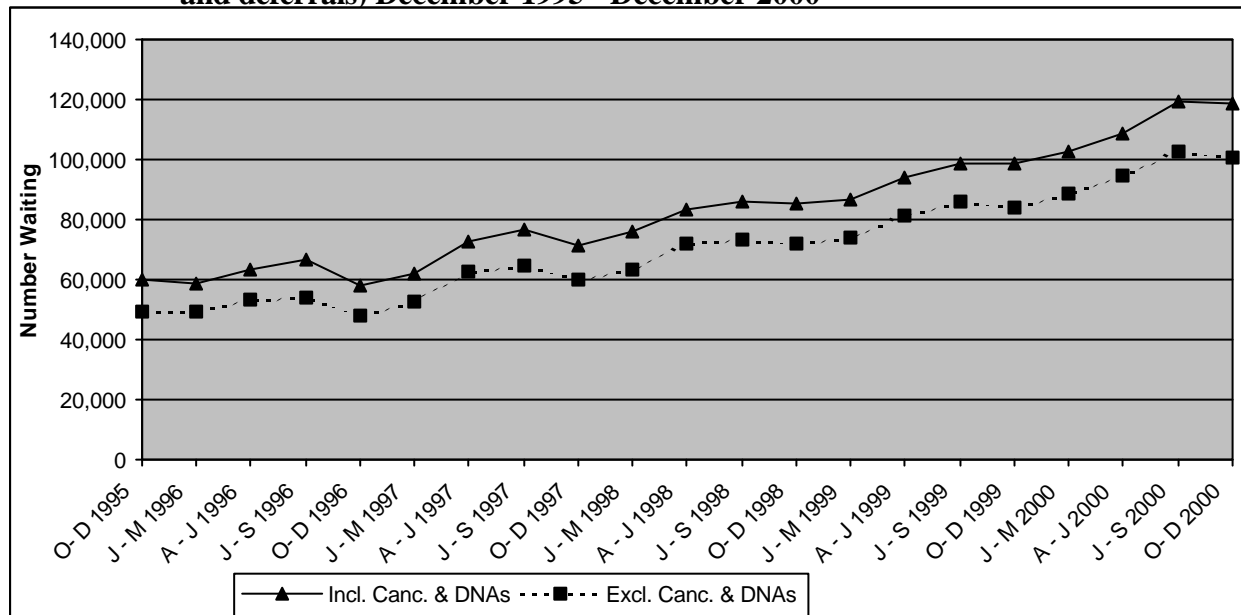
Source: CH2 Part 1

Outpatients

Headline Totals

The number of patients waiting for admission as outpatients (including cancellations and deferrals) at the end of December 2000 stood at 118,386 representing a decrease of 912 (<-1%) over the quarter** and an increase of 19,755 (+20.0%) compared with the same quarter in the previous year. Corresponding quarterly and annual changes (excluding cancellations and deferrals) were -2.3% and 19.7% respectively. Outpatient waiting lists have been on a generally upward trend for more almost four years apart from falls in the December quarters (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Outpatients Waiting for a First Appointment (including and excluding cancellations and deferrals) December 1995 - December 2000



Source: CH3 Parts 1&2.

Outpatient Completed Waits

Waiting times for completed outpatient waits are shown in Table 5. During the December 2000 quarter a total of 86,211 outpatients attended their first appointment without having cancelled or missed a previous appointment.

Table 5 Completed Outpatient Waits for First Appointment

Quarter	Time Waiting in Months					Total
	0-2	3-11	12-17	18-23	24+	
O - D 1997	81.9%	17.1%	0.9%	0.1%	0.0%	79,547
J - M 1998	82.8%	16.3%	0.7%	0.2%	0.0%	78,694
A - J 1998	82.9%	16.5%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	78,980
J - S 1998	78.8%	20.6%	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	73,141
O - D 1998	79.4%	20.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	83,321
J - M 1999	79.9%	19.2%	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%	83,143
A - J 1999	80.9%	18.3%	0.6%	0.1%	0.1%	77,691
J - S 1999	77.3%	21.7%	0.8%	0.2%	0.1%	75,075
O - D 1999	76.5%	22.4%	0.8%	0.2%	0.1%	82,658
J - M 2000*	77.1%	21.7%	0.9%	0.2%	0.1%	84,570
A - J 2000*	78.6%	20.1%	0.9%	0.3%	0.2%	79,082
J - S 2000*	75.4%	23.1%	1.2%	0.2%	0.1%	77,143
O - D 2000*	74.5%	23.5%	1.6%	0.3%	0.2%	86,211

Source: CH4 Part 1

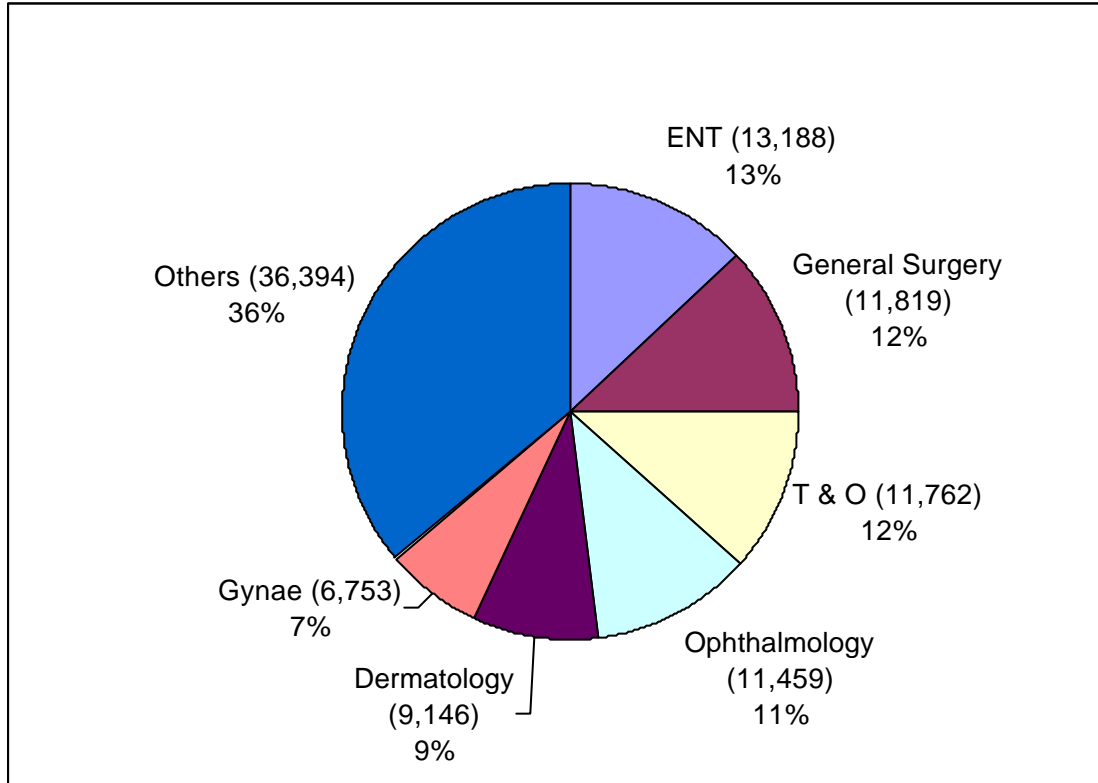
* Estimated figures – See note 14.

** Revised figures – See note 16.

Outpatients Waiting by Specialty

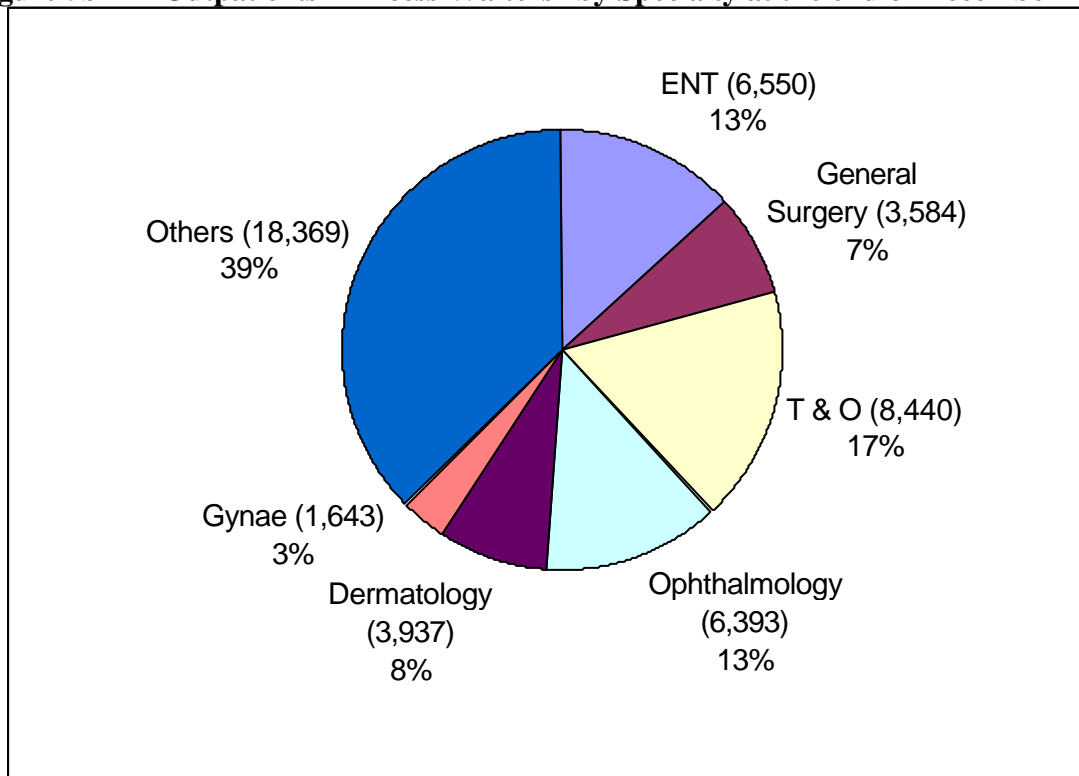
The overwhelming majority of those waiting (64%) were within six specialties: ENT; General Surgery; T&O; Ophthalmology; Dermatology and Gynae (Figure 5a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure 5b. All figures include only those who are waiting for their first appointment without having cancelled or missed a previous appointment during the December 2000 quarter.

Figure 5a Outpatients – Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of December 2000



Source: CH3 Part 1.

Figure 5b Outpatients – Excess Waiters¹ by Specialty at the end of December 2000



¹See notes to editors (paragraph 6) for definition of Excess Waiters.

Notes to Editors

1. Unless otherwise stated hospitals and patients mentioned in this release refer only to HPSS hospitals and patients.
2. The sources for the data contained in this release are the Charter Monitoring Returns CH1, CH2, CH3 and CH4. These returns collect information from Hospital Trusts on a quarterly basis.
3. All figures include all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals and those patients who are resident outside Northern Ireland.
4. In Northern Ireland, inpatient excess waiters are defined as those having to wait 12 months or more for admission to the Cardiac Surgery specialty and those having to wait 18 months or more to other specialties.
5. For outpatients, excess waiters are defined as those having to wait more than 3 months for a first outpatient appointment.
6. Ordinary admissions include both (a) patients admitted electively with the expectation that they will remain in hospital for at least one night, and (b) non-elective admissions (e.g. emergency admissions). A patient who is admitted with this intention but who leaves hospital for any reason without staying overnight is still counted as an ordinary admission. Day cases are not included.
7. Day Cases are patients admitted electively during the course of a day with the intention of receiving care who do not require the use of a hospital bed overnight and who return home as scheduled. If this original intention is not fulfilled and the patient stays overnight, such a patient should be counted as an ordinary admission.
8. The inpatient figures presented include people waiting to be admitted as inpatients either as day cases or ordinary admissions. They do not include:
 - Patients admitted as emergency cases;
 - Outpatients;
 - Patients undergoing a planned programme of treatment e.g. a series of admissions for chemotherapy;
 - Maternity (specialties 510 and 520);
 - Patients already in hospitals but included on other waiting lists;
 - Patients who are temporarily suspended from waiting lists.
9. Outpatient waiting list figures presented do not include maternity specialties 510 and 520.
10. Waiting time begins from the date the clinician decided to admit the patient. Patients subsequently offered a date but unable to attend have their waiting times calculated from the most recent date offered. These are known as self-deferred cases and are included in the total waiting.
11. Monthly waiting lists figures had previously been included in this publication. The source for the monthly waiting list figures is the monthly return CHA. Due to technical difficulties at source monthly figures are not currently available. Work is ongoing to rectify this problem.

12. The source for outpatient waiting list data is the quarterly Charter Monitoring Return CH3.
13. Figures relating to the quarter ending March 2001 will be released Tuesday, 12th June 2001.
14. Some of the data may be provisional and may be subject to revision in subsequent quarters.
15. One Trust (Sperrin Lakeland) was unable to produce CH4 data for quarters ending March, June and September 2000. Figures for December 2000 are available. Estimates for this Trust's data previously published have now been recast and included in table 5. Another Trust (the United Group of Hospitals) has been unable to produce CH4 data for quarters ending June, September and December 2000. Estimates for these missing data for United Group of Hospitals have been included in the June, September and December 2000 data shown in table 5. When CH4 data again becomes available these estimates will be recast also.
16. Outpatient waiting list figures for September 2000 have been significantly revised to reflect updated information provided by Trusts. The net effect of the revision is to increase the September 2000 figure by some 7,000.
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You can also find National Statistics on the internet –

Go to www.statistics.gov.uk.

Additional Information

Further information on waiting lists in Northern Ireland is available from:

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