

The Insights Series

Aboriginal people's experiences of hospital care

2019 to 2024



About this report

This report provides insights into Aboriginal people's experiences in NSW public hospitals between 2019 and 2024 in areas critical to the delivery of high quality care. It follows on from the 2021 *Insights Series* report Aboriginal people's experiences of hospital care, which covered the time period 2014 to 2019.

More than 12,000 Aboriginal people who were admitted to NSW public hospitals between 2019 and 2024 shared their experiences of hospital care through the Adult Admitted Patient Survey. Patients provided feedback on key areas like information provision, effective communication and involvement in decision-making, as well as respect, kindness, safety and comfort. In 2024, 40% of Aboriginal survey respondents were admitted to rural hospitals and 60% were admitted to urban hospitals.

Alongside safety and clinical effectiveness, patient experience is an important indicator of healthcare quality, and there is growing evidence of the link between patient-reported measures and outcomes of care. Hearing from Aboriginal people about their experiences of care is, therefore, fundamental to efforts to tailor care to their needs and help improve health outcomes.

The report examines how Aboriginal patients' experiences in NSW public hospitals have changed over time. It also includes results of analyses

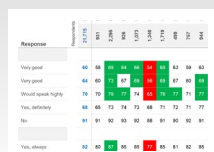
comparing Aboriginal patients' experiences in urban and larger rural hospitals, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal patients' experiences, factors ('drivers') contributing to positive overall hospital experiences for Aboriginal people; and the positive impact of Aboriginal health workers.

The measures in this report include those identified as of particular relevance to Aboriginal patients based on input from Aboriginal people and key NSW health system stakeholders, along with BHI analyses of survey results. Measures have also been selected where there was significant change over time and differences in results between patient groups. BHI has engaged closely with the NSW Ministry of Health's Centre for Aboriginal Health in developing the report.

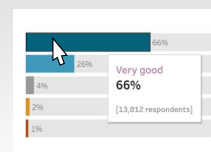
Detailed results for a wider range of measures are provided in the [supplementary data tables](#).

This report covers a period when COVID-19 continued to present challenges to health services to varying degrees. This may have affected patients' experiences of care, including in relation to visitor restrictions and additional preventative measures to ensure the safety of staff and patients.

Throughout the report, results are identified as significantly different between groups, or as having significantly improved or declined over time, based on statistical testing that accounted for differences in age, gender, language mainly spoken at home and education.



Detailed results for Aboriginal people, including trends over time and other comparisons, are available in the [supplementary data tables](#).



Results for Aboriginal patients can be explored on the [BHI Data Portal](#).

Key insights

In 2024, more than eight in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (86%) said, overall, the care they received in hospital was either 'very good' or 'good'.

Aboriginal patients continued to report significantly less positive experiences than non-Aboriginal patients for most survey questions, with some of the largest differences seen in measures relating to kind and compassionate care, provision of information, and timely and coordinated care.

For most survey questions, Aboriginal patients' ratings of care declined or were stable between 2019 and 2024.

More than one-quarter of Aboriginal patients (28%) said that in the past 12 months, there was a time when they needed to go to hospital but didn't, a result that has improved from 36% in 2022.

In 2024, 6% of patients said they felt unfairly treated during their hospital stay because they were an Aboriginal person, an improvement from 10% in 2022.

Aboriginal patients admitted to rural hospitals reported more positive experiences than Aboriginal patients admitted to urban hospitals for many measures, particularly in the areas of overall satisfaction and outcomes, timely and coordinated care, and discharge planning.

Aboriginal patients admitted to hospital between 2022 and 2024 were more likely to rate their overall care as 'very good' if they said their care was 'very well organised', health professionals were 'always' kind and caring, and health professionals worked well together as a team.

Aboriginal patients' hospital care experiences were significantly more positive when they had the support of an Aboriginal health worker, including in areas where the differences in experience between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal patients were largest.

Setting the scene

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the first peoples of Australia. Their enduring connection to Country, diverse histories, rich cultures and strong sense of community continue to shape and strengthen contemporary NSW.

In 2021, the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) estimated there were 339,710 Aboriginal people living in NSW – 4.2% of the NSW population and 35% of Australia's total Aboriginal population. Around 48% were living in major cities and 52% in regional or remote areas.

Although there have been some important improvements in recent times, Aboriginal people do not always experience the same health outcomes as non-Aboriginal people and may face distinct challenges when accessing and navigating the healthcare system.^{1,2} These challenges include interpersonal and institutional racism; a lack of culturally safe care; socioeconomic disadvantage; lower health literacy; and the historical and ongoing effects of colonisation and intergenerational trauma.²

Aboriginal people are more likely to be hospitalised than non-Aboriginal people. In 2023–24, the rate of hospitalisation for all causes per 100,000 people was almost double for Aboriginal people compared with non-Aboriginal people in NSW.¹

Measuring and monitoring the self-reported experiences of hospital care for Aboriginal patients provides unique information about how well the NSW public health system is performing. It provides transparency for the community, as well as information to help policy-makers and health-system managers target improvement efforts.

Acknowledgement of Country

BHI acknowledges Aboriginal people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters of NSW and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

In this report, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are referred to as Aboriginal people in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of NSW.

Policy context

The patient experience measures in this report cover themes including overall satisfaction and outcomes; accessing care; compassion, respect and kindness; involvement in decision-making; effective communication; timely and coordinated care; and discharge planning.

Each of these themes aligns with high priority areas of healthcare delivery set out in the following NSW Health policy documents:

The [NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2024–2034](#) aims to drive change to achieve the highest possible levels of health and wellbeing for Aboriginal people in NSW.

The [NSW Aboriginal Health Governance, Shared Decision Making and Accountability Framework](#) outlines the ‘gold standard’ for Aboriginal governance, shared decision making and accountability within NSW Health.

[Future Health: Guiding the next decade of care in NSW 2022–2032](#) is NSW Health’s roadmap for how services are delivered, positioning the health system to meet the needs of patients, the community and workforce over the coming years.

[Elevating the Human Experience – Our guide to action for patient, family, carer and caregiver experiences](#) outlines what the NSW health system can do together, in partnership with patients, carers and staff, to consistently create positive, personalised experiences.

The [NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022–2032](#) is a roadmap for the future provision of health services to regional, rural and remote communities.

The Aboriginal Patient Experience Survey Program

BHI and the NSW Ministry of Health’s Centre for Aboriginal Health are working together to collect information about Aboriginal patients’ experiences of care with NSW healthcare services as part of the Aboriginal Patient Experience Survey Program. This program aims to deliver detailed, system-wide information about Aboriginal patients’ experiences and outcomes of hospital care in NSW.

Between 2019 and 2024, more than 12,000 Aboriginal people provided feedback on their experiences of hospital care via the NSW Patient Survey Program’s Adult Admitted Patient Survey.

From 2022, a modified version of the statewide Adult Admitted Patient Survey has been sent to eligible Aboriginal patients discharged from NSW public hospitals. The survey includes core survey questions, as well as additional questions identified as of high relevance to Aboriginal patients, the Aboriginal community and other relevant stakeholders. These additional questions are a subset of the Aboriginal Patient Experience Question Set developed in collaboration with Aboriginal people, the Centre for Aboriginal Health, the Aboriginal Patient Experience Survey Program Advisory Committee and other key stakeholders from across the NSW health system.

It is important that Aboriginal people play a key role not only in determining what information is collected in surveys of Aboriginal patients, but also in how the data are analysed, used, interpreted and contextualised. To produce this report, BHI worked with the Centre for Aboriginal Health, which provided advice and feedback. The data collection and analysis that inform this report have been approved under an ethics application through the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council.

Experiences of care in hospital

Overall satisfaction and outcomes

In 2024, more than eight in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (86%) said, overall, the care they received in hospital was either 'very good' or 'good'.

The percentage of Aboriginal patients who said their overall care was 'very good' decreased between 2021 and 2022, and has been relatively stable since.

Aboriginal patients gave significantly less positive ratings of their overall care than non-Aboriginal patients.

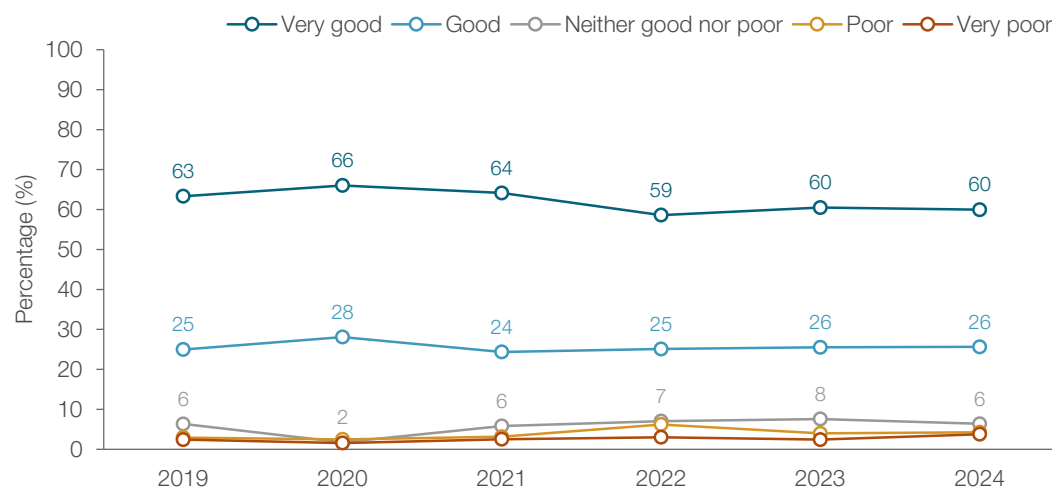
For more measures, [see page 21](#).

In 2024, Aboriginal patients admitted to rural hospitals were significantly more likely to rate their overall care as 'very good' than Aboriginal patients admitted to urban hospitals.

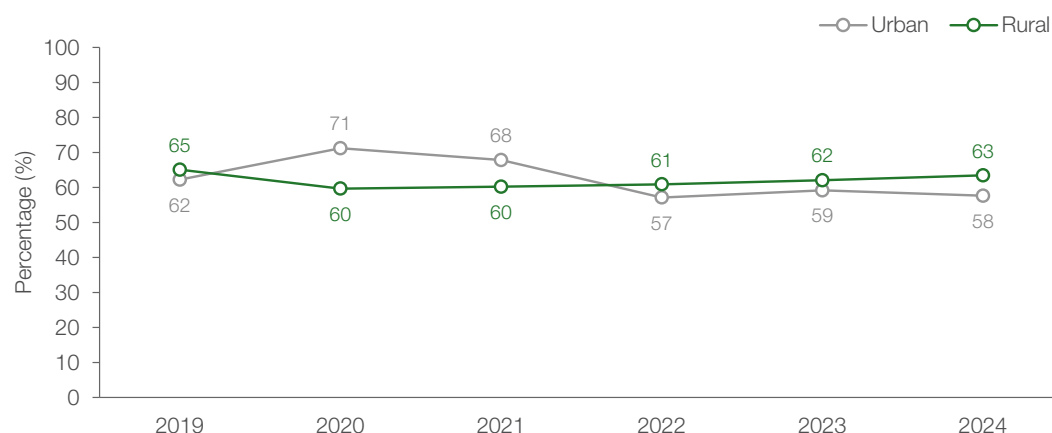
The percentage of Aboriginal patients admitted to rural hospitals who rated their overall care as 'very good' has increased slightly since 2021.

See the [supplementary data tables](#) to this report for additional comparisons of Aboriginal patients' experiences in urban and rural hospitals.

Overall, how would you rate the care you received while in hospital?, Aboriginal patients, all response options, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Percentage of Aboriginal patients who rated their overall care as 'very good', by rurality of hospital, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Overall satisfaction and outcomes

In 2024, almost seven in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (68%) said the care and treatment they received in hospital 'definitely' helped them.

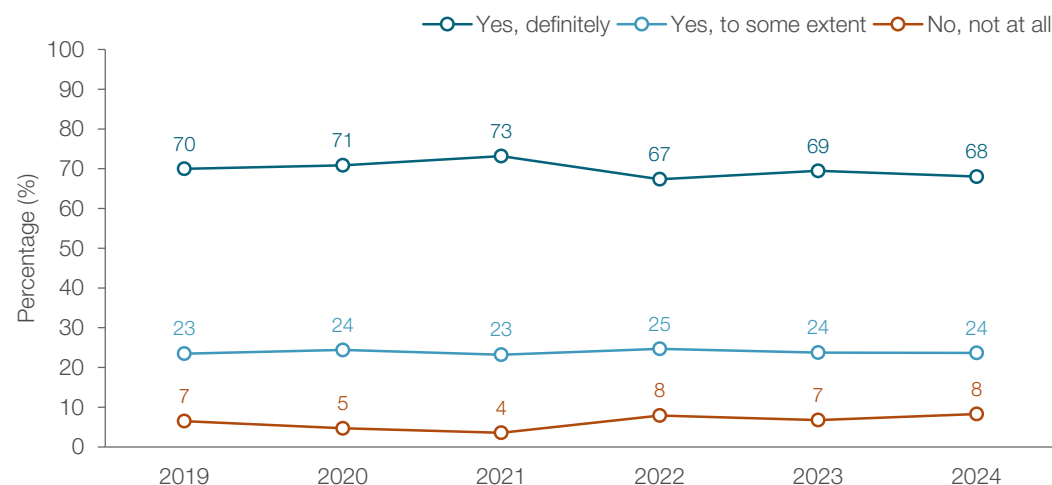
The percentage of Aboriginal patients who said their hospital care and treatment did not help them doubled between 2021 and 2024 (from 4% to 8%).

Aboriginal patients supported by an Aboriginal health worker gave significantly more positive ratings for this measure. For more measures, [see page 24](#).

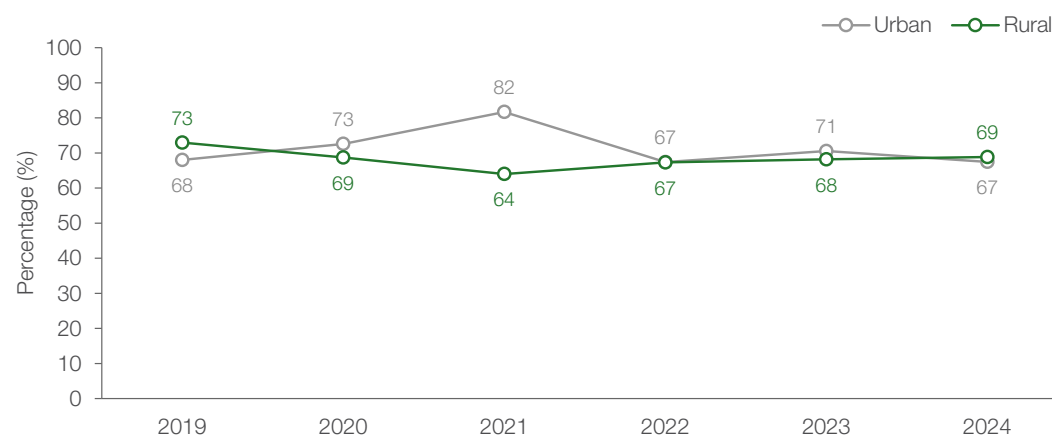
This measure is associated with the [risk of readmission to hospital](#).

Since 2022, a similar percentage of Aboriginal patients in rural and urban hospitals have said the care they received in hospital 'definitely' helped them.

Did the care and treatment received in hospital help you?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Percentage of Aboriginal patients who said the care and treatment they received in hospital 'definitely' helped them, by rurality of hospital, NSW, 2019 to 2024

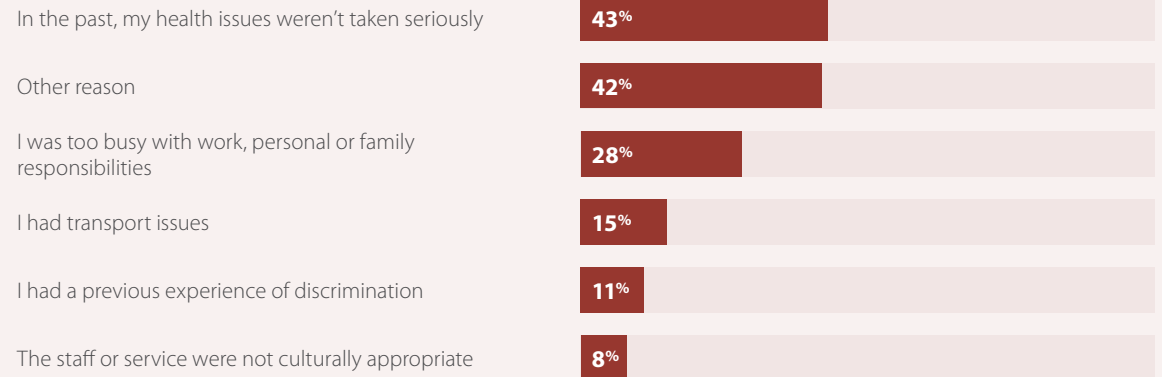


Accessing care

In 2024, more than one-quarter of adult admitted Aboriginal patients (28%) said that in the past 12 months, there was a time when they needed to go to hospital but didn't. This result improved from 36% in 2022.

Aboriginal people may face distinct challenges when accessing healthcare.^{2,3}

Aboriginal patients said the reason they didn't go to hospital was...*

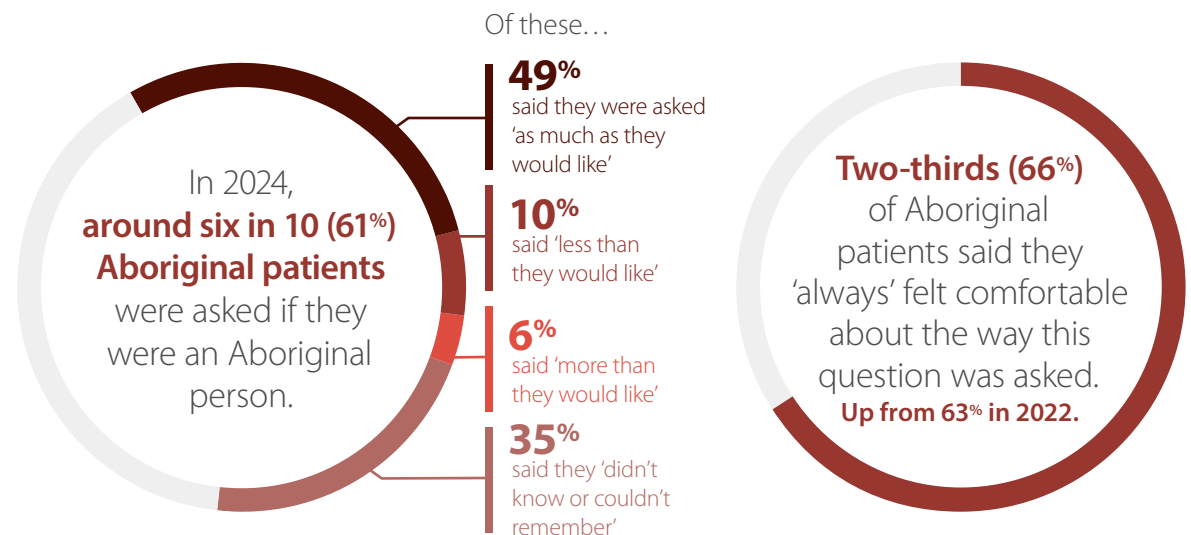


*Based on the responses of 570 Aboriginal patients who were admitted to a NSW public hospital between January and December 2024 who said there was a time in the past 12 months that they needed to go to hospital but didn't. Note: Respondents were able to select multiple response options.

Compassion, respect and kindness

“What could improve is just a little more recognition of being Aboriginal.”

“I was never asked if I was an Aboriginal person, or if I had any needs or requests in relation to this, despite the hospital's records no doubt showing this.”



Compassion, respect and kindness

In 2024, more than seven in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (74%) said health professionals were 'always' kind and caring.

Aboriginal patients supported by an Aboriginal health worker gave significantly more positive ratings for this measure.

For more measures, [see page 24](#).

This measure is a driver of positive overall experiences of care.

For more information, [see page 21](#).

Percentage of Aboriginal patients in NSW, all response options, January to December 2024

Were the health professionals kind and caring?



▼ Down from 78% in 2023

Percentage of Aboriginal patients in NSW, all response options, January to December 2024

Did the health professionals listen carefully to your views and concerns?



▲ Up from 61% in 2023

“The best part was the respect, kindness and professionalism shown by staff. Everyone was helpful and attentive, creating a supportive and compassionate environment throughout my stay.”

Compassion, respect and kindness

In 2024, almost eight in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (79%) said they were 'always' treated with respect and dignity.

Being treated with respect is a key element of culturally safe healthcare services for Aboriginal people.³

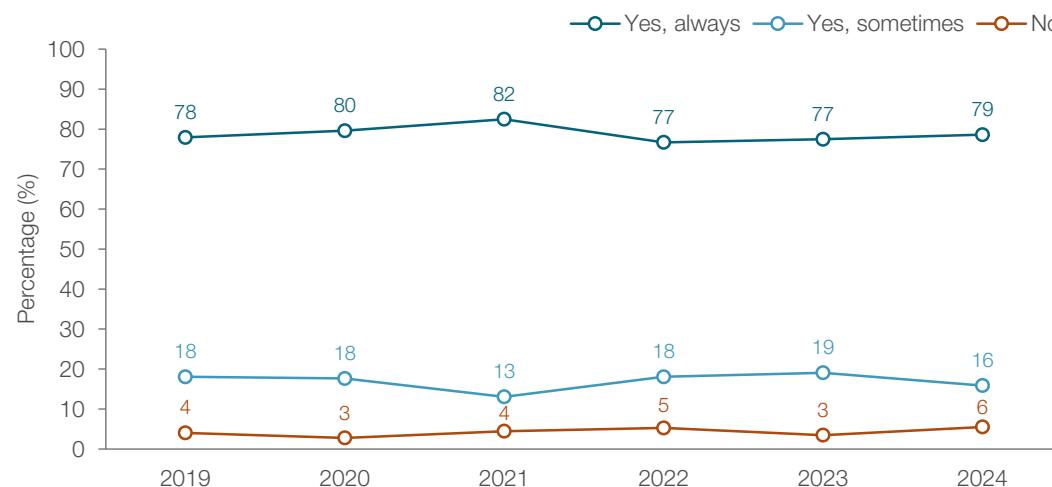
Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

“The staff were very professional and treated me with the utmost respect and care. I knew what was happening from the moment I entered the hospital until I left.”

In 2024, 6% of Aboriginal patients said they felt unfairly treated during their hospital stay because they were an Aboriginal person. This result improved from 8% in 2023 and from 10% in 2022.

The NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2024–2034 recognises the elimination of racism in all aspects of healthcare is necessary to achieve the highest possible levels of health and wellbeing for Aboriginal people.

Were you treated with respect and dignity?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



When Aboriginal patients were asked what happened to make them feel they were treated unfairly...*

The staff were less respectful with me than other patients (e.g. the way they spoke to me, the way they looked at me)

48%

The staff kept me waiting longer than other patients

45%

Other reason

37%

The staff didn't spend as much time with me compared with other patients

33%

I don't think my cultural needs were recognised

31%

Heard the staff say something bad about me or Aboriginal people

18%

*Based on the responses of 383 Aboriginal patients who were admitted to a NSW public hospital between 2022 and 2024 who said they felt unfairly treated during their stay because they were an Aboriginal person. Note: Respondents were able to select multiple response options.

Compassion, respect and kindness

In 2024, almost eight in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (77%) said their cultural or religious beliefs were 'always' respected by hospital staff.

This result declined significantly from 83% in 2019, and from 86% in 2014 (see 2021 report) – one of the largest declines across the survey.

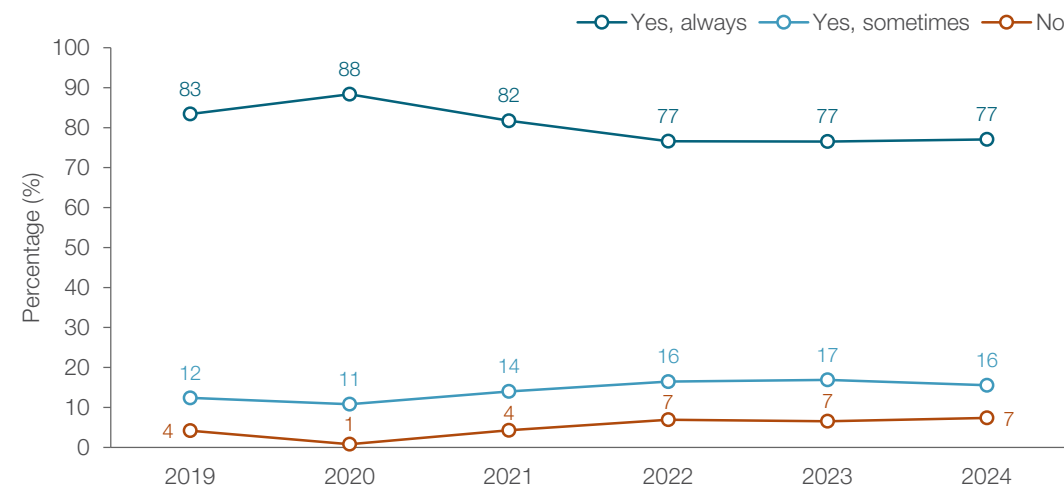
This result showed the largest difference in experience between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal patients.
For more measures, see page 21.

Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

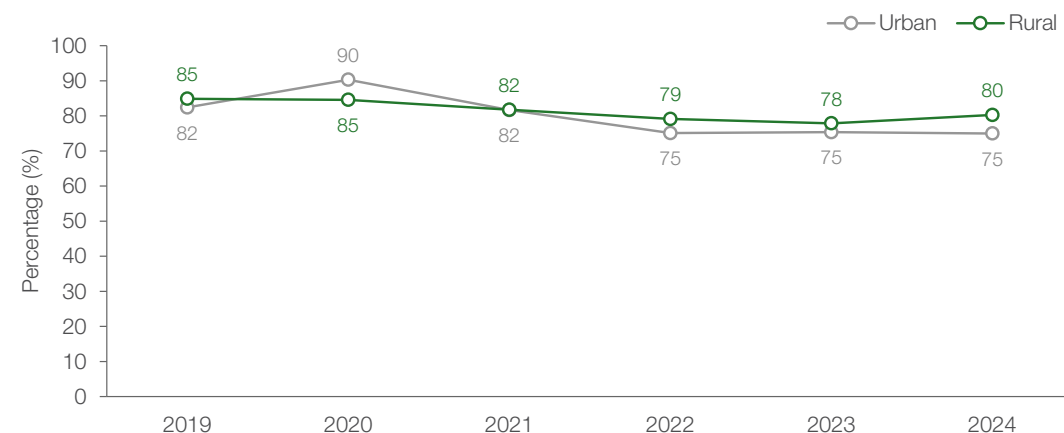
Between 2019 and 2024, the percentage of Aboriginal patients who said their cultural and religious beliefs were 'always' respected by hospital staff declined in both rural and urban hospitals.

“What could improve is cultural education for staff so that Aboriginal people are not discriminated against and stereotyped.”

Were your cultural or religious beliefs respected by the hospital staff?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Percentage of Aboriginal patients who said their cultural or religious beliefs were 'always' respected by the hospital staff, by rurality of hospital, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Experiences of family in hospital

In 2024, more than seven in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (74%) had family visit them in hospital.

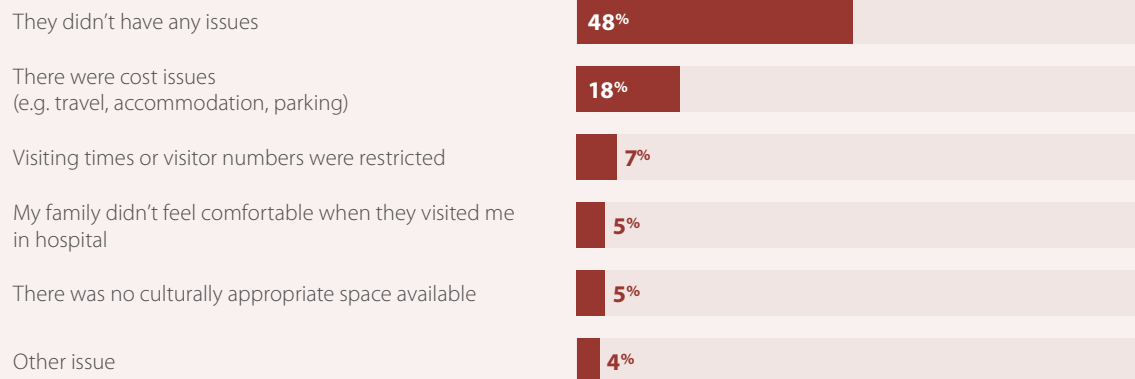
Connection to Country, family, kinship and community is a cultural determinant of health for Aboriginal people and is also a key element of culturally safe health services.²

In 2024, less than half of Aboriginal patients (46%) said if their family wanted or needed to talk to the health professionals they got the opportunity to do so.

This result declined from 49% in 2023 but improved from 42% in 2022 (data not shown).

“More information should be given to family. My family was not informed by staff when I came out of theatre.”

When asked about the issues their family experienced, Aboriginal patients said:*



*Based on the responses of 1,996 Aboriginal patients who were admitted to a NSW public hospital between January and December 2024 who said they had family who visited them. Note: Respondents were able to select multiple response options.

Percentage of Aboriginal patients in NSW, all response options, January to December 2024

If your family wanted or needed to talk to the health professionals, did they get the opportunity to do so?



▼ Down from 49% in 2023

Based on the responses of 1,602 patients (66%) whose family wanted or needed to talk to the health professionals.

Involvement in decision-making

In 2024, six in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (60%) said they were 'definitely' involved, as much as they wanted to be, in decisions about their care and treatment.

Partnering with patients to make decisions about their own care is a key objective of [Future Health](#). Ensuring Aboriginal patients are listened to and enabled to make informed decisions, including about their care and treatment, is a key priority of the [NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2024–2034](#) and [NSW Aboriginal Health Governance, Shared Decision Making and Accountability Framework](#).

Percentage of Aboriginal patients in NSW, all response options, January to December 2024

Were you involved, as much as you wanted to be, in decisions about your care and treatment?



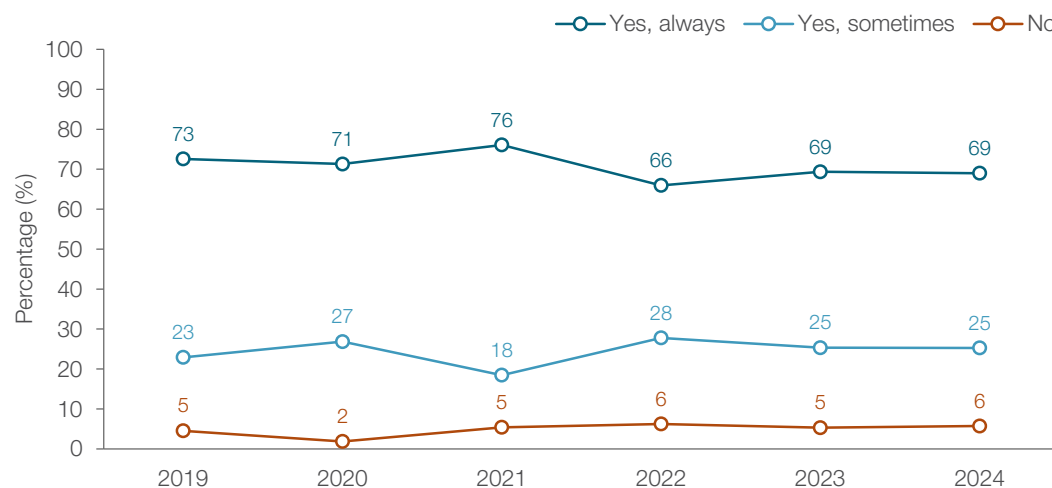
Effective communication

In 2024, almost seven in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (69%) said health professionals 'always' explained things in a way they could understand.

Across the survey, some of the largest differences in the experiences of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal patients were seen in measures relating to clear information and effective communication. For more measures, [see page 21](#).

This measure is associated with the [risk of readmission to hospital](#).

Did the health professionals explain things in a way you could understand?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Clear information

In 2024, more than seven in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (74%) said they were given 'the right amount' of information about their condition or treatment during their hospital stay.

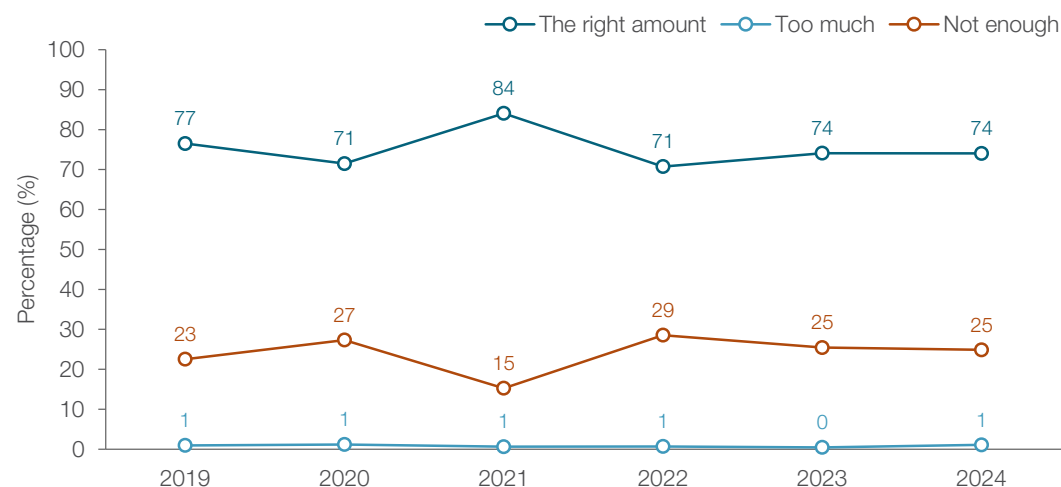
This result declined significantly from 77% in 2019.

“The doctors and nurses were very caring and explained things clearly to alleviate any fears I had.”

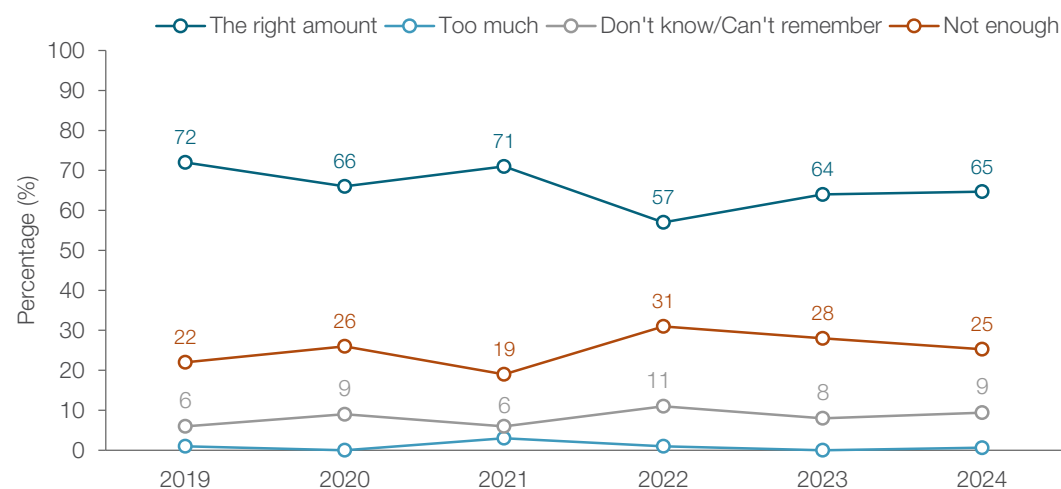
In 2024, more than six in 10 Aboriginal patients (65%) said 'the right amount' of information about their condition or treatment was given to their family, carer or someone close to them.

This result declined significantly from 72% in 2019.

During your stay in hospital, how much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



How much information about your condition or treatment was given to your family, carer or someone close to you?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Timely and coordinated care

In 2024, almost six in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (58%) said the care they received in hospital was 'very well organised'.

This result declined significantly from 61% in 2019, and from 63% in 2014 (see 2021 report).

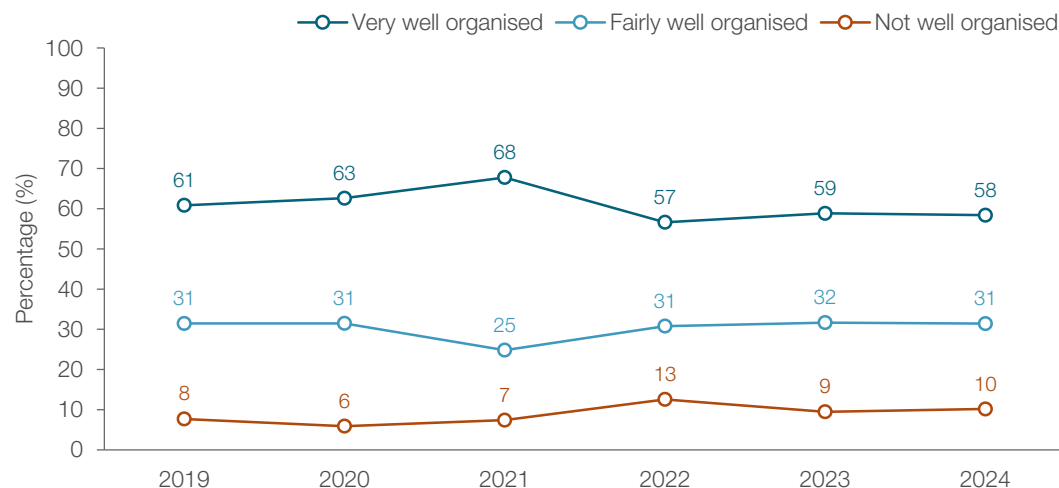
This measure is a driver of positive overall experiences of care. For more information, see page 21.

Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

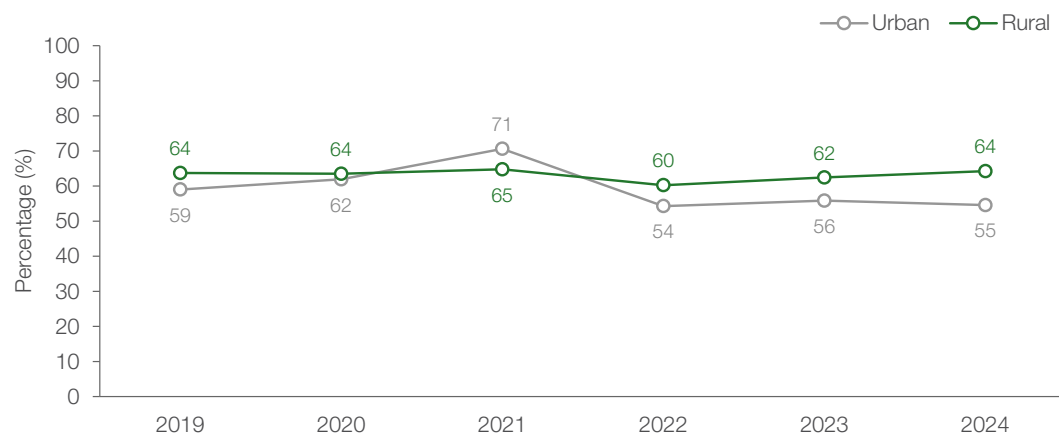
In 2024, Aboriginal patients admitted to urban hospitals were significantly less likely to say their care was 'very well organised' than Aboriginal patients admitted to rural hospitals.

The percentage of Aboriginal patients admitted to urban hospitals who said their care was 'very well organised' has decreased since 2021.

How well organised was the care you received in hospital?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Percentage of Aboriginal patients who said the care they received in hospital was 'very well organised', by rurality of hospital, NSW, 2019 to 2024



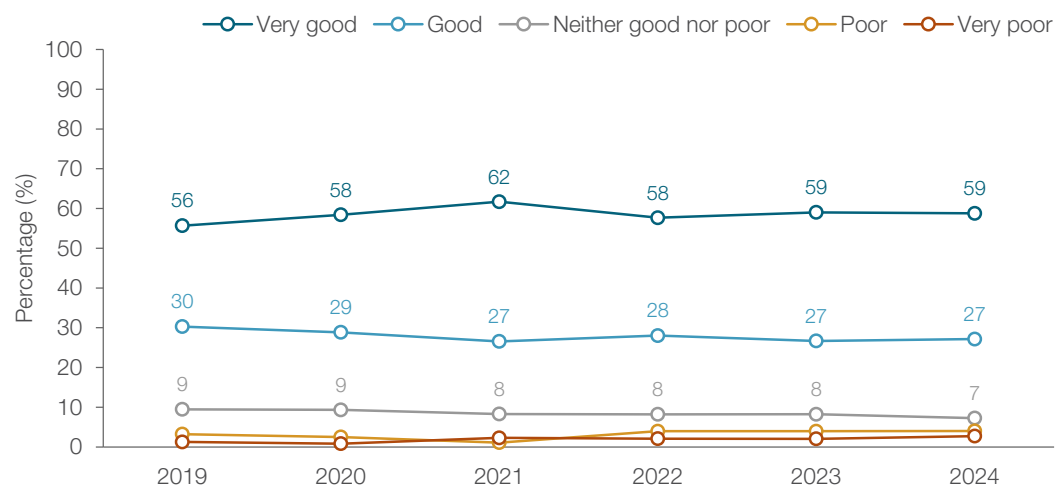
Timely and coordinated care

In 2024, almost six in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (59%) rated the way health professionals worked together as a team as 'very good'.

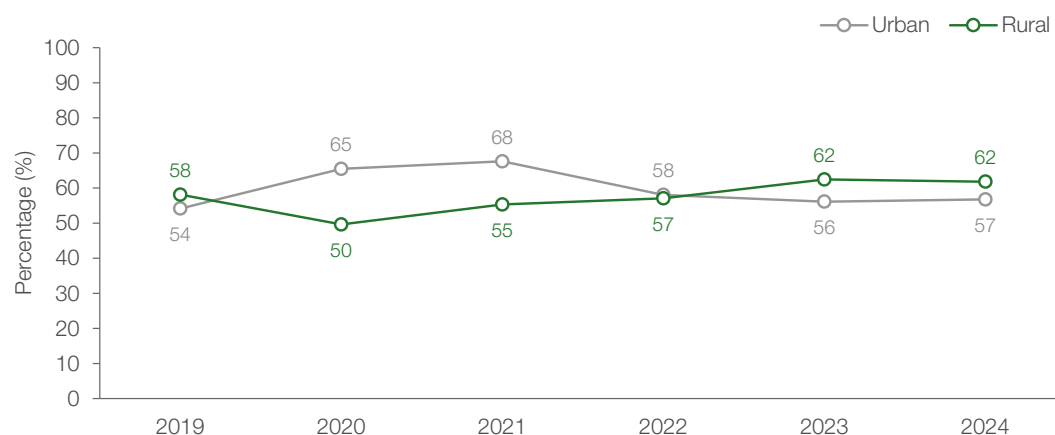
This measure is a driver of positive overall experiences of care.
For more information, [see page 21](#).

Since 2020, the percentage of Aboriginal patients who rated the way health professionals worked together as 'very good' has increased by 12 percentage points in rural hospitals and declined by 8 percentage points in urban hospitals.

How would you rate how well the health professionals worked together as a team?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Percentage of Aboriginal patients who rated the way health professionals worked together as 'very good', by rurality of hospital, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Experiences at discharge

In 2024, six in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (60%) said they 'definitely' felt involved in decisions about their discharge from hospital.

Aboriginal patients admitted to rural hospitals were significantly more likely to report feeling involved than Aboriginal patients admitted to urban hospitals (data not shown).

Ensuring Aboriginal patients experience well-coordinated healthcare, with smooth transitions and continuity of care across primary, secondary and tertiary services, represents a key priority of the [NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2024–2034](#).

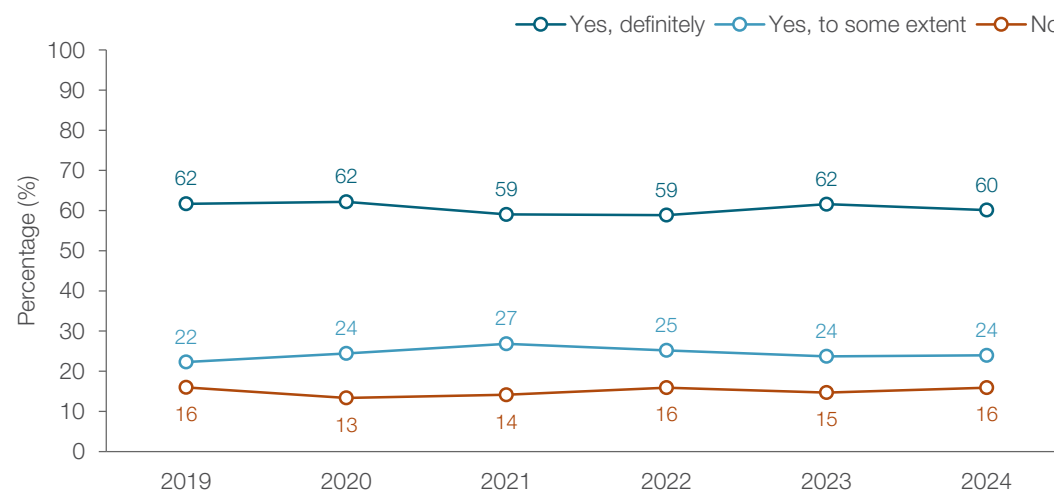
Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

In 2024, around eight in 10 Aboriginal patients (81%) said they felt well enough to leave hospital at the time they were discharged. This result declined significantly from 86% in 2019, and from 88% in 2014 ([see 2021 report](#)).

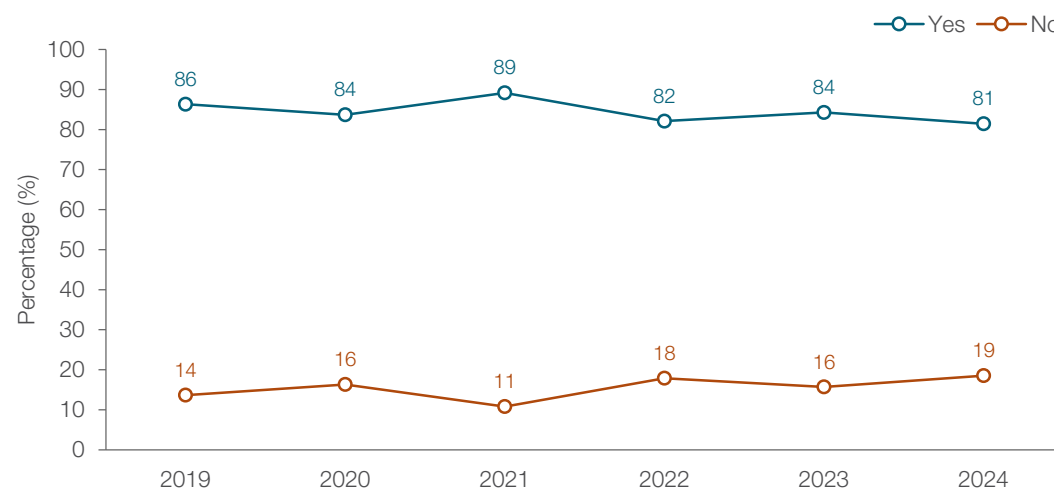
Aboriginal patients admitted to rural hospitals were significantly more likely to report feeling well enough to leave hospital at the time they were discharged than Aboriginal patients admitted to urban hospitals (data not shown).

This measure is associated with the [risk of readmission to hospital](#).

Did you feel involved in decisions about your discharge from hospital?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



At the time you were discharged, did you feel that you were well enough to leave hospital?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Experiences at discharge

In 2024, almost seven in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (67%) said their family and home situation was 'definitely' taken into account when they were discharged.

In 2024, around six in 10 Aboriginal patients (63%) said they were 'definitely' given enough information about how to manage their care at home.

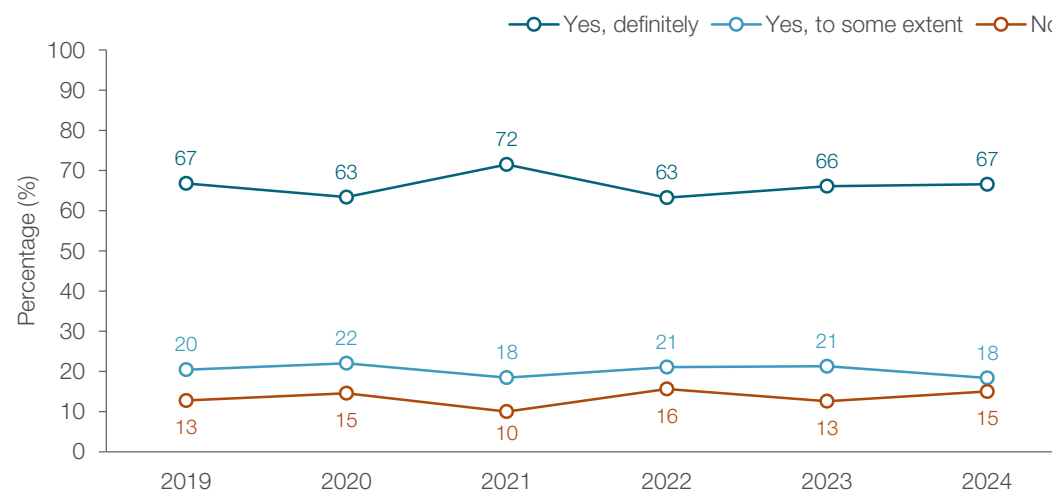
The percentage of Aboriginal patients who said they were not given enough information on how to manage their care at home increased notably between 2021 and 2024 (from 10% to 16%).

Aboriginal patients supported by an Aboriginal health worker gave significantly more positive ratings for this measure.

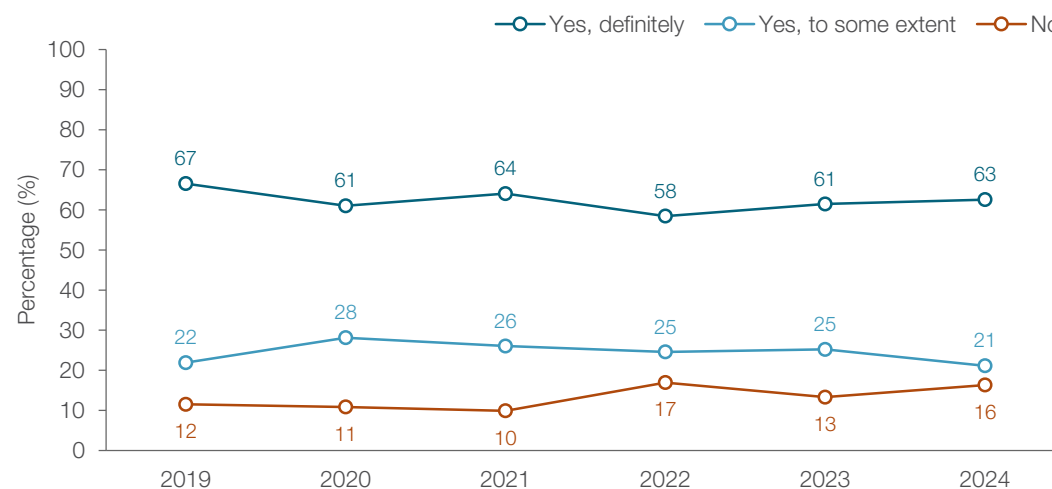
For more measures, [see page 24](#).

This measure is associated with the [risk of readmission to hospital](#).

Was your family and home situation taken into account when you were discharged?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Thinking about when you left hospital, were you given enough information about how to manage your care at home?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



Experiences at discharge

In 2024, almost six in 10 adult admitted Aboriginal patients (57%) said adequate arrangements were 'definitely' made for any services they needed after they left hospital.

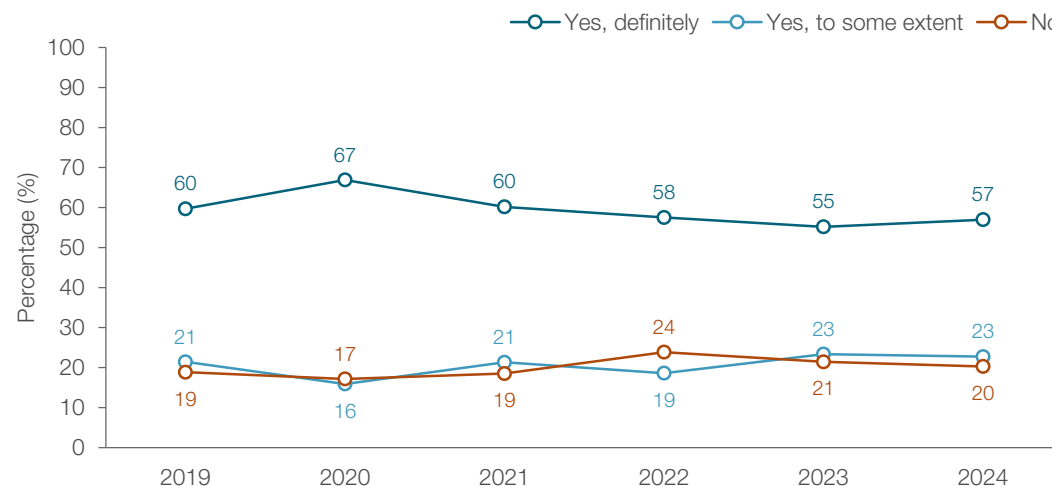
Aboriginal patients were significantly less likely than non-Aboriginal patients to provide this response.

For more measures, [see page 21](#).

This measure is associated with the [risk of readmission to hospital](#).

Note: Results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Thinking about when you left hospital, were adequate arrangements made for any services you needed (e.g. equipment, home care, community care, follow-up appointments)?, all response options, Aboriginal patients, NSW, 2019 to 2024



“ Everything was well explained to me – the after care, all appointments to follow and who to contact if I had any problems. ”

“ I was not told of any care for when I got home. I had no idea when or where to see a follow-up doctor and was not given enough pain medication to see me through the initial pain period. ”

Aboriginal patients' experiences of virtual care after discharge

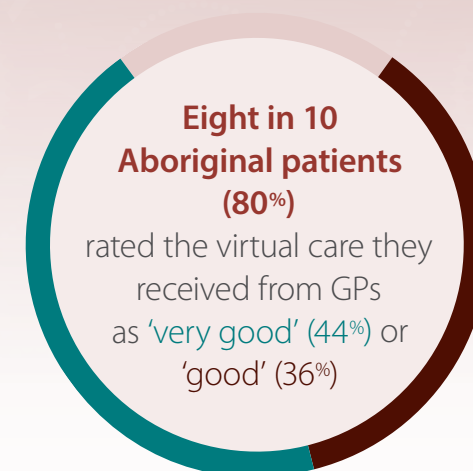
Following an admission to hospital, many patients receive virtual follow-up care with hospital outpatient clinics and general practitioners (GPs). Virtual care can play an important role in the post-discharge period, including by helping to ensure that healthcare is coordinated, from acute through to primary care settings.⁴

In 2024, 132 (18%) of adult Aboriginal patients admitted to hospital between April and June 2024 said they had at least one virtual care appointment with a hospital outpatient clinic within three months of discharge (compared with 13% of non-Aboriginal patients); and 228 (29%) said they had at least one virtual care appointment with a GP (compared with 24% of non-Aboriginal patients).

Around three-quarters of Aboriginal patients (77%) cited at least one benefit of virtual care with hospital outpatient clinics. The most common benefits were convenience (62%), time savings (34%) and feeling at ease being in their own home/surroundings (32%).

Around eight in 10 Aboriginal patients who had a virtual care appointment with a GP (83%) said the opportunity to use virtual care either 'definitely' (40%) or 'to some extent' (43%) helped to ensure that their care was well-coordinated between the hospital and the GP.

Most Aboriginal patients provided positive ratings of their virtual care experiences:



See the [supplementary data tables](#) to this report for detailed information on Aboriginal patients' experiences of virtual care after discharge.

Differences in experiences of hospital care between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people

BHI undertook analyses to examine how the hospital care experiences of Aboriginal people compared with those of non-Aboriginal people.

For most survey questions, Aboriginal patients reported significantly less positive experiences than non-Aboriginal patients. Across the survey, the largest differences were seen in questions relating to kind and compassionate care, provision of information, and timely and coordinated care.

For many measures, the difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal patients' experiences of care widened between 2019 and 2024.

See the [supplementary data tables](#) to this report for detailed comparisons between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal patients' experiences.

For example, in 2024, compared with non-Aboriginal patients, Aboriginal patients were...



7 percentage points **less** likely to rate their overall hospital care as 'very good'
(60% for Aboriginal patients, compared with 67%)



10 percentage points **less** likely to say 'the right amount' of information about their condition or treatment was given to their family, carer or someone close to them
(65% for Aboriginal patients, compared with 75%)



11 percentage points **less** likely to say health professionals 'always' explained things in a way they could understand
(69% for Aboriginal patients, compared with 80%)



14 percentage points **less** likely to say their cultural or religious beliefs were 'always' respected by hospital staff
(77% for Aboriginal patients, compared with 91%)



12 percentage points **less** likely to say that professionals 'definitely' gave them the support they needed to help with any worries or fears related to their care and treatment
(56% for Aboriginal patients, compared with 68%)



11 percentage points **less** likely to say adequate arrangements were 'definitely' made for any services they needed when they left hospital
(57% for Aboriginal patients, compared with 68%)

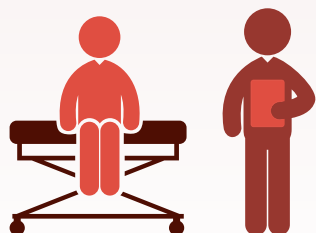
Key drivers of positive overall experiences of care for Aboriginal patients

BHI analysed feedback from more than 8,000 Aboriginal patients admitted to hospital between 2022 and 2024 to identify which aspects of patient experience were most strongly associated with high overall ratings of care.

Aboriginal patients were **more likely to rate their overall hospital care as 'very good'** if they said:

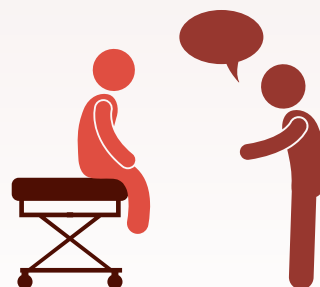
Their care was
'very well organised'

(8 times more likely than those who did not)



The health professionals
were 'always' kind and caring

(4 times more likely)



The way that health professionals worked
well together as a team was 'very good'

(3 times more likely)



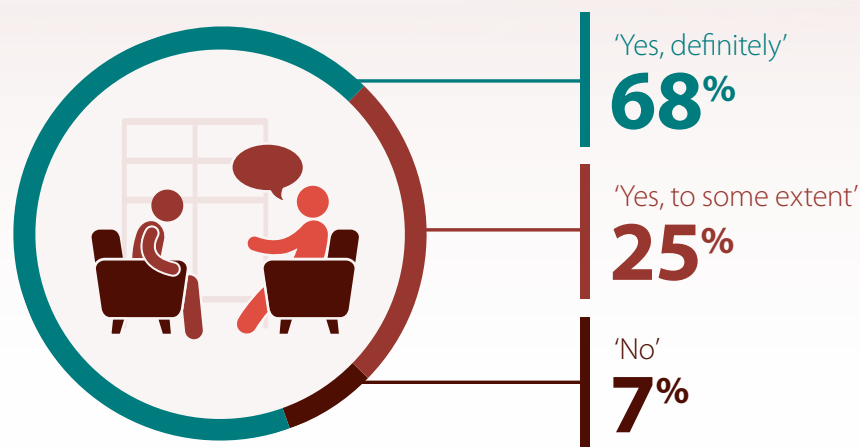
Note: To identify the aspects of care most strongly associated with positive overall ratings of care, a statistical analysis was used to predict the likelihood of Aboriginal patients rating their care, overall, as 'very good'. The analysis accounted for characteristics, including age, gender, education and language spoken at home, and other self-reported experiences. For more information about the methodology, see the technical supplement to the BHI's 2021 [Insights Series report Aboriginal people's experiences of hospital care](#).

Impact of Aboriginal health workers on Aboriginal patients' experiences

Aboriginal health workers provide non-clinical services such as advocacy, support, liaison and health promotion in community and hospital settings.

In 2024, around one-third of Aboriginal patients (**30%**) said they received support, or the offer of support, from an Aboriginal health worker while they were in hospital.

When asked whether, after talking to an Aboriginal health worker, they felt more supported with their care, Aboriginal patients said...



“ The Aboriginal health worker was absolutely fantastic. If he didn't support me I would not have had any positive experiences to mention. He is definitely an asset to the team. ”

“ Aboriginal health workers come every day to ask if I needed anything or if my family needed anything. ”

Note: The identification of an Aboriginal health worker is based on the patient's perspective and could include any member of staff that the respondent considered to be an Aboriginal health worker, regardless of whether they were officially employed in this capacity.

Impact of Aboriginal health workers on Aboriginal patients' experiences

BHI's analyses found that, for many measures, Aboriginal patients' hospital care experiences were significantly more positive when they had the support, or the offer of support, from an Aboriginal health worker.

The positive impact of Aboriginal health workers was also evident in areas where the differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal patients' experiences were greatest.

These findings indicate that having the support of an Aboriginal health worker makes a marked difference to some of the most important aspects of experience for Aboriginal patients, including kind and compassionate care, provision of information and timely and coordinated care.

Of patients who received support, or the offer of support, from an Aboriginal health worker...



77%

said the care and treatment they received 'definitely' helped them

compared with 62% of patients who did not receive support, or the offer of support



80%

said the health professionals were 'always' kind and caring

compared with 69% of patients who did not receive support, or the offer of support



71%

said they were 'definitely' given enough information about how to manage their care at home

compared with 56% of patients who did not receive support, or the offer of support



66%

said the care they received in hospital was 'very well organised'

compared with 54% of patients who did not receive support, or the offer of support

See the [supplementary data tables](#) to this report for detailed comparisons between the experiences of Aboriginal patients who received the support, or the offer of support, from an Aboriginal health worker, and those who did not.

References

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State Health Publication Number: (BHI) 250789

ISBN: 978-1-74231-233-0

Suggested citation:

Bureau of Health Information. The Insights Series – Aboriginal people's experiences of hospital care: 2019 to 2024.
Sydney (NSW): BHI; 2025.

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Published September 2025

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