

Information Release



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

An Roinn
**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

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Northern Ireland Waiting Lists – December 2003

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 2003, 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 2003 stood at 52,606.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of December 2003 with the end of September 2003 (54,257), the total number waiting has decreased by 1,651 (-3.0%).

Over the year, comparing the end of December 2003 with the end of December 2002 (57,649), the total number waiting decreased by 5,043 (-8.7%).

Table 1: Quarterly Waiting Lists – December 2003

Waiting for:	Quarter Ending December 2003	Change compared with end of previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter – previous year
Ordinary Admissions	23,971	-362	-2,994
Day case Admissions	28,635	-1289	-2,049
Total Waiting	52,606	-1,651	-5,043

Source: CH1

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 52,606 people waiting for admission to hospital at the end of December 2003, 23,971 (45.6%) were waiting for ordinary admission and 28,635 (54.4%) were waiting for day case admission (Table 1).

Since the end of September 2003, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has decreased by 362 (-1.5%) and the number waiting for day case admission has decreased by 1,289 (-4.3%).

In comparison with December 2002, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has decreased by 2,994 (-11.1%) and the number waiting for day case admission has decreased by 2,049 (-6.7%).

Excess Waiters¹ – Table 2

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.

The number of excess waiters at the end of December 2003 stood at 5,377 or 10.2% of the total waiting.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of December 2003 with the end of September 2003, the number of excess waiters decreased by 1,289 (-19.3%).

Over the year, comparing the end of December 2003 with the end of December 2002, the number of excess waiters decreased by 2,967 (-35.6%).

Table 2 Excess Waiters¹ – December 2003

Waiting for:	Quarter Ending December 2003	Change compared with end of previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter - previous year
Ordinary admissions	4,069	-904	-2,082
Day case admissions	1,308	-385	-885
Total Waiting	5,377	-1,289	-2,967

¹See Notes to Editors (paragraph 5) for definition of Excess waiters.

Source: CH1

Peak Figures

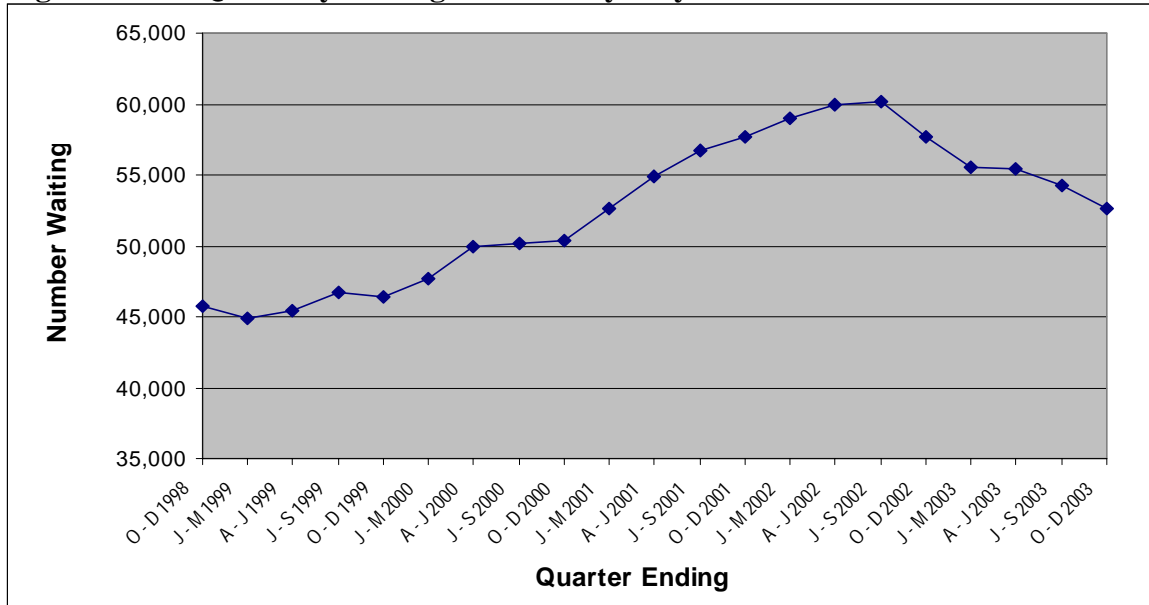
The end of December 2003 total of 52,606 on the inpatient waiting list represents a decrease of 7,584 (-12.6%) on the peak waiting list figure of 60,190 (end September 2002).

The number of excess waiters has fallen to 5,377 at the end of December 2003, and represents a decrease of 3,781 (-41.3%) on the peak figure of 9,158 recorded at the end of September 2002.

Trends

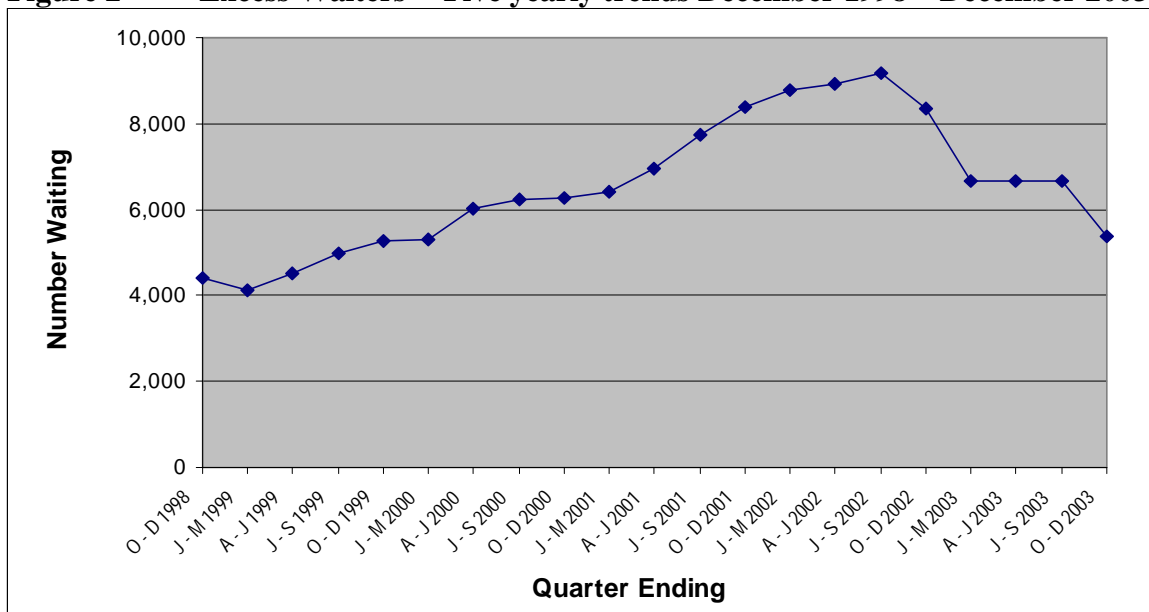
The total waiting was on a generally downward trend until March 1999, when the trend reversed and total waiting rose to peak in September 2002. The total waiting decreased during the quarters ending December 2002, March 2003, June 2003 and September 2003 and has continued to decrease in the current quarter (Figure 1). Excess waiters have followed a similar trend (Figure 2).

Figure 1 Quarterly waiting lists – Five yearly trends December 1998 – December 2003



Source: CH1

Figure 2 Excess Waiters¹ - Five yearly trends December 1998 – December 2003



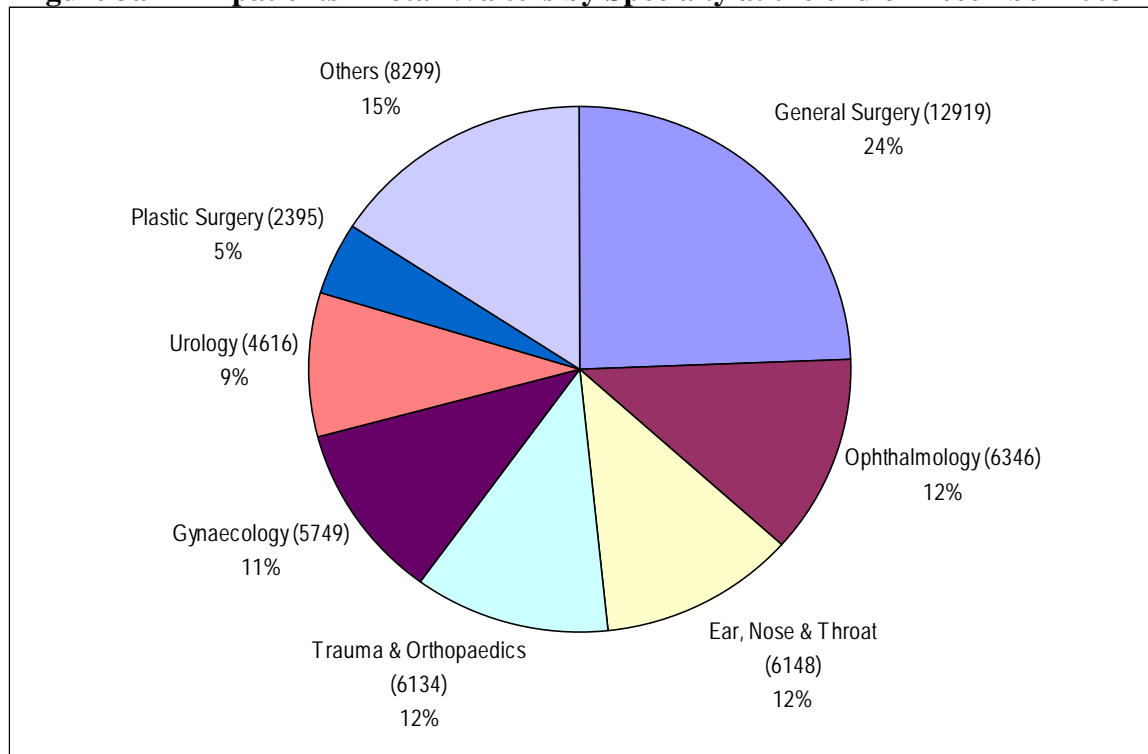
¹See Notes to Editors (paragraph 5) for definition of Excess waiters.

Source: CH1

Inpatients Waiting by Specialty

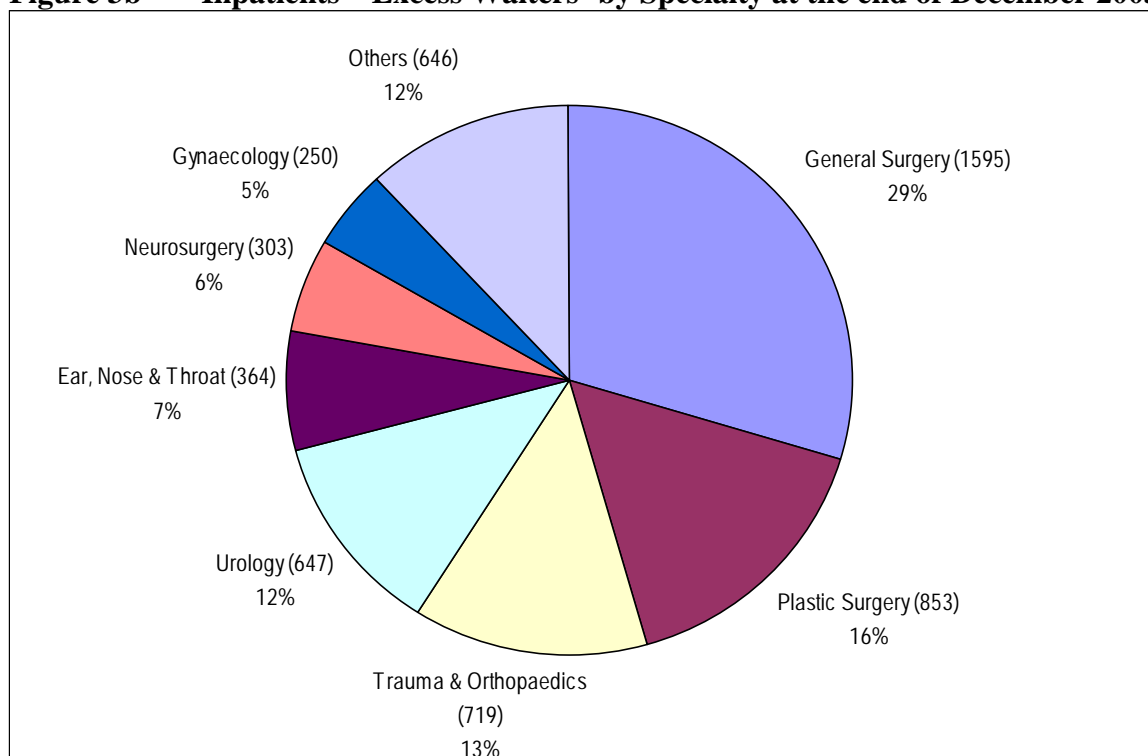
The overwhelming majority of those waiting (85%) were within seven specialties: General Surgery; Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Ophthalmology; Gynaecology (Gynae); Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery (T&O); Urology and Plastic Surgery (Figure 3a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure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

Figure 3a Inpatients - Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of December 2003



Source: CH1

Figure 3b Inpatients – Excess Waiters¹ by Specialty at the end of December 2003



¹See notes to editors (paragraph 5) for definition of Excess Waiters.

Source: CH1

Inpatient Waiting Time by Specialty

Waiting times for inpatients by specialty are shown in Tables 3a and 3b. The proportion of those waiting less than 12 months ranged from 99.8% in Rheumatology to 41.9% in Neurosurgery. Overall over three quarters (82.4%) of those waiting for admission were waiting less than 12 months.

Table 3a Number of Patients Waiting for Admission by Months Waiting and Specialty

Specialty	Patients Waiting for Admission by Months Waiting					Total Number of Patients Awaiting Admission
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24 +	
General Surgery	6,034	4,315	975	569	1,026	12,919
Ophthalmology	2,492	3,231	422	160	41	6,346
Ear, Nose & Throat	2,387	2,986	411	153	211	6,148
Trauma & Orthopaedics	1,647	3,075	693	325	394	6,134
Gynaecology	2,714	2,425	360	130	120	5,749
Urology	2,010	1,573	386	238	409	4,616
Plastic Surgery	532	778	232	149	704	2,395
General Medicine	1,266	335	16	1	0	1,618
Cardiology	679	434	131	161	79	1,484
Gastroenterology	647	201	3	2	5	858
Neurosurgery	100	164	63	59	244	630
Paediatric Surgery	183	333	53	3	4	576
Rheumatology	440	96	1	0	0	537
Oral Surgery	236	208	41	16	13	514
Pain Management	203	205	13	3	12	436
Dermatology	215	135	28	11	30	419
Cardiac Surgery	143	137	23	9	8	320
Thoracic Surgery	85	61	28	29	28	231
Neurology	110	67	21	6	1	205
Paediatric Dentistry	109	71	5	0	0	185
Other	252	33	0	1	0	286
All Specialties	22,484	20,863	3,905	2,025	3,329	52,606

Source: CHI

Table 3b Percentage of Patients Waiting for Admission by Months Waiting and Specialty

Specialty	Patients Waiting for Admission by Months Waiting				
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24 +
General Surgery	46.7%	33.4%	7.5%	4.4%	7.9%
Ophthalmology	39.3%	50.9%	6.6%	2.5%	0.6%
Ear, Nose & Throat	38.8%	48.6%	6.7%	2.5%	3.4%
Trauma & Orthopaedic	26.9%	50.1%	11.3%	5.3%	6.4%
Gynaecology	47.2%	42.2%	6.3%	2.3%	2.1%
Urology	43.5%	34.1%	8.4%	5.2%	8.9%
Plastic Surgery	22.2%	32.5%	9.7%	6.2%	29.4%
General Medicine	78.2%	20.7%	1.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Cardiology	45.8%	29.2%	8.8%	10.8%	5.3%
Gastroenterology	75.4%	23.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%
Neurosurgery	15.9%	26.0%	10.0%	9.4%	38.7%
Paediatric Surgery	31.8%	57.8%	9.2%	0.5%	0.7%
Rheumatology	81.9%	17.9%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Oral Surgery	45.9%	40.5%	8.0%	3.1%	2.5%
Pain Management	46.6%	47.0%	3.0%	0.7%	2.8%
Dermatology	51.3%	32.2%	6.7%	2.6%	7.2%
Cardiac Surgery	44.7%	42.8%	7.2%	2.8%	2.5%
Thoracic Surgery	36.8%	26.4%	12.1%	12.6%	12.1%
Neurology	53.7%	32.7%	10.2%	2.9%	0.5%
Paediatric Dentistry	58.9%	38.4%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	88.1%	11.5%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
All Specialties	42.7%	39.7%	7.4%	3.8%	6.3%

Source: CHI

Completed Waits

Waiting times for completed inpatient waits are shown in Table 4. A total of 38,283 inpatients were admitted to hospital (excluding those who had previously refused an offer of attendance) during the December 2003 quarter. Seventy three percent of patients received their treatment within 3 months of being placed on the waiting list and 94% received their treatment within 12 months.

Table 4 Completed Inpatient Waits

Quarter	Time Waiting in Months					Total
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24+	
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
J - D 2000	75.7%	19.9%	2.9%	0.8%	0.7%	142,449
J - M 2001	76.9%	18.7%	2.7%	0.8%	0.8%	36,377
A - J 2001	76.6%	19.4%	2.5%	0.8%	0.7%	35,858
J - S 2001	74.4%	20.8%	3.1%	1.0%	0.8%	33,271
O - D 2001	75.0%	20.0%	3.1%	1.0%	0.9%	37,656
J - D 2001	75.7%	19.7%	2.9%	0.9%	0.8%	143,162
J - M 2002	74.9%	19.7%	3.6%	1.1%	0.8%	38,042
A - J 2002	74.4%	20.4%	3.3%	1.0%	0.9%	36,885
J - S 2002	72.9%	21.9%	3.3%	1.1%	0.7%	33,522
O - D 2002	74.1%	20.3%	3.5%	1.2%	0.9%	38,009
J - D 2002	74.1%	20.5%	3.4%	1.1%	0.8%	146,458
J - M 2003	74.1%	19.5%	3.8%	1.4%	1.2%	38,371
A - J 2003	74.3%	20.7%	3.1%	1.0%	1.0%	37,948
J - S 2003	72.4%	22.6%	2.9%	1.2%	1.0%	34,080
O - D 2003	73.1%	21.2%	3.0%	1.3%	1.3%	38,283
J - D 2003	73.5%	20.9%	3.2%	1.2%	1.1%	148,682

Source: CH2 Part 1

Monthly Inpatient Waiting Lists

The Department also collects monthly data on the size of the inpatient waiting list excluding private patients and non-NI residents. These figures are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5 Monthly Inpatient Waiting Lists

Month Ending	Admission Method		Total Waiting	Excess Waiters	
	Ordinary	Day Case		Number	% of Total
December 2002 ²	26,483	30,040	56,523	8,260	14.6%
January 2003 ²	25,702	29,967	55,669	7,450	13.4%
February 2003 ²	25,061	30,238	55,299	6,863	12.4%
March 2003 ²	24,502	29,828	54,330	6,626	12.2%
April 2003 ²	24,480	29,862	54,342	6,620	12.2%
May 2003 ²	24,309	30,147	54,456	6,702	12.3%
June 2003	24,250	30,299	54,549	6,646	12.2%
July 2003	24,612	30,148	54,760	6,774	12.4%
August 2003	24,474	29,867	54,341	6,886	12.7%
September 2003	23,853	29,355	53,208	6,629	12.5%
October 2003	24,040	28,924	52,964	6,225	11.8%
November 2003	23,358	28,180	51,538	5,733	11.1%
December 2003	23,562	28,203	51,765	5,379	10.4%

Source: CHA

² Estimated Figures – See Note 14

The monthly waiting list figures have shown an overall decrease in the 3 month period since September 2003.

Patients resident in a Health Board Area may receive treatment in any of the four Health Boards. Table 6 shows the number of residents in each Health Board Area waiting for admission to hospitals in their own and other Health Board Areas.

Table 6 Monthly Inpatient Waiting Lists by Board of Residence and Board of Treatment

Board of Residence	Board of Treatment			
	EHSSB	NHSSB	SHSSB	WHSSB
Eastern	20,089	98	119	0
Northern	6,071	6,349	494	687
Southern	3,803	13	7,458	157
Western	1,141	43	50	5,193
Northern Ireland	31,104	6,503	8,121	6,037

Source: CHA

Outpatients

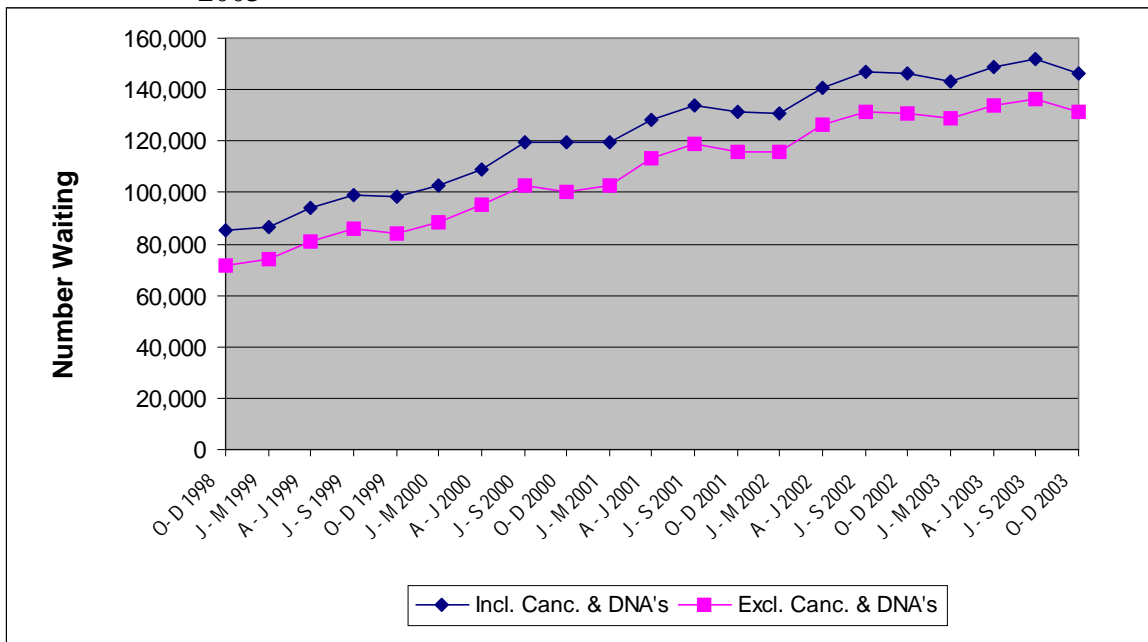
Headline Totals

The number of patients waiting for admission as outpatients (including cancellations and deferrals) at the end of December 2003 stood at 146,180³ representing a decrease of 5,572 (-3.7%) over the quarter and a decrease of 124 (-0.1%) compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

Corresponding quarterly and annual changes (excluding cancellations and deferrals) were -3.5% and +0.8% respectively. Figure 4 shows five yearly trends in the number of outpatients waiting for a first appointment, Figure 5 shows the same trends information for excess waiters (excess waiters are defined as patients waiting more than 3 months for a first outpatient appointment).

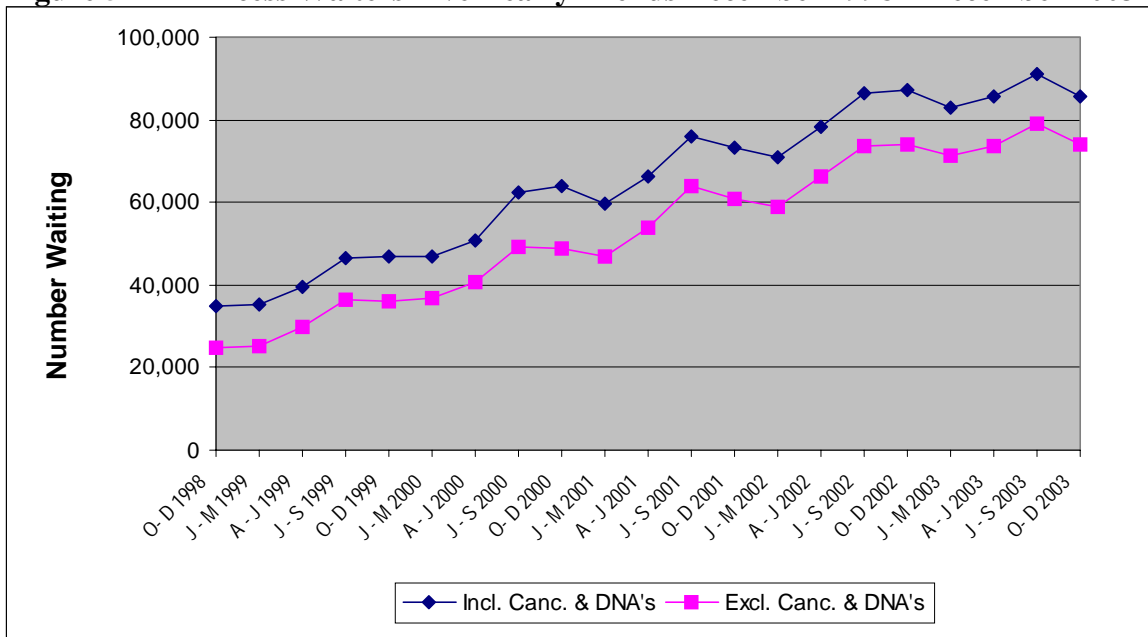
³Outpatient figures for the June 2002, September 2002, December 2002 and March 2003 quarters have been revised to include estimates – see note 15.

Figure 4 Outpatients Waiting for a First Appointment (including and excluding cancellations and deferrals) – Five Yearly Trends December 1998 – December 2003



Source: CH3 Parts 1&2.

Figure 5 Excess Waiters Five Yearly Trends December 1998 – December 2003

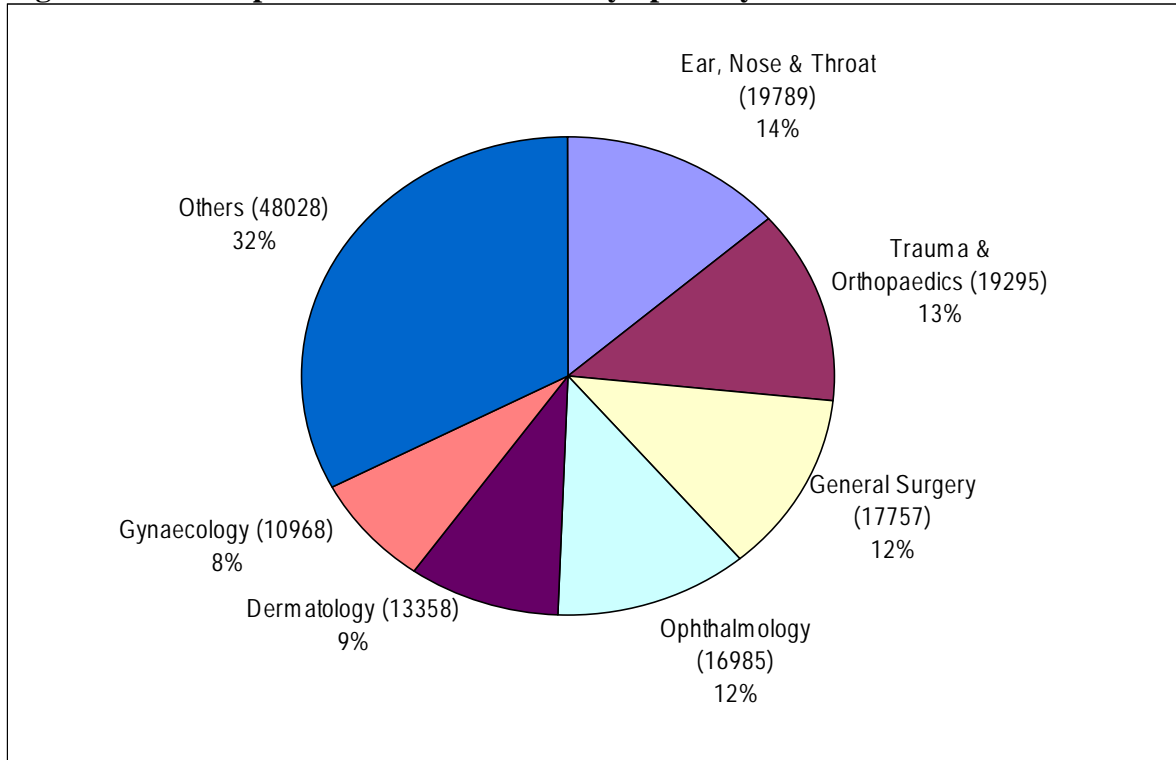


Source: CH3 Parts 1 & 2

Outpatients Waiting by Specialty

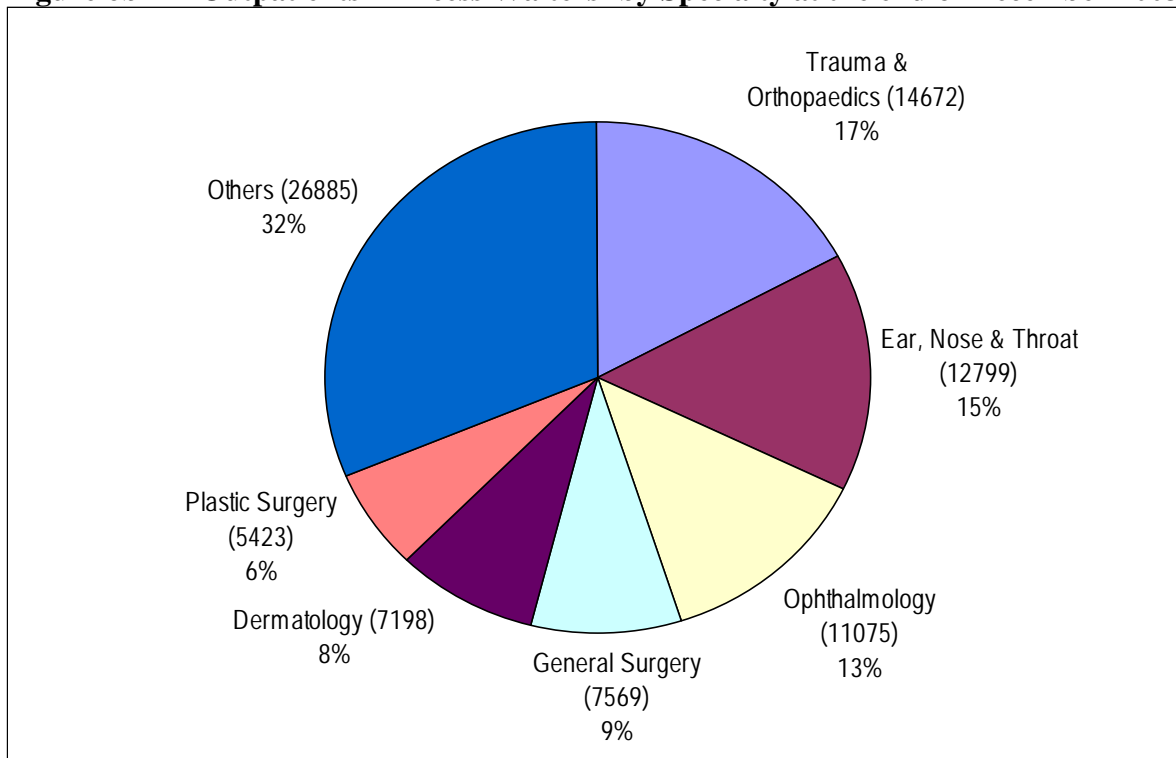
The majority of those waiting (68%) were within six specialties: Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT); Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery (T&O); General Surgery; Ophthalmology; Dermatology and Gynaecology (Gynae) (Figure 5a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure 5b. All figures include those who are waiting for their first appointment including those who have cancelled or missed a previous appointment during the December 2003 quarter.

Figure 6a Outpatients – Total Waiters by Specialty at the end of December 2003



Source: CH3.

Figure 6b Outpatients – Excess Waiters¹ by Specialty at the end of December 2003



¹See notes to editors (paragraph 6) for definition of Excess Waiters.
Source: CH3.

Outpatient Waiting Time by Specialty

Waiting times for outpatients by specialty are shown in Tables 7a and 7b. The proportion of those waiting less than 12 months ranged from 100% in Old Age Psychiatry to 24.5% in Plastic Surgery. Overall four fifths (80%) of those waiting for treatment were waiting less than 12 months.

Table 7a Number of Patients Waiting for a First Appointment by Months Waiting and Specialty

Specialty	Patients Waiting for an Appointment by Months Waiting					Total Number of Patients Awaiting Appointment
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24 +	
Ear, Nose & Throat	6,990	8,903	2,304	860	732	19,789
Trauma & Orthopaedics	4,623	7,319	2,334	1,529	3,490	19,295
General Surgery	10,188	6,092	1,112	278	87	17,757
Ophthalmology	5,910	8,143	1,739	652	541	16,985
Dermatology	6,160	5,167	937	499	595	13,358
Gynaecology	6,304	4,112	460	68	24	10,968
General Medicine	3,654	2,589	521	148	126	7,038
Plastic Surgery	664	827	528	465	3,603	6,087
Urology	1,530	1,844	465	181	268	4,288
Cardiology	2,356	1,542	157	94	109	4,258
Rheumatology	1,164	1,772	446	196	35	3,613
Neurology	1,296	1,712	256	73	37	3,374
Paediatrics	1,743	812	101	114	304	3,074
Oral Surgery	738	1,137	318	186	264	2,643
Mental Illness	1,856	622	4	1	2	2,485
Pain Management	668	973	259	164	166	2,230
Geriatric Medicine	680	533	75	2	0	1,290
Paediatric Surgery	525	519	43	37	91	1,215
Gastroenterology	471	253	7	2	0	733
Nephrology	369	268	51	7	37	732
Thoracic Medicine	391	267	9	14	1	682
Orthodontics	352	182	27	5	0	566
Endocrinology	395	159	6	2	0	562
Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	271	267	9	4	0	551
Resorative Dentistry	166	151	40	65	125	547
Neurosurgery	134	191	10	9	4	348
Old Age Psychiatry	139	71	0	0	0	210
Haematology (Clinical)	167	31	0	1	0	199
Audiological Medicine	102	26	7	25	37	197
Paediatric Dentistry	31	32	27	18	70	178
Anaesthetics	43	73	21	11	12	160
Cardiac Surgery	122	24	0	0	0	146
Chemical Pathology	40	64	13	1	0	118
Clinical Oncology	92	4	0	0	0	96
Psychotherapy	29	50	0	0	0	79
Other	196	93	8	7	25	329
All Specialties	60,559	56,824	12,294	5,718	10,785	146,180

Source: CH3

Table 7b Percentage of Patients Waiting for a First Appointment by Months Waiting and Specialty

Specialty	Patients Waiting for an Appointment by Months				
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24+
Ear, Nose & Throat	35.3%	45.0%	11.6%	4.3%	3.7%
Trauma & Orthopaedics	24.0%	37.9%	12.1%	7.9%	18.1%
General Surgery	57.4%	34.3%	6.3%	1.6%	0.5%
Ophthalmology	34.8%	47.9%	10.2%	3.8%	3.2%
Dermatology	46.1%	38.7%	7.0%	3.7%	4.5%
Gynaecology	57.5%	37.5%	4.2%	0.6%	0.2%
General Medicine	51.9%	36.8%	7.4%	2.1%	1.8%
Plastic Surgery	10.9%	13.6%	8.7%	7.6%	59.2%
Urology	35.7%	43.0%	10.8%	4.2%	6.3%
Cardiology	55.3%	36.2%	3.7%	2.2%	2.6%
Rheumatology	32.2%	49.0%	12.3%	5.4%	1.0%
Neurology	38.4%	50.7%	7.6%	2.2%	1.1%
Paediatrics	56.7%	26.4%	3.3%	3.7%	9.9%
Oral Surgery	27.9%	43.0%	12.0%	7.0%	10.0%
Mental Illness	74.7%	25.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%
Pain Management	30.0%	43.6%	11.6%	7.4%	7.4%
Geriatric Medicine	52.7%	41.3%	5.8%	0.2%	0.0%
Paediatric Surgery	43.2%	42.7%	3.5%	3.0%	7.5%
Gastroenterology	64.3%	34.5%	1.0%	0.3%	0.0%
Nephrology	50.4%	36.6%	7.0%	1.0%	5.1%
Thoracic Medicine	57.3%	39.1%	1.3%	2.1%	0.1%
Orthodontics	62.2%	32.2%	4.8%	0.9%	0.0%
Endocrinology	70.3%	28.3%	1.1%	0.4%	0.0%
Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	49.2%	48.5%	1.6%	0.7%	0.0%
Resorative Dentistry	30.3%	27.6%	7.3%	11.9%	22.9%
Neurosurgery	38.5%	54.9%	2.9%	2.6%	1.1%
Old Age Psychiatry	66.2%	33.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Haematology (Clinical)	83.9%	15.6%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
Audiological Medicine	51.8%	13.2%	3.6%	12.7%	18.8%
Paediatric Dentistry	17.4%	18.0%	15.2%	10.1%	39.3%
Anaesthetics	26.9%	45.6%	13.1%	6.9%	7.5%
Cardiac Surgery	83.6%	16.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Chemical Pathology	33.9%	54.2%	11.0%	0.8%	0.0%
Clinical Oncology	95.8%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Psychotherapy	36.7%	63.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	59.6%	28.3%	2.4%	2.1%	7.6%
All Specialties	41.4%	38.9%	8.4%	3.9%	7.4%

Source: CH3

Outpatient Completed Waits

Waiting times for completed outpatient waits are shown in Table 8. During the December 2003 quarter a total of 88,711 outpatients attended their first appointment without having cancelled or missed a previous appointment. Seventy percent of patients attended their first outpatient appointment within 3 months of being placed on the waiting list and 96% had their first outpatient appointment within 12 months.

Table 8 Completed Outpatient Waits for First Appointment

Quarter	Time Waiting in Months					Total
	0 - 2	3 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 23	24+	
J - M 2000	77.0%	21.7%	0.9%	0.2%	0.1%	84,604
A - J 2000	78.5%	20.1%	0.9%	0.3%	0.2%	77,699
J - S 2000	75.4%	23.1%	1.2%	0.2%	0.1%	75,721
O - D 2000	74.5%	23.5%	1.6%	0.3%	0.2%	84,326
J - D 2000	76.3%	22.1%	1.2%	0.3%	0.1%	322,350
J - M 2001	75.6%	22.5%	1.3%	0.4%	0.2%	86,024
A - J 2001	77.2%	21.0%	1.2%	0.4%	0.2%	82,161
J - S 2001	74.4%	23.7%	1.2%	0.5%	0.3%	77,880
O - D 2001 ⁴	72.4%	24.7%	1.8%	0.7%	0.3%	88,331
J - D 2001⁴	74.9%	23.0%	1.4%	0.5%	0.3%	334,396
J - M 2002 ⁴	72.4%	25.3%	1.4%	0.6%	0.3%	85,856
A - J 2002 ⁴	74.9%	22.7%	1.4%	0.5%	0.4%	82,282
J - S 2002 ⁴	71.0%	26.3%	1.8%	0.4%	0.4%	79,986
O - D 2002 ⁴	70.2%	26.6%	2.0%	0.6%	0.6%	88,056
J - D 2002⁴	72.1%	25.2%	1.7%	0.5%	0.4%	336,180
J - M 2003 ⁴	70.0%	25.6%	2.4%	0.9%	1.2%	85,054
A - J 2003 ⁴	72.1%	24.4%	2.2%	0.7%	0.7%	84,963
J - S 2003 ⁴	69.5%	26.6%	2.2%	0.8%	0.9%	80,128
O - D 2003 ⁴	69.6%	26.1%	2.5%	0.9%	0.9%	88,711
J - D 2003⁴	70.3%	25.7%	2.3%	0.8%	0.9%	338,856

Source: CH4 Part 1

⁴ Estimated Figures – See note 16.

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. The CHA return collects information from Health Boards on a monthly basis.
3. There is a fundamental difference in coverage between Board based and Trust based information. Board based (CHA) returns exclude all patients living outside Northern Ireland and all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals.
4. Apart from Tables 5 and 6, figures include all privately funded patients waiting for treatment in Health Service hospitals and those patients who are resident outside Northern Ireland.
5. 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.
6. For outpatients, excess waiters are defined as those having to wait more than 3 months for a first outpatient appointment.
7. 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 either of the above intentions, but who leaves hospital for any reason without staying overnight, is still counted as an ordinary admission. Day cases are not included.
8. 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 is counted as an ordinary admission.
9. 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.
10. Outpatient waiting list figures presented do not include maternity specialties 510 and 520.
11. 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.

12. The source for the monthly waiting list figures is the monthly CHA return. The monthly figures presented here are produced from an ad-hoc reporting system which does not go through the more stringent validation processes which produce the quarterly figures. For this reason and the fact that the two sets of figures are run-off at different points in time mean that there may be anomalies when comparing the monthly figures with the quarterly figures.
13. Health Board residents included in Table 6 are not always assigned a Health Board of treatment as some patients may be waiting for admission to a hospital outside Northern Ireland.
14. Western Board have now provided figures for Western Board residents awaiting admission to hospital as a day case in the General Medicine specialty. Estimated data was supplied for months ending April 2002 to May 2003 and figures for these months have been revised to include the estimated data. Revised figures are included in Tables 5 and 6.
15. Green Park HSS Trust now provide outpatient waiting list figures in the Pain Management specialty. Estimated totals were provided for quarters ending June, September and December 2002 and March 2003 and estimates for each time band have been calculated. These new estimates have been included in the outpatient figures shown in Figures 4 and 5.
16. Due to reasons beyond the control of the Trust, United Hospitals HSS Trust has been unable to produce CH4 data for all quarters between December 2001 and December 2003. This Trust has provided estimated totals for these quarters and estimates for each time band have been calculated. These new estimates for the missing data for the United Group of Hospitals have been included in the data shown in Table 8. When CH4 data becomes available these estimates will be recast.
17. Some of the data is provisional and may be subject to revision in subsequent quarters.
18. Figures relating to the quarter ending March 2004 will be released on Thursday, 3rd June 2004.
19. For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Service on

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LONDON SW1V 2QQ

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:

Office Information Manager
Regional Information Branch
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Annexe 2
Castle Buildings
Stormont
BT4 3UD

Internet address: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/index.html