

16 October 2023

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Tēnā koe Aaron

Your request for Official information, reference: HNZ00025708

Thank you for your email on 17 July 2023, asking for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

“Understanding that triage 1 & 2 patients require immediate treatment and treatment within 10 minutes respectively (as per the Australasian Triage Scale), how many patients given triage 1 & 2 status at Christchurch and Dunedin hospital emergency departments were seen outside of the timeframe expected for their triage level over the past 6 months, and what was the longest time between presentation and treatment for patients at triage 1 and at triage 2 during this same time frame?”

Christchurch Hospital:

There were 375 triage 1 and 9691 triage 2 patients who presented to Christchurch Hospital emergency department in the last six months.

Data available from the Emergency Department At A Glance (EDAAG) system show of that number: 50 triage 1 and 3988 triage 2 patients were seen outside of the time frame requirements identified.

However, due to the acute nature of the response, particularly to triage 1 patients, timing data stamps are regularly not entered immediately as priority is given to attending to the patient rather than attending to this data entry requirement. Clinical teams report that triage one patients are always seen immediately on arrival and the failure noted above for this cohort is likely attributed to a data entry error rather than a matter of delay in provision of clinical care.

The longest time between presentation and treatment for patients of Triage 1 and Triage 2 over the past six months was:

- Triage 1 28 Minutes
- Triage 2 323 Minutes

The data entry issue noted above also affects this measure for the longest time between presentation and treatment for both triage categories. Our clinical staff advise it would be very unusual for a triage 2 patient to wait longer than 60 minutes for treatment.

Dunedin Hospital:

There were 358 triage category 1 patients seen in Dunedin Emergency Department in the period 01 February - 31 July 2023. Of these, 356 triage category 1 patients were recorded in the Emergency Department Information System (EDIS) as being seen outside the immediate timeframe. The longest delay in recording a category 1 patient in the EDIS system was 281 minutes.

It is very rare for triage 1 patients to not be seen as soon as they arrive in the department because the great majority of them are transported via ambulance or helicopter and the team are waiting for them on arrival. It is likely that the volume of patients recorded as waiting outside of the immediate timeframe is a direct result of what time the data is entered into EDIS, not an accurate reflection of any actual delays in being seen.

There were 4404 triage category 2 patients that were seen for the same period between 01 February – 31 July 2023. Of these, 3061 triage category 2 patients were seen outside the 10-minute timeframe. The longest time recorded from triage to seen by an ED Doctor was 2866 minutes. Further to the above data entry issue, we believe this also does not accurately represent the number of patients delayed to be seen.

Please note that this data is provisional and has not undergone full quality assurance.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at hnzOIA@health.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Te Whatu Ora may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Michael Cleary
Acting OIA Manager
Government Services