

Information Release

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

12th December 2000

Northern Ireland Waiting Lists – September 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 September 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 September 2000 stood at 50,184.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of September 2000 with the end of June 2000 (49,518), the total number waiting has increased by 666 (1.3%).

Over the year, comparing the end of September 2000 with the end of September 1999 (46,432), the total number waiting increased by 3,752 (8.1%).

Table 1: Quarterly Waiting Lists – September 2000

Waiting for:	Quarter ending September 2000	Change compared with end previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter – previous year
Ordinary admissions	25,823	+ 220	+ 1,642
Day case admissions	24,361	+ 446	+ 2,110
Total Waiting	50,184	+ 666	+ 3,752

Source: CH1



A National Statistics Publication

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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 50,184 people waiting for admission to hospital at the end of September 2000, 25,823 (51.5%) were waiting for ordinary admission and 24,361 (48.5%) were waiting for day case admission (Table 1).

Since the end of June 2000, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has increased by 220 (<+1%) and the number waiting for day case admission has increased by 446 (1.9%).

In comparison with September 1999, the number of cases waiting for ordinary admission has increased by 1,642 (6.8%) and the number waiting for day case admission has increased by 2,110 (9.5%).

Excess Waiters¹ – Table 2

The number of excess waiters at the end of September 2000 stood at 6,239 or 12.4% of the total waiting.

Over the quarter, comparing the end of September 2000 with the end of June 2000, the number of excess waiters increased by 230 (3.8%).

Over the year, comparing the end of September 2000 with the end of September 1999, the number of excess waiters increased by 1,265 (25.4%).

Table 2 Excess Waiters¹ – September 2000

Waiting for:	Quarter ending September 2000	Change compared with end previous quarter	Change compared with end same quarter – previous year
Ordinary admissions	4,508	+ 173	+ 946
Day case admissions	1,731	+ 57	+ 319
Total Waiting	6,239	+ 230	+ 1,265

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

Source: CHI

Peak Figures

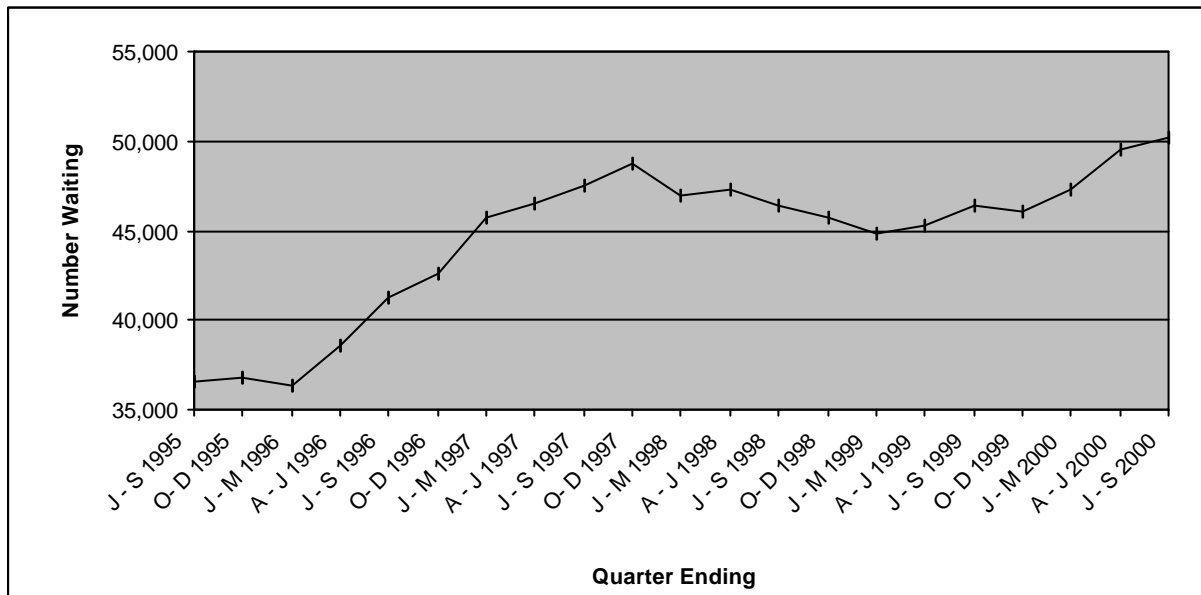
The end of September 2000 total of 50,184 on the inpatient waiting list has exceeded the previous peak waiting list figure 49,518 (end June 2000) by 666 (1.3%).

Although the number of excess waiters has continued to rise to 6,239 at the end of September 2000, it is still 356 (5.4%) below the peak of 6,595 recorded at the end of December 1997.

Trends

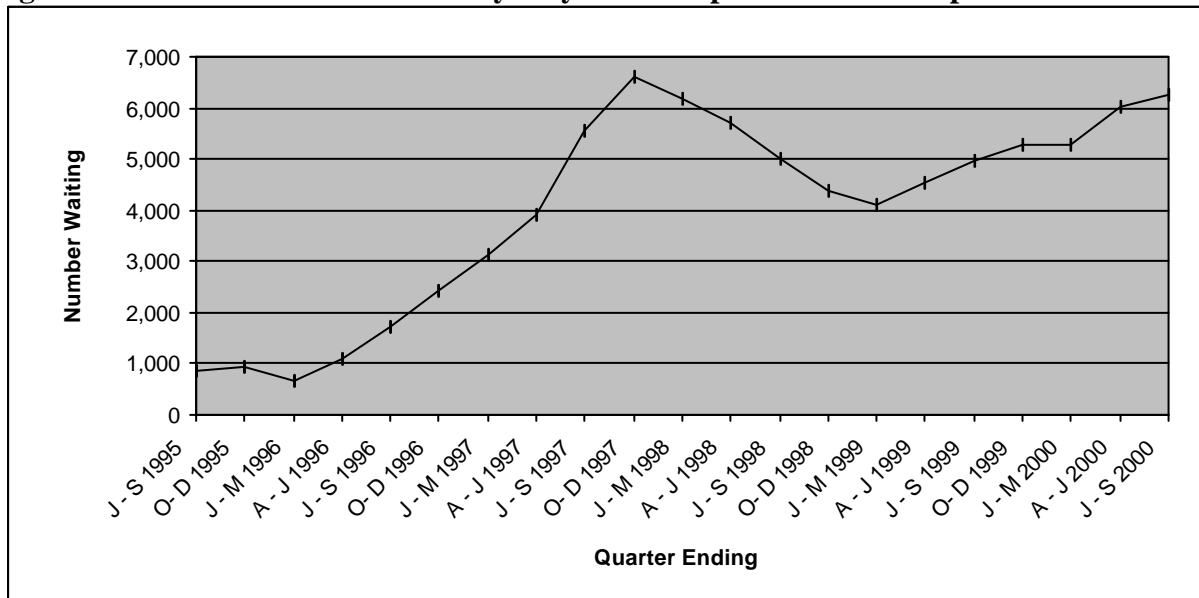
Over the past five years both the total numbers waiting and the numbers of excess waiters were on a generally upward trend until December 1997. Subsequently the total waiting went on a generally downward trend until June 1999. Since then the total waiting has risen to its current peak (Figure 1). Excess 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 September 1995 –September 2000



Source: CHI

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



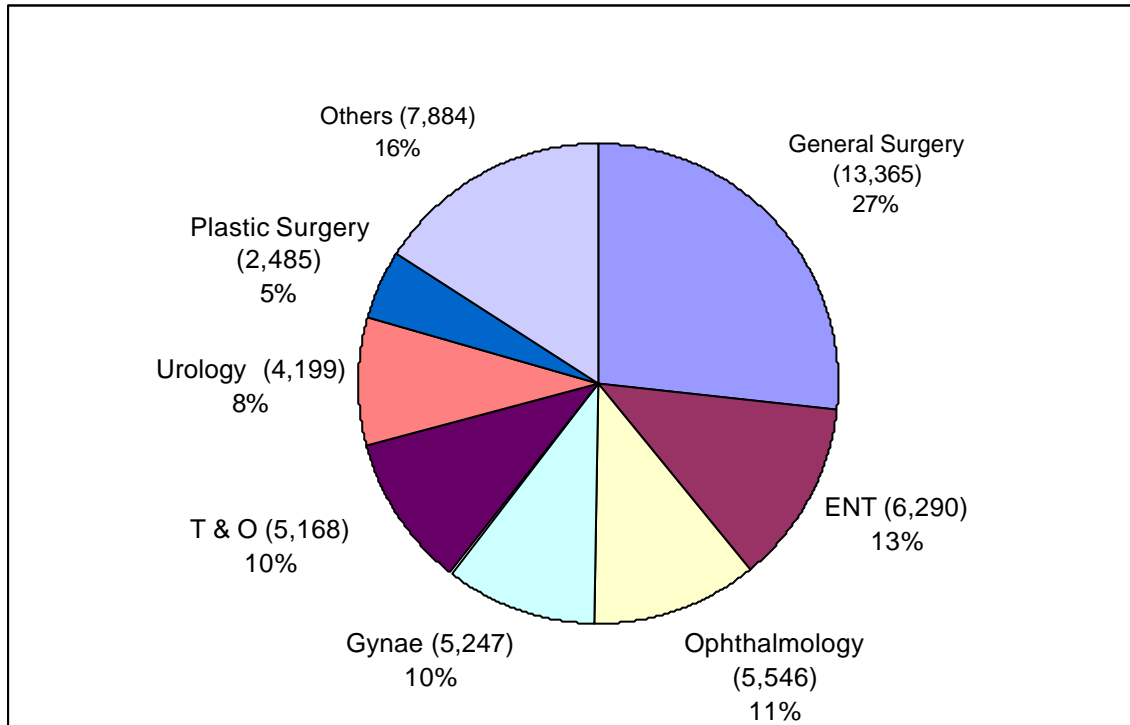
¹See Notes to Editors (paragraph 4) for definition of Excess waiters.

Source: CHI

Inpatients Waiting by Specialty

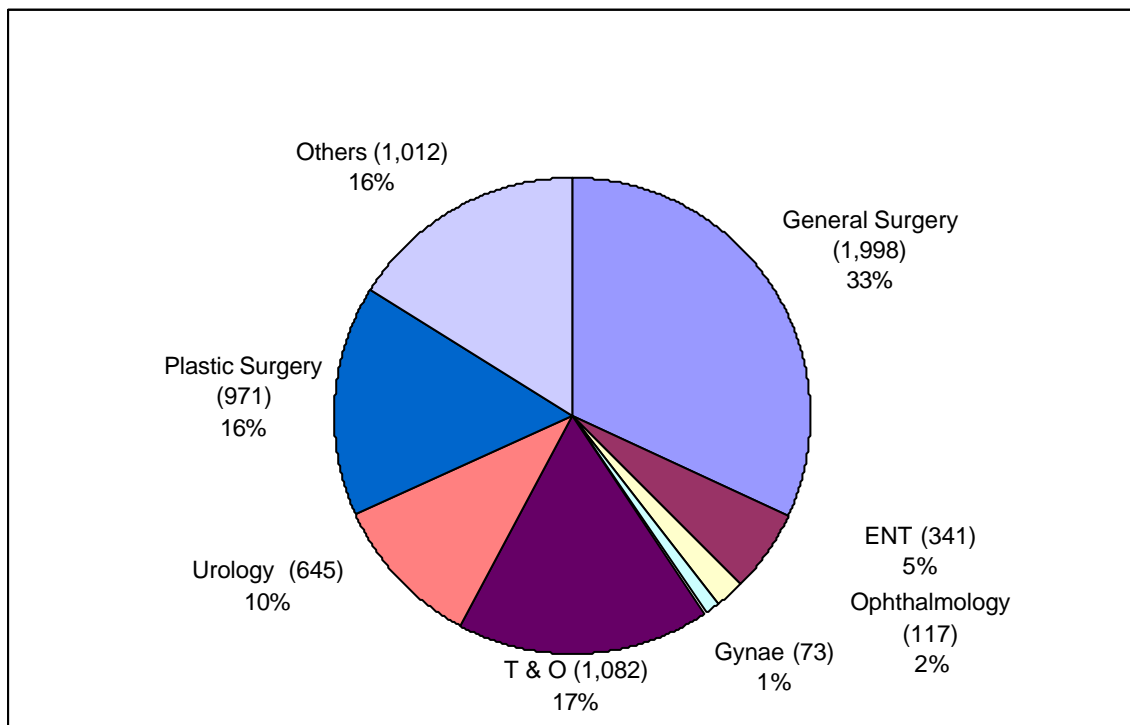
The overwhelming majority of those waiting (84%) were within seven specialties: General Surgery; ENT; Ophthalmology; Gynae; T&O; Urology and Plastic Surgery (Figure 3a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure 3b.

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



Source: CHI

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



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

Source: CHI

Inpatient Completed Waits

Waiting times for completed inpatient waits are shown in Table 3. A total of 33,322 inpatients were admitted to hospital (excluding those who had previously refused an offer of attendance) during the September 2000 quarter.

Table 3 Completed Inpatient Waits

Time Waiting in Months (Percentage of total waits in each time band)						
Quarter	0-2	3-11	12-17	18-23	24+	Total
J – S 1997	76.3%	19.3%	2.9%	1.0%	0.4%	32,245
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

Source: CH2 Part 1

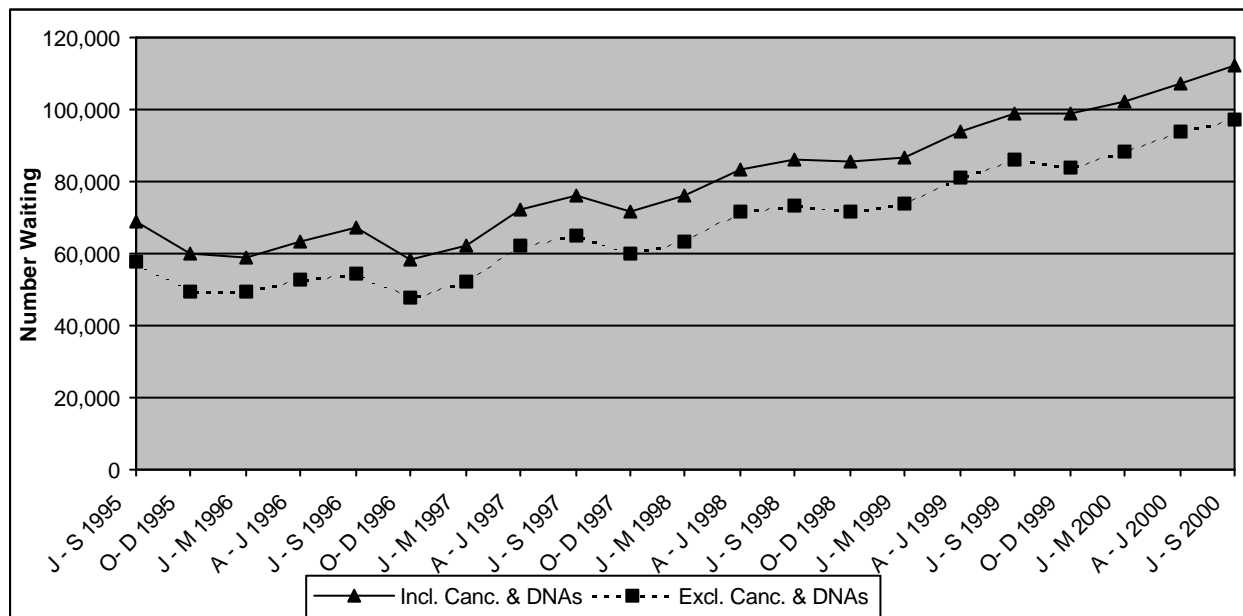
Outpatients

Headline Totals

The number of patients waiting for admission as outpatients (including cancellations and deferrals) at the end of September 2000 stood at 112,156 representing an increase of 4,832 (+4.5%) over the quarter and an increase of 13,444 (+13.6%) compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

Corresponding quarterly and annual changes (excluding cancellations and deferrals) were 3.2% and 12.9% respectively. Outpatient waiting lists have been on a generally upward trend for more almost four years (Figure 4).

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



Source: CH3 Parts 1&2.

Outpatient Completed Waits

Waiting times for completed outpatient waits are shown in Table 4. During the September 2000 quarter a total of 74,524 outpatients attended their first appointment without having cancelled or missed a previous appointment.

Table 4 Completed Outpatient Waits for First Appointment

Time Waiting in Months (Percentage of total waits in each time band)						
Quarter	0-2	3-11	12-17	18-23	24+	Total
J – S 1997	82.7%	16.3%	0.9%	0.1%	0.0%	72,137
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*	77.2%	21.7%	0.9%	0.1%	0.1%	83,981
A – J 2000*	78.9%	19.9%	0.9%	0.2%	0.2%	77,383
J – S 2000*	75.5%	23.1%	1.2%	0.2%	0.1%	74,524

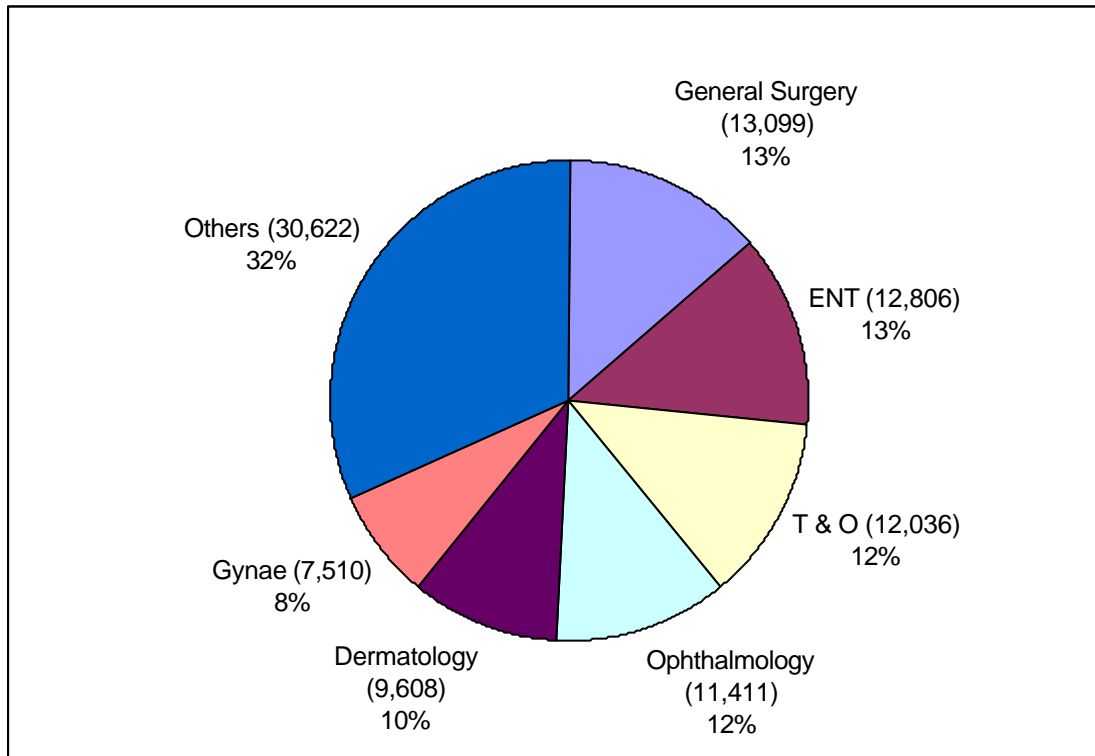
Source: CH4 Part 1

* Estimated figures – See note 14.

Outpatients Waiting by Specialty

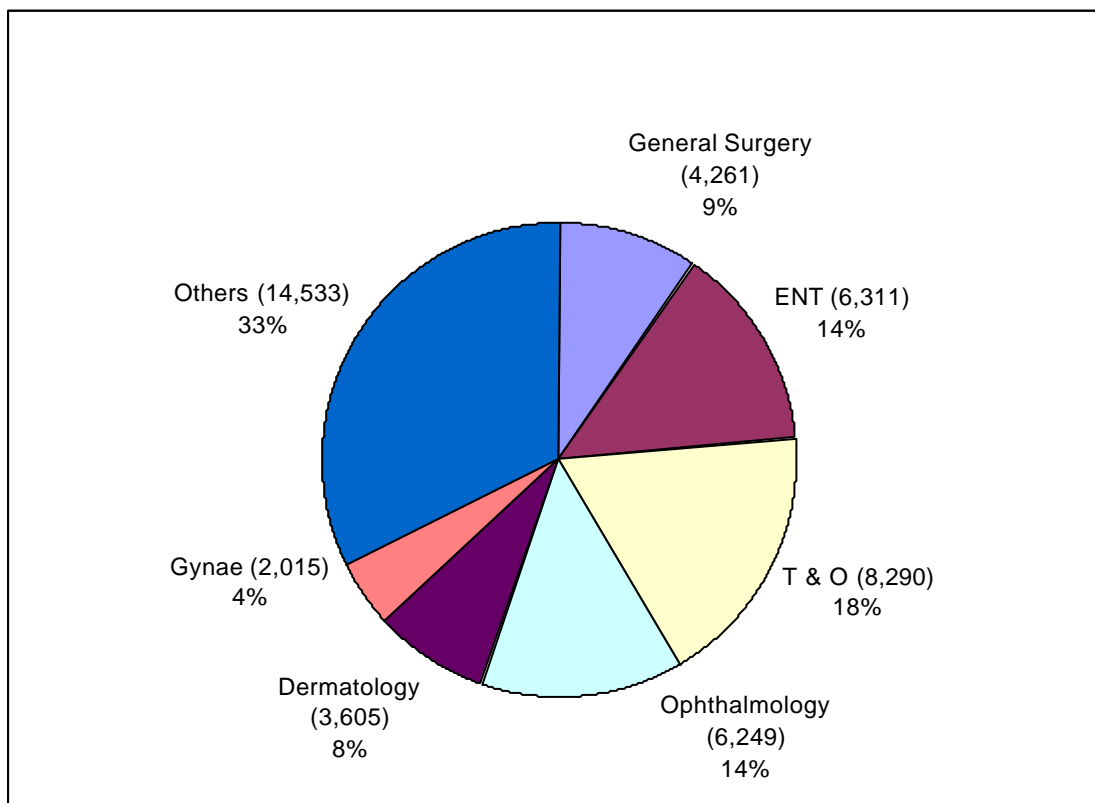
The overwhelming majority of those waiting (68%) were within six specialties: General Surgery; ENT; T&O; Ophthalmology; Dermatology and Gynae (Figure 5a). Corresponding figures for excess waiters are shown in Figure 5b. All figures include only those who are waiting for their first appointment without having cancelled or missed a previous appointment during the September 2000 quarter.

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



Source: CH3 Part 1.

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



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, 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;
 - Patients already in hospitals but included on other waiting lists;
 - Patients who are temporarily suspended from waiting lists.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. The source for outpatient waiting list data is the quarterly Charter Monitoring Return CH3.

12. Figures relating to the quarter ending December 2000 will be released Tuesday, 13th March 2001.
13. Some of the data may be provisional and may be subject to revision in subsequent quarters.
14. One Trust (Sperrin Lakeland) has been unable to produce CH4 data for quarters ending March, June and September 2000. Another Trust (the United Group of Hospital) has been unable to produce CH4 data for quarters ending June and September 2000. Estimates for these missing data have been included in the March, June and September 2000 data shown in table 4.
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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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Internet address: <http://www.dhssni.gov.uk/hpss/statistics>

