

**WOMEN'S SELECTION AND EVALUATION OF
OBSTETRIC HOSPITALS: A SURVEY OF
THE NORTHERN SYDNEY AREA**

ALLISON BOYES

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Department of Public Health and
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ABSTRACT

A study of women's views of maternity services in the Northern Sydney Area Health Service was conducted as a result of the changing patterns of use of the Area's 7 obstetric hospitals. 340 primiparous women living in the Northern Sydney Area who had given birth in the previous six months were approached in Early Childhood Health Centres and asked to complete a survey exploring the factors influencing their choice of obstetric hospital, postnatal length of stay in hospital, and overall satisfaction with their choice of hospital. Of the 315 eligible women, 312 (99%) consented to participate and 297 (94%) completed the survey. Overall, reputation of the hospital and quality of nursing care were the most frequent reasons given for choice of hospital and there was some evidence that women selected different hospitals for distinct reasons. Women's postnatal length of stay ranged from less than 1 day to 11 days with an average of 5.3 days. Private patients stayed an average of 1 day longer than public patients, after adjusting for delivery type and pregnancy induced hypertension. There was little evidence that women in the Northern Sydney Area Health Service desire a shorter postnatal stay with the majority of women reporting they were satisfied with their length of stay. Overall, women displayed high levels of satisfaction with their choice of hospital; at least 90% of women attending all hospitals except one reported that they would choose the same hospital for the birth of another baby. This study provides valuable information, based on the experiences of the service users, to help guide the Northern Sydney Area Health Service in the provision of its maternity services to ensure they meet the changing needs of women and their families.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHS	Area Health Service
ECHC	Early Childhood Health Centre
HKH	Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital
LOS	Length of stay
MV	Mona Vale Hospital
NESB	Non English Speaking Background
NSA	Northern Sydney Area
NSAHS	Northern Sydney Area Health Service
NVD	Normal vaginal delivery
PIH	Pregnancy induced hypertension
RNS	Royal North Shore Hospital
SAN	Sydney Adventist Hospital