Essential facts regarding A&E Services

Last winter saw unprecedented pressures on A&E departments. Media interest was considerable and many people and organisations were asked to account for these pressures. It is timely therefore to provide all interested and concerned parties with a summary of the key data that should inform any responsible debate concerning A&E departments ahead of the Welsh Assembly elections.

Patients

1. In Wales there were 768 thousand patient attendances to major A&Es in 2015.

2. The UK has the 3rd lowest A&E attendance rate of 11 comparable nations.

3. There were 2,426 fewer patient attendances in 2014/2015 than in 2010/2011 – this equates to a 0.24 per cent decrease over this time.

4. The total absorbed cost of type 1 A&E services in Wales was £116 million in 2013-14.

5. Six per cent of the population of Wales were aged between 75 and 84 in 2013, however this age group accounted for eight per cent of attendances at A&E departments.

6. Although the age group 85 or over makes up the least number of attendances at A&E departments it has the highest rate of attendances per 1,000 population.

7. Across Wales 15% of patients could be seen in a non-hospital setting.

Departments

8. There are 13 major emergency departments (A&E) in Wales.

9. Annual attendances per department during 2014/15 range from 25,308 (Bronglais General Hospital) to 125,282 (University Hospital Of Wales)
10. In 2015 there were 63 (A&E) Consultants working the NHS in Wales.

11. It takes a minimum of eight years from commencing a medical degree to becoming an emergency medicine registrar and 13 years to become a consultant.

12. Whilst EM training posts at year one have a 100% fill rate at beginning, only 61% of higher specialist training posts in Emergency Medicine are being filled.

13. ‘Out of Hours’ working is currently recognised by paying doctors the same sum for working 1am to 4am on a Sunday night as they receive for working 1pm to 5pm on a Wednesday afternoon.

14. Over 500 UK trained EM doctors are working in Australia – 92% do not plan to return.

15. The UK has the best A&E performance in the world (measured by process indicators)

16. However, A&E performance is worse than comparable performance in England and Scotland and better than Northern Ireland.

17. Exit block occurs when patients cannot be moved in a timely manner to a ward due to a lack of available beds.

18. Waiting for a hospital bed is the most common cause for patients waiting longer than four hours in A&E.

19. Exit block causes harm and mortality – it is a hospital acquired illness.

20. A&E departments tend to register more attendances in the summer and fewer in the winter. Most A&E attendances occur between 9am and 6pm. Monday and Sunday are the two busiest days in terms of attendance levels.

21. Block funding through the Barnett Formula finances Wales’s Emergency Departments.

22. In 2013/14 the Health and Social Care budget was £6.1 billion.

23. This equates to around 40% of Welsh Government expenditure.
References

Patients
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Departments

Workforce
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Finance