

15th October 1999

Northern Ireland Waiting Lists – June 1999

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 June 1999, 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 June 1999 stood at 45,278.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of June 1999 with the end of March 1999 (44,868), the total number waiting has risen by 410 (0.9%).

Over the year, comparing the end of June 1999 with the end of June 1998 (47,283), the total number waiting has fallen by 2,005 (4.2%).

Table 1: Quarterly Waiting Lists – June 1999

| Waiting for: | Quarter ending June 1999 | Change compared with end previous quarter | Change compared with end same quarter – previous year |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Ordinary admissions | 24,068 | + 60 | - 1,141 |
| Day case admissions | 21,210 | + 350 | - 864 |
| Total Waiting | 45,278 | + 410 | - 2,005 |

Source: CHI

The figures in this bulletin include private patients and also patients resident outside Northern Ireland. The waiting list initiative to reduce the number of cases waiting for inpatient treatment over the year March 1998 - March 1999 was targeted only at patients who were resident in Northern Ireland. At the end of June 1999, the waiting list for these patients stood at 43,979, representing a drop of 5.9% since the end June 1998 (see Table 4).

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



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 45,278 people waiting for admission to hospital at the end of June 1999, 24,068 (53.2%) were waiting for ordinary admission and 21,210 (46.8%) were waiting for day case admission (Table 1).

Since the end of March 1999, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has increased by 0.2% (60) and the number waiting for day case admission has increased by 1.7% (350).

In comparison with June 1998, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has decreased by 4.5% (1,141) and the number waiting for day case admission has decreased by 3.9% (864).

Excess Waiters – Table 2

The number of excess waiters at the end of June 1999 stood at 4,518 or 10% of the total waiting.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of June 1999 with the end of March 1999, the number of excess waiters increased by 404 (9.8%).

Over the year, comparing the end of June 1999 with the end of June 1998, the numbers of excess waiters decreased by 1,202 (21.0%).

Table 2 Excess Waiters – June 1999

| Waiting for: | Quarter ending June 1999 | Change compared with end previous quarter | Change compared with end same quarter – previous year |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| Ordinary admissions | 3,200 | + 251 | - 639 |
| Day case admissions | 1,318 | + 153 | - 563 |
| Total Waiting | 4,518 | + 404 | - 1,202 |

Source: CH1

Peak Figures

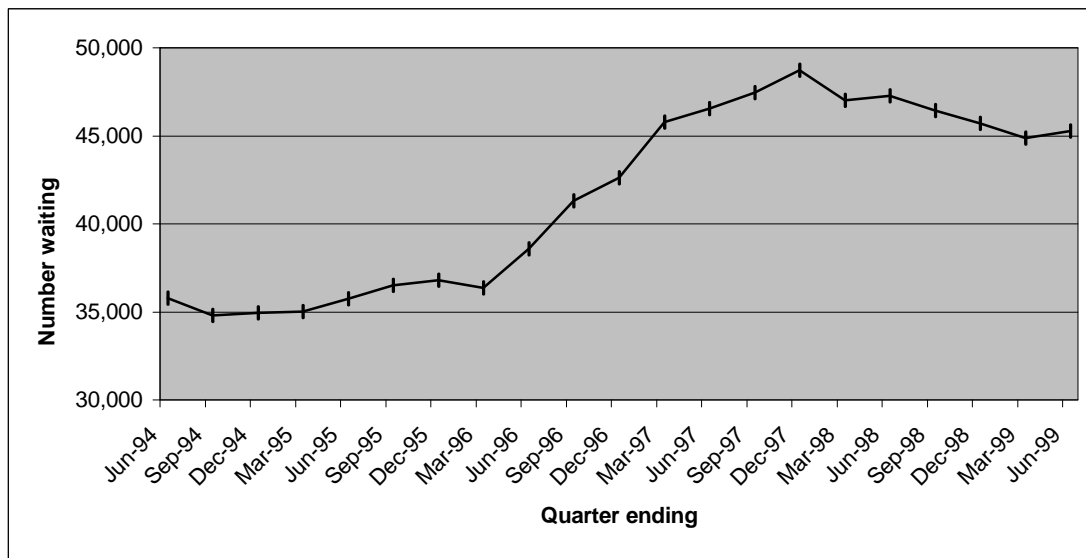
The end of June 1999 total of 45,278 on the inpatient waiting list represents a fall of 3,462 (-7.1%) compared with the peak waiting list figure of 48,740 (end December 1997).

Similarly, the number of excess waiters has decreased from a peak of 6,595 at the end of December 1997 by 31.5% (2,077) to 4,518 at the end of June 1999.

Trends

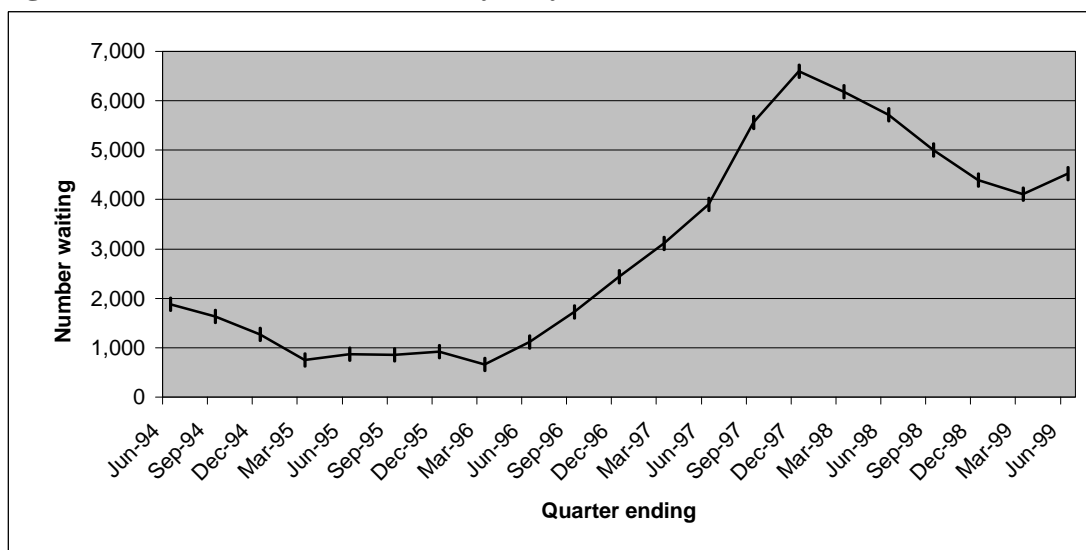
Over the past five years both the total numbers waiting and the numbers of excess waiters were on a generally upward trend until September/October 1997. Since that time the numbers have been on a generally downward trend Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1 Quarterly waiting lists – five yearly trends June 1994 –June 1999



Source: CH1

Figure 2 Excess Waiters - five yearly trends June 1994 –June 1999

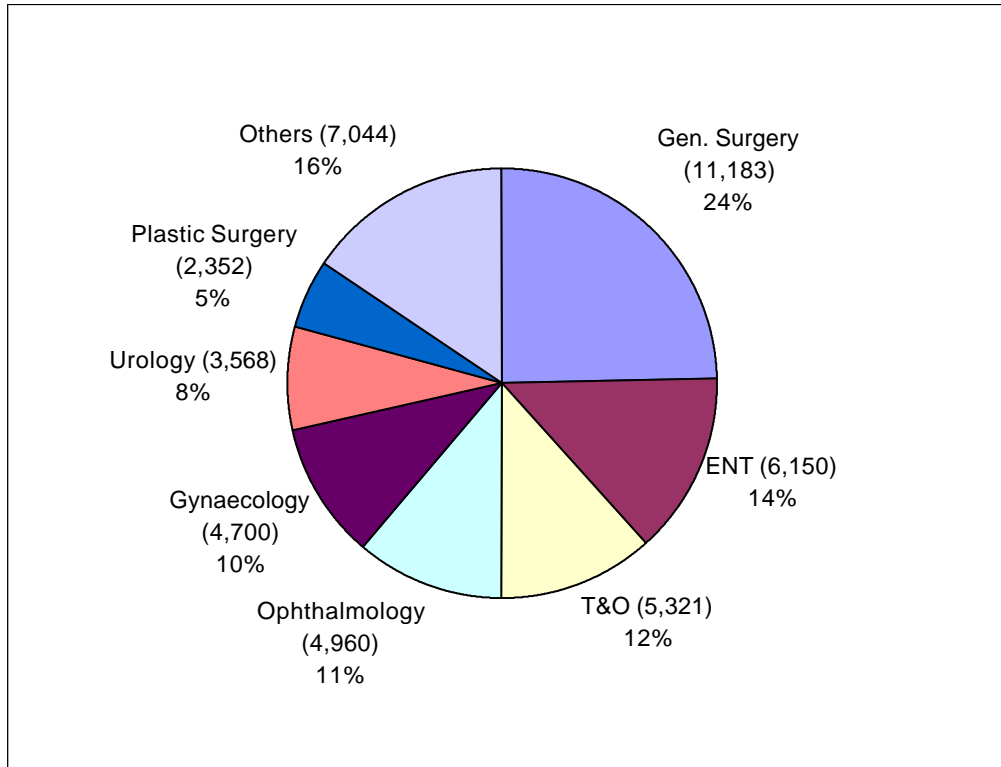


Source: CH1

Inpatients Waiting by Specialty

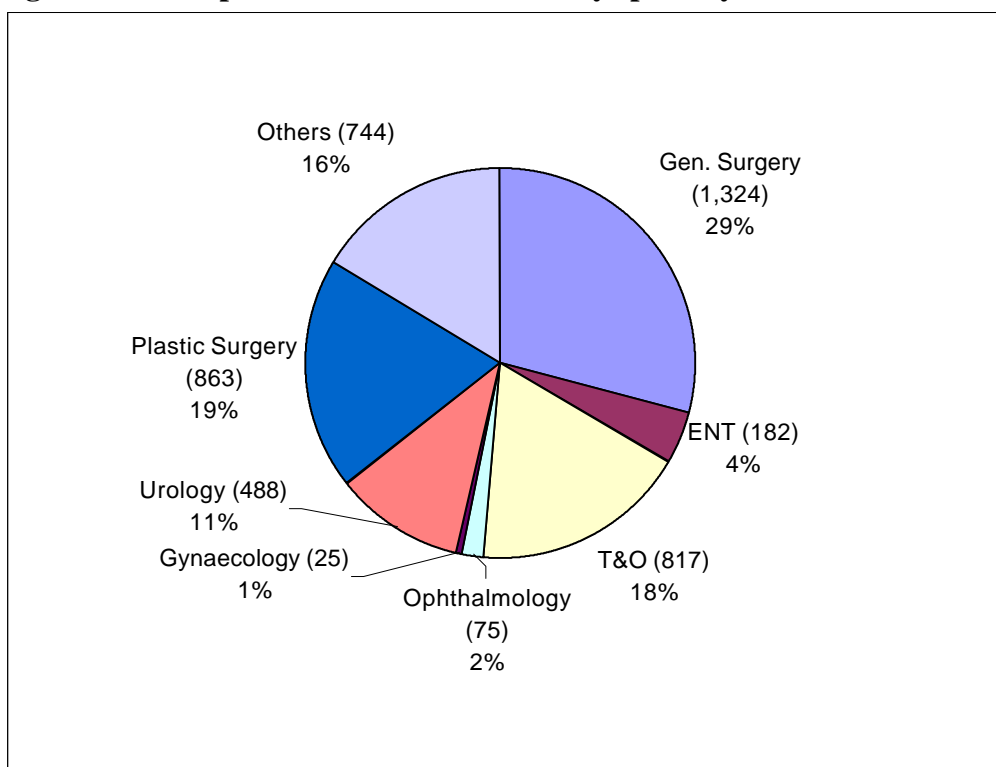
The overwhelming majority of those waiting (84%) were within seven specialties; General Surgery, ENT, Trauma & Orthopaedic, Ophthalmology, Gynaecology, Urology and Plastic Surgery (Figure 3a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure 3b.

Figure 3a Inpatients - Total waiters by specialty at the end of June 1999



Source CHI

Figure 3b Inpatients – Excess waiters¹ by specialty at the end of June 1999



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

Source CHI

Inpatient completed waits

Waiting times for completed inpatient waits are shown in Table 3. A total of 36,171 inpatients were admitted to hospital (excluding those who had previously refused an offer of attendance) during the June 1999 quarter.

Table 3 Completed inpatient waits for first appointment

| Time Waiting in Months (Percentage of total waits in each time band) | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|-------|-------|-----|--------|
| Quarter | 0-5 | 6-11 | 12-17 | 18-23 | 24+ | Total |
| Jun-96 | 90.0 | 7.7 | 1.8 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 36,672 |
| Sep-96 | 89.9 | 7.8 | 1.9 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 31,362 |
| Dec-96 | 88.2 | 8.6 | 2.6 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 36,047 |
| Mar-97 | 88.6 | 8.0 | 2.7 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 35,578 |
| Jun-97 | 87.9 | 8.4 | 2.8 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 36,029 |
| Sep-97 | 87.7 | 7.9 | 2.9 | 1.0 | 0.4 | 32,245 |
| Dec-97 | 86.9 | 8.2 | 3.2 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 36,495 |
| Mar-98 | 85.0 | 8.3 | 4.0 | 1.6 | 1.0 | 38,848 |
| Jun-98 | 86.1 | 8.3 | 3.1 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 40,637 |
| Sep-98 | 86.1 | 8.5 | 2.9 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 34,067 |
| Dec-98 | 85.8 | 8.9 | 3.2 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 37,192 |
| Mar-99 | 87.3 | 8.0 | 2.9 | 0.8 | 1.0 | 38,185 |
| Jun-99 | 87.0 | 8.5 | 3.0 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 36,171 |

Source CH2

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 Table 4.

Table 4 Monthly Inpatient Waiting Lists

| Month Ending | Admission method | | Total Waiting | Excess waiters | |
|--------------|------------------|----------|---------------|----------------|------------|
| | Ordinary | Day case | | Number | % of total |
| Jun-98 | 24,963 | 21,759 | 46,722 | 5,720 | 12.2 |
| Jul-98 | 25,266 | 21,956 | 47,222 | 5,499 | 11.6 |
| Aug-98 | 24,973 | 21,679 | 46,652 | 5,362 | 11.5 |
| Sep-98 | 24,069 | 21,521 | 45,590 | 4,858 | 10.7 |
| Oct-98 | 23,615 | 20,978 | 44,593 | 4,628 | 10.4 |
| Nov-98 | 23,061 | 20,825 | 43,886 | 4,228 | 9.6 |
| Dec-98 | 23,573 | 20,940 | 44,513 | 4,271 | 9.6 |
| Jan-99 | 23,539 | 20,797 | 44,336 | 4,136 | 9.3 |
| Feb-99 | 23,323 | 20,331 | 43,654 | 4,033 | 9.2 |
| Mar-99 | 23,415 | 20,037 | 43,452 | 4,003 | 9.2 |
| Apr-99 | 23,546 | 20,310 | 43,856 | 4,136 | 9.4 |
| May-99 | 23,465 | 20,545 | 44,010 | 4,356 | 9.9 |
| Jun-99 | 23,549 | 20,430 | 43,979 | 4,382 | 10.0 |

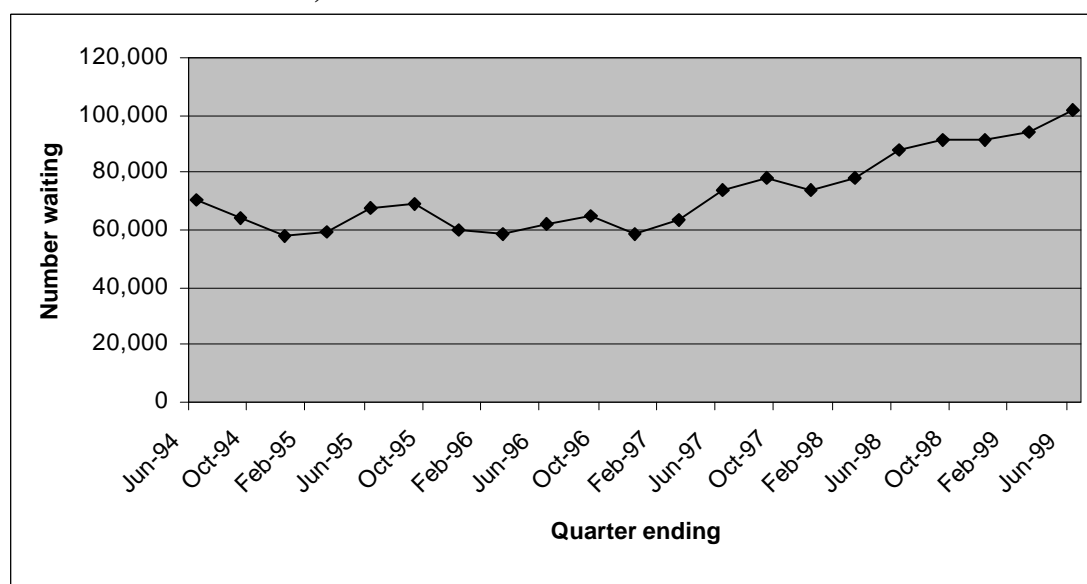
Source: CHA

Outpatients

Headline Totals

The numbers of patients waiting for admission as outpatients at the end of June 1999 stood at 101,573 representing an increase of 8,280 (+8.9%) over the quarter and an increase of 13,673 (15.6%) compared with the same quarter in the previous year. Outpatient waiting lists have been on a generally upward trend for more than two years (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Outpatients waiting for a first appointment (including cancellations and deferrals) June 1994 - June 1999



Source CH3

Outpatient completed waits

Waiting times for completed outpatient waits are shown in Table 5. A total of 77,691 outpatients attended their first appointment without having cancelled or missed a previous appointment during the June 1999 quarter.

Table 5 Completed outpatient waits for first appointment

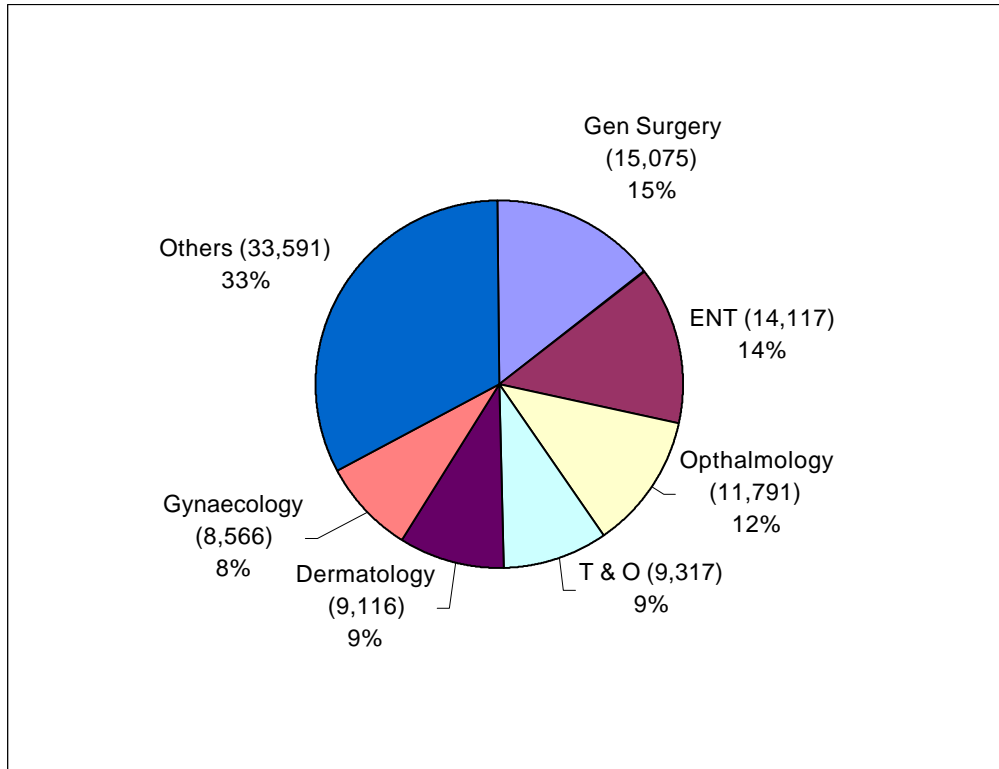
| Quarter | Time Waiting in Months (Percentage of total waits in each time band) | | | | | Total |
|---------|---|------|------|-------|-----|--------|
| | 0-2 | 3-8 | 9-14 | 15-23 | 24+ | |
| Jun-96 | 87.8 | 11.2 | 0.9 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 76,519 |
| Sep-96 | 85.0 | 14.1 | 0.7 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 70,183 |
| Dec-96 | 86.8 | 12.4 | 0.7 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 78,069 |
| Mar-97 | 87.1 | 11.6 | 1.1 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 74,296 |
| Jun-97 | 87.4 | 10.8 | 1.4 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 75,299 |
| Sep-97 | 82.7 | 15.5 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 72,137 |
| Dec-97 | 81.9 | 16.6 | 1.1 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 79,547 |
| Mar-98 | 82.8 | 15.7 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 78,694 |
| Jun-98 | 82.9 | 15.8 | 0.9 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 78,980 |
| Sep-98 | 78.8 | 19.9 | 1.1 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 73,141 |
| Dec-98 | 79.4 | 19.1 | 1.2 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 83,321 |
| Mar-99 | 79.9 | 18.3 | 1.4 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 83,143 |
| Jun-99 | 80.9 | 17.5 | 1.3 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 77,691 |

Source CH4

Outpatients Waiting by Specialty

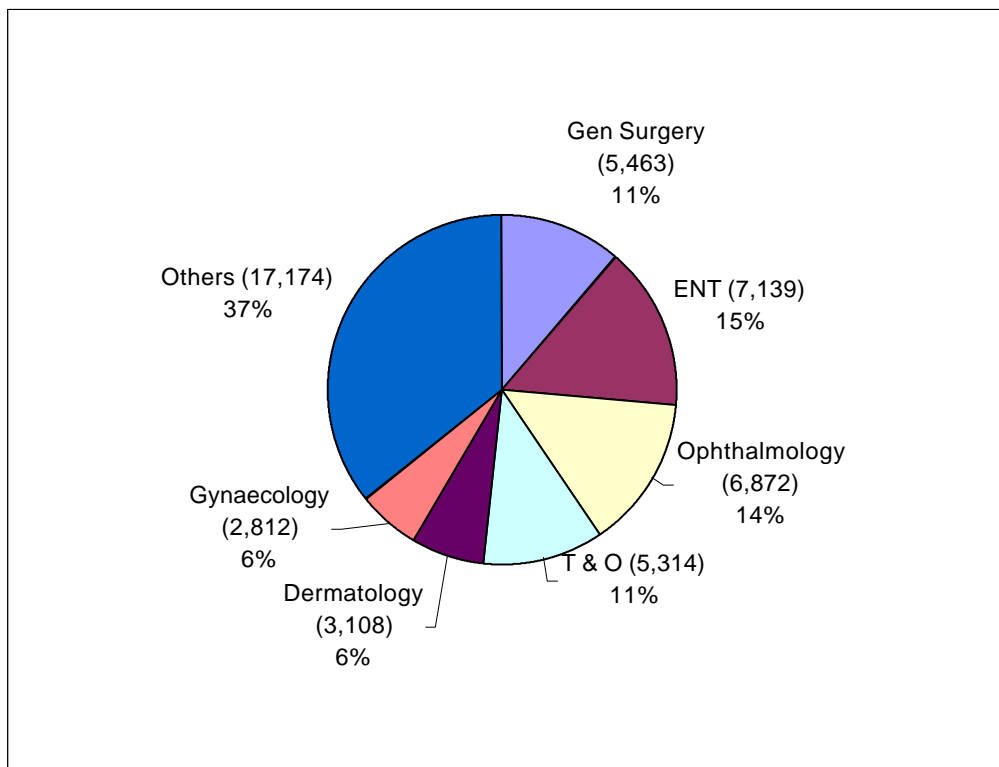
The overwhelming majority of those waiting (67%) were within six specialties; General Surgery, ENT, Ophthalmology, Trauma & Orthopaedic, Dermatology and Gynaecology (Figure 5a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure 5b.

Figure 5a Outpatients – Total waiters by specialty at the end of June 1999



Source: CH3

Figure 5b Outpatients – Excess waiters¹ by specialty at the end of June 1999



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

Source CH3

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, CH3, CH4 and CHA. The CH1, CH2, CH3 and CH4 returns collect information from Hospital Trusts on a quarterly 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 Table 3, the figures include private patients 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 this intention 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 should be 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;
 - Patients already in hospitals but included on other waiting lists;
 - Patients who are temporarily suspended from waiting lists.
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 are only available from June 1998 and exclude private patients and patients resident outside Northern Ireland. The source for the monthly waiting list figures is the monthly return CHA.
12. The source for outpatient waiting list data is the quarterly Charter monitoring Return the CH3.
13. Figures relating to the quarter ending September 1999 will be released Tuesday, 14 December 1999.
14. Some of the data may be provisional and may be subject to revision in subsequent months/quarters.

Additional Information

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

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

Internet address: <http://www.dhssni.gov.uk/hpss/statistics>