

PAEDIATRIC SURGERY SERVICES

CHAPTER 5

The aim of the Paediatric Surgical Service is to offer a comprehensive inpatient and outpatient consultation service and to perform all common operations, either general or subspecialty, within the SWSAHS hospitals, within the agreed status of each hospital. Children under the age of 12 are managed by paediatric surgeons at Liverpool, not by the general surgeons. Tertiary services such as neonatal surgery and complex, highly-specialised work such as cardiac, thoracic, neurosurgical, oncological, transplantation, acute burns etc will continue to be managed at one of the two specialist children's hospitals.

The statistics from NSW Health used for this discussion were selected so that children aged under 16 years who had a surgical operation were identified. However, it is recognised that this does not fully reflect the caseload of surgeons who care for children, as they see patients who do not progress to surgery. That relatively small number of cases is included in the paediatric numbers elsewhere and the statistics outlined here include all general and subspecialty surgical operations.

All six SWSAHS Hospitals care for children who had a surgical operation, with the main centres being Liverpool and Campbelltown. In 2002/03, SWSAHS was 49% self-sufficient for public sector paediatric surgical operations overall, providing a total of 2,039 separations and 3,447 beddays. Self-sufficiency varies for different 'subspecialties' based on a number of factors, including the mix of district level and tertiary level care required. For example, in operations for ENT, non-subspecialty surgery and orthopaedics, SWSAHS self-sufficiency for children aged less than 16 years was 55%, 56% and 64% respectively. This contrasts with other subspecialty groupings with 0-20% self-sufficiency, where the work is largely tertiary and must be done at a specialist children's hospital. Most resident outflows were to The Children's Hospital at Westmead (CHW) and Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick (SCH), which combined provided 42% of paediatric surgical operations for SWSAHS children. A component of this is non-subspecialty surgery, where CHW and SCH undertook 34% of operations for SWSAHS child residents in 2002/03. For the same period, the private sector provided 32% of paediatric surgical separations generated by SWS residents.

At a planned occupancy of 85% and assuming no change in flows, it is projected that paediatric surgical operations in SWSAHS Hospitals will increase by 2% to 2006 and then decrease by 4% to 2011 for separations. At the same time, beddays for paediatric surgical operations will decrease by 5% to 2006, and decline a further 12% by 2011.

Current Services

Bankstown Hospital

Paediatric surgical operations are performed by general surgeons or by subspecialty surgeons. In 2002/03, there were 273 paediatric surgical separations, including 45% day only, occupying 236 beddays at an average LOS of 1.76 days.

Fairfield Hospital

Paediatric surgical operations are performed by general surgeons or by subspecialty surgeons. In 2002/03, there were 110 paediatric surgical separations, including 59% day only, occupying 197 beddays at an average LOS of 1.79 days.

Liverpool Hospital

General surgical operations on children are performed by paediatric surgeons when the child is aged less than 12 years and by general or paediatric surgeons when the child is aged 12 years or more. There are two VMO paediatric surgeon positions at Liverpool and one paediatric surgeon provides consults to the hospital and Feto-maternal unit for two days per week. In 2002/03, there were 811 separations, including 46% day only, occupying 1,401 beddays at an average LOS of 1.73 days.

Campbelltown Hospital

There is one VMO paediatric surgeon position at Campbelltown Hospital. In 2002/03, there were 685 paediatric surgical operation separations, of which 60% were day only, occupying 1,083 beddays at an average LOS of 1.6 days.

Camden Hospital

General or subspecialty surgeons performed a small number of operations on children in 2002/03. A total of 25 day only separations.

Bowral Hospital

Paediatric surgical operations are performed by general surgeons or by subspecialty surgeons. In 2002/03, there were 135 paediatric surgical separations, including 36% day only, occupying 260 beddays at an average LOS of 1.9 days.

Non-inpatient

Children are seen in VMO rooms and in pre-admission clinics.

Research and Teaching

The surgical registrar and resident at Liverpool and Campbelltown are assigned from the adult rotation, to assist with lists and to undertake training in paediatric surgery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Campbelltown and Liverpool be the two centres for elective paediatric surgery in SWSAHS with more complex cases being cared for at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and The Children's Hospital at Westmead.
- An emergency paediatric surgical roster at Liverpool be commenced with surgeons cross-appointed to Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and The Children's Hospital at Westmead.
- Continue participation in both the Greater Western Child Health Network and the Greater Eastern and Southern Child Health Network.