

NEUROLOGY SERVICES

CHAPTER 23

Neurology is provided at all public hospitals in SWSAHS, with most services provided by Liverpool and Bankstown Hospitals, including neurology outpatient services. Stroke Units operate out of the Liverpool and Bankstown Hospitals, with smaller Units at the Campbelltown and Bowral Hospitals.

SWSAHS is 82% self-sufficient in neurology, with the private sector playing a limited role in meeting total demand for neurological services (5%). In 2002/03, SWSAHS delivered 3,234 episodes of care, accounting for a total of 19,234 beddays. The majority of outflows were to the Auburn, Westmead, Westmead Children's (people aged 16–19 years) and Concord Hospitals. The demand by SWS residents for neurology services is forecast to increase by 22.6% to 2006 and by a further 16.8% to 2011.

In 2006, at 85% occupancy and assuming no change in flow patterns, it is projected that there will be a need for approximately 70.7 neurology beds for adults.

Current Services

Inpatient Services

Inpatient services comprise neurology patients, stroke patients and a consultative service. Inpatients are mainly emergency admissions with a smaller number admitted via neurology consultants.

Bankstown Hospital

Bankstown hospital operates as a level 5 Neurology and Stroke service. Stroke patients are admitted to a combined stroke/rehabilitation ward, which has 20 beds including 4 with monitoring.

In 2002/03, there were 823 separations; average LOS was 6.2 days (7.3 days excluding day only). At 95% occupancy this is equivalent to 14.7 beds.

A neurophysiology department provides adult, paediatric and neonatal EEG services, nerve conduction and EMG, evoked potential and audiology services for inpatients and outpatients.

Fairfield Hospital

Neurology and stroke patients are admitted under general medicine at Fairfield hospital.

In 2002/03, there were 438 separations; average LOS was 5.3 days (6.8 days excluding day only). At 95% occupancy this is equivalent to 6.7 beds.

Liverpool

Liverpool Hospital Neurology operates as a level 6 neurology and stroke service with 1 senior lecturer in medicine, 3 staff specialist neurologists and 2 VMOs. A further staff specialist appointment and a registrar would enable the service to respond to increasing referrals and improved weekend cover. There are 12 neurology beds and 8 stroke beds including 4 monitored stroke beds in the stroke unit. There is 1 advanced trainee in neurology at Liverpool.

In 2002/03, there were 990 separations; average LOS was 8.4 days (8.9 days excluding day only). At 95% occupancy this is equivalent to 24.1 beds.

The neurophysiology department provides EEG, sleep EEG, prolonged video telemetry EEG, as well as neonatal and paediatric EEG services. Comprehensive nerve conduction and EMG studies for diagnosis of peripheral nerve and muscle diseases are provided. Evoked potential tests for the diagnosis of multiple sclerosis and other CNS disorders are performed. Training programs for technicians are established.

Audiology and vestibular testing, including neonatal and paediatric services are provided by a staff specialist and 2 audiologists.

Liverpool has developed a supra-Area role in the provision of services for people with multiple sclerosis. The service provides a CNC in neuro immunology for support and education of patients with multiple sclerosis and other immune mediated neurological conditions. A large majority of activity for multiple sclerosis services is provided on an outpatient basis.

Liverpool Hospital has the only public MRI service for SWSAHS residents. The diagnosis and assessment of neurological conditions is greatly enhanced by local access to MRI technology. A second MRI would enhance the service capability.

Campbelltown Hospital

Neurology and stroke patients are admitted under general medicine at Campbelltown hospital. A Stroke unit is located at Campbelltown.

In 2002/03, there were 543 separations; average LOS was 4.4 days (5.2 days excluding day only). At 95% occupancy this is equivalent to 6.9 beds.

Camden Hospital

In 2002/03, there were 271 separations; average LOS was 3.3 days (5.1 days excluding day only). At 95% occupancy this is equivalent to 2.5 beds.

Bowral Hospital

Neurology and stroke patients are admitted under general medicine at Bowral hospital. A Stroke unit is located at Bowral.

In 2002/03, there were 169 separations; average LOS was 1.2 days (1.7 days excluding day only). At 95% occupancy this is equivalent to 0.6 beds.

Outpatient Services

Outpatient services comprise a consultative service for patients referred with neurological conditions; EEG for diagnosis of epilepsy, Audiology/Vestibular tests for diagnosis of hearing and balance problems. Outpatient services are provided at Liverpool with some service also at Bankstown.

There are no outpatient services at Fairfield, Campbelltown or Bowral hospitals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- An Area-wide Department of Neurology be established with the three centres located at Bankstown, Liverpool and Campbelltown enhanced to provide neurological and stroke services.

- Specialised areas of expertise be developed at each hospital:

Bankstown

- Management of stroke;
- Neurology of ageing and dementia in association with aged care; and
- Rehabilitation.

Liverpool

- Tertiary investigations and treatment modalities (MRI, PET, interventional neuroradiology);
- Management of stroke;
- Neuro-otology;
- Neuro-ophthalmology;
- Neuromuscular disorders; and
- Multiple sclerosis and neuro-immunological disease.

Campbelltown/Camden

- Management of stroke; and
- Rehabilitation.

- Additional registrar positions be appointed to enable a registrar roster for weekend cover and ambulatory/outpatient neurophysiology services' cover.