



National Physician Diary Study 2009 Wait Time Results by National Specialty Society



Background and Response Rates

The National Physician Diary Study 2009 was conducted between February 12th and March 6th 2009. The purpose of the study was to gather the views of specialist physicians on wait times for specialty care, as well as to collect wait times for specialty care from actual patient records. These specialty specific wait-time results should be read in conjunction with the June 2009 Wait Time Alliance Report Card and the technical background, which can both be found at www.waittimealliance.ca

The table below shows the response rates per specialty for physicians as well as the number of patients reported on for each specialty area.

Note: Median wait times are reported for each specialty therefore the wait time from referral to consult and from consult to procedure or treatment do not necessarily equal the median wait time from referral to procedure or treatment. In the case of Emergency Medicine both average and median wait times are reported.

	Invitations Sent	Completes (Physicians)	Completion Rate	Number of Patients Reported On
Emergency Medicine	1712	189	11.04%	256
Nuclear Medicine	177	12	6.80%	31
Plastic Surgery	311	64	20.60%	185
OBGYN	1102	152	13.80%	588
Radiation Oncology	266	84	31.60%	160
Psychiatry	1599	188	11.80%	340
Orthopaedics	644	119	18.50%	151
Ophthalmology	581	93	16.00%	95
Anesthesia Chronic Pain	125	41	32.80%	98
Anesthesia	1299	214	16.50%	N.A.*
Gastroenterology	393	33	8.40%	70
Total	8209	1189	14.60%	2010

*Only Anesthesiologists who practice Chronic Pain Management were asked to complete the diary portion of the survey.



Radiation Oncology – Median Wait Times (number of days)



Tumour Type	Number of Cases	Referral to Consult	Consult to Date of Procedure/ Treatment	Referral to Procedure/ Treatment
All eligible radical (curative)	104	14	25	46
-CNS Radical	9	7	14	20
-Breast Radical	10	22	30	59
-Lung Radical	15	13	29	38
-GI Radical	10	16	20	40
-Genito-Urinary Radical	42	18	39	68
-Gynaecology Radical	10	9	20	29
-Lymphoma Radical	8	6	15	25
All eligible palliative	56	6	6	13
-Breast Palliative	9	2	2	5
-Lung Palliative	22	8	7	19
-GI Palliative	8	6	21	33
-Genito-Urinary Palliative	8	7	3	13
-Lymphoma Palliative	9	4	2	8
Overall total/combined medians	160	10	17	33

Base: Patients reported on (n=160); Number of Radiation Oncologists who participated in the study (n=84)



Anesthesia – Median Wait Times for Chronic Pain (number of days/weeks)



Referral to Consultation	Outcome of Consultation
201 / 28.7	Referred back to family physician
329 / 47	Further investigation ordered
224 / 32	Referred to different specialist
85 / 12.1	Decision to treat
268 / 38.3	Other
106 / 15.1	All outcomes combined

Base: Patients reported on (n=98); Number of Chronic Pain Specialists who participated in the study (n=41)



Nuclear Medicine – Median Wait Times (number of days)



Milestone	Thyroid studies/ consultations (n=11)	Stress tests (n=13)	Isotopes therapy (n=7)	Overall median (n=31)
Referral to Consult	12	25	13	16
Consult to procedure or treatment	1	0	0	0
Referral to procedure or treatment	21	25	16	19

Base: Patients reported on (n=31); Number of Nuclear Medicine Specialists who participated in the study (n=12)



Psychiatry – Median Wait Times for Depression (number of days/weeks)



Referral to Consultation	Outcome of Consultation
25 / 3.6	Referred back to family physician (n=83)
55 / 7.9	Further investigation ordered (n=15)
42 / 6	Decision to treat (n=213)
33 / 4.7	Referred to different specialist (n=13)
92 / 13.1	Other (n=16)
40 / 5.7	Overall Median (n=340)

Base: Patients reported on (n=340); Number of Psychiatrists who participated in the study (n=188)



Gastroenterology – Median Wait Times (number of days/weeks)



Condition Type	Number of Cases	Referral to Consult	Consult to Date of Procedure/Treatment	Referral to Procedure/Treatment
Stable dysphagia that is not severe	4	60 / 8.6	32 / 4.6	98 / 14
Chronic GERD referred for screening endoscopy	4	158 / 22.6	92 / 13.1	272 / 38.9
Poorly-controlled reflux/dyspepsia, NO alarm symptoms	3	95 / 13.6	73 / 10.4	168 / 24
Confirmation of celiac disease by antibody test	3	82 / 11.7	0 / 0	93 / 13.3
Painless obstructive acute jaundice	1	1 / 0.1	0 / 0	1 / 0.1

Base: Patients reported on (n=70); Number of Gastroenterologists who participated in the study (n=33)



Gastroenterology – Median Wait Times (number of days/weeks)



Condition Type	Number of Cases	Referral to Consult	Consult to Date of Procedure/Treatment	Referral to Procedure/Treatment
Chronic abdominal pain	4	78 / 11.1	48 / 6.9	119 / 17
Clinical features of significant active IBD	3	60 / 8.6	45 / 6.4	106 / 15.1
Chronic diarrhea or chronic constipation	4	90 / 12.9	139 / 19.9	260 / 37.1
New-onset change in bowel habit	1	22 / 3.1	63 / 9	85 / 12.1
Bright red rectal bleeding	7	37 / 5.3	14 / 2	57 / 8.1
Documented iron deficiency anemia	5	34 / 4.9	0 / 0	62 / 8.9
Fecal occult blood test positive	4	93 / 13.3	64 / 9.1	156 / 22.3
Screening colonoscopy	20	106 / 15.1	39 / 5.6	148 / 21.1
Cancer likely based on imaging or physical exam	3	32 / 4.6	8 / 1.1	40 / 5.7
Other	4	110 / 15.7	57 / 8.1	170 / 24.3
Overall median	70	75 / 10.7	48 / 6.9	130 / 18.6

Base: Patients reported on (n=70); Number of Gastroenterologists who participated in the study (n=33)



Orthopaedics – Median Wait Times (number of days/weeks)



Milestone	Referral to Consult	Consult to treatment or procedure	Referral to procedure or treatment
Total Hip Arthroplasty (n=53)	65 / 9.3	141 / 20.1	247 / 35.3
Total Knee Arthroplasty (n=98)	89 / 12.7	143 / 20.4	312 / 44.6
Overall (n=151)	82 / 11.7	142 / 20.3	288 / 41.1

Base: Patients reported on (n=151); Number of Orthopaedic Surgeons who participated in the study (n=119)



Plastic Surgery – Median Wait Times (number of days/weeks)



Condition Type	Number of Cases	Referral to Consult	Consult to Date of Procedure/Treatment	Referral to Procedure/Treatment
Necrotizing fasciitis	2	0*	0	0
Suppurative tenosynovitis	2	6	0	6
Zygoma fracture	2	2	9	11
Orbital floor fracture (no entrapment)	2	2	10	12
Mandibular fracture (compound)	1	0	9	9
Panfacial fracture	1	0	9	9
Frontal sinus fracture	1	2	2	4
Nasal fracture	1	0	404 / 57.7	404 / 57.7
Major burn	1	196 / 28	199 / 28.4	395
Minor burn	2	0	42 / 6	42 / 6
Flexor tendon laceration	5	1	2	3
Digital nerve laceration	1	0	0	0

*A wait time of 0 means that the consult and treatment took place on the same day.

Base: Patients reported on (n=185); Number of Plastic Surgeons who participated in the study (n=64)



Plastic Surgery – Median Wait Times (number of days/weeks)



Condition Type	Number of Cases	Referral to Consult	Consult to Date of Procedure/ Treatment	Referral to Procedure/ Treatment
Hand/finger fracture (compound)	4	1	2	2
Hand/finger fracture (not compound)	11	3	7	12
Gamekeeper thumb	2	1	5	6
Breast reconstruction (immediate)	2	60 / 8.6	38 / 5.4	98 / 14
Breast reconstruction (delayed)	9	93 / 13.3	220 / 31.4	370 / 52.9
Breast reduction	29	196 / 28	315 / 45	617 / 88.1
Cleft lip	1	60 / 8.6	456 / 65.1	516 / 73.7
Craniofacial anomaly	3	96 / 13.7	131 / 18.7	289 / 41.3
Congenital hand deformity	2	79 / 11.3	192 / 27.4	271 / 38.7
Congenital pigmented nevus	1	117 / 39	75 / 10.7	192 / 27.4
Late post traumatic craniofacial anomaly (i.e. enophthalmos)	3	48 / 6.86	187 / 26.7	272 / 38.9
Septoplasty	2	88 / 12.6	171 / 24.4	258 / 26.9

Base: Patients reported (n=185); Number of Plastic Surgeons who participated in the study (n=64)



Plastic Surgery – Median Wait Times (number of days/weeks)



Condition Type	Number of Cases	Referral to Consult	Consult to Date of Procedure/Treatment	Referral to Procedure/Treatment
Ptosis (levator weakness)	1	295 / 42.1	116 / 16.6	411 / 58.7
Ectropion	1	57/8.1	93 / 13.3	150 / 21.4
Blepharoplasty (visual axis impaired)	1	9	34 / 4.9	43 / 6.1
Carpal tunnel with permanent numbness	8	74 / 10.6	109 / 15.6	161 / 23
Carpal tunnel with episodic numbness	7	60/8.6	73 / 10.4	140 / 20
Painful neuroma	1	121 / 17.3	324 / 46.3	445 / 63.6
Flexor/extensor tendon reconstruction/transfer	1	242 / 34.6	53 / 7.6	295 / 42.1
de Quervain's tenosynovitis	1	242 / 34.6	32 / 4.6	274 / 39.1
Trigger finger	1	145 / 20.7	68 / 9.7	213 / 30.4
Rheumatoid/OA hand	3	101 / 14.4	206 / 29.4	311 / 44.4
Dupuytren's (with joint contracture)	12	97 / 13.9	123 / 17.6	197 / 28.1
Dupuytren's (without joint contracture)	1	26 / 3.7	115 / 16.4	141 / 20.1

Base: Patients reported on (n=185); Number of Plastic Surgeons who participated in the study (n=64)



Plastic Surgery – Median Wait Times (number of days/weeks)



Condition Type	Number of Cases	Referral to Consult	Consult to Date of Procedure/Treatment	Referral to Procedure/Treatment
Wrist ganglion	4	87 / 12.4	64 / 9.1	252 / 36
Stiff joint (MP, PIP)	1	0	40 / 5.7	40 / 5.7
Enchondroma	2	18	84 / 12	101 / 14.4
Lesion suspicious for melanoma	2	3	13	16
Lesion suspicious for BCC	6	56 / 8	70 / 10	153 / 21.9
Lesion suspicious for SCC	1	53 / 7.6	52 / 7.4	105 / 15
Melanoma re-excision	5	6	10	18
BCC positive margins	9	62 / 8.9	27	79 / 11.3
SCC positive margins	3	15	16	31
Head and neck cancer	1	255 / 36.4	158 / 22.6	413 / 59
Nevus	2	403 / 57.6	455 / 65	858 / 122.6
Cyst (Collusion)	2	23	134 / 19.1	157 / 22.4

Base: Patients reported on (n=185); Number of Plastic Surgeons who participated in the study (n=64)



Plastic Surgery – Median Wait Times (number of days/weeks)



Condition Type	Number of Cases	Referral to Consult	Consult to Date of Procedure/Treatment	Referral to Procedure/Treatment
Lipoma (interfering with function)	4	60 / 8.6	111 / 15.9	200 / 28.6
Lipoma (not interfering with function)	1	81 / 11.6	224 / 32	305 / 43.6
Pyogenic granuloma	1	4	17	21 / 3
Non-healing wound	6	3	60 / 8.6	74 / 10.6
Scar (non visible area)	2	137 / 19.6	114 / 16.3	251 / 35.9
Pressure sore	2	105 / 15	53 / 7.6	158 / 22.6
Foreign body (chronic)	3	62 / 8.9	99 / 14.1	244 / 34.9
Total Average Wait Times	185	55 / 7.9	87 / 12.4	173 / 24.7

Base: Patients reported on (n=185); Number of Plastic Surgeons who participated in the study (n=64)



Obstetricians and Gynaecologists – Median Wait Times (number of days/weeks)



Condition/Treatment Type	Referral to Consult	Consult to Procedure or Treatment	Referral to Procedure or Treatment
Abnormal pre-menopausal uterine bleeding (n=156)	71 / 10.1	76 / 10.9	164 / 23.4
Urinary incontinence (n=109)	92 / 13.1	116 / 16.6	247 / 35.3
Pelvic prolapse (n=129)	93 / 13.3	120 / 17.1	250 / 35.7
Pelvic Pain (n=90)	69 / 9.9	74 / 10.6	145 / 20.7
Elective Sterilization (n=104)	80 / 11.4	64 / 19.1	159 / 22.7
Overall median	86 / 12.3	92 / 13.1	192.5 / 27.6

Base: Patients reported on (n=588); Number of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists who participated in the study (n=152)



Ophthalmology – Median Wait Times (number of days/weeks)



Milestone	Corneal Transplants (n=50)	Adult Strabismus Surgery (n=45)
Referral to Consult	62/8.9	159/22.7
Consult to date of procedure/ treatment	457/65.3	188/26.9
Referral to procedure or treatment	636/90.9	450/64.3

Base: Patients reported on (n=95); Number of Ophthalmologists who participated in the study (n=93)



Emergency Medicine – Median/Average Wait Times (number of hours)



Milestone	Median/Average number of hours
Time to physician from time of presentation (n=256)	3 / 4.66
Time to consultation from physician (n=93)	2.57 / 4.47
Time from consultation to floor (if admitted) (n=84)	12.6 / 15.71
Time from physician to discharge (if applicable) (n=172)	2 / 4.05
Time from presentation to discharge (n=172)	5.75 / 8.91
Time from presentation to floor (n=84)	19.08 / 23.54

Base: Patients reported on (n=256); Number of Emergency Medicine Specialists who participated in the study (n=189)

Emergency Medicine – Patient Flow in Emergency Care



Of the **256** patient records included in the study, the median wait time captured from the time of presentation to the time they saw a physician was **3 hours** (an average of 4.66 hours)



93 of these patients went on to consult with a specialist physician. The median wait time experienced by these patients from physician to consultation was another **2.57 hours** (an average of 4.47 additional hours).

9 patients were discharged after having consulted with a specialist.

84 of these patients were admitted. The median wait time experienced by these patients was another **12.6 hours** (an average of 15.71 additional hours).

172 of these patients were discharged. The median wait time experienced by these patients (whether or not they were seen by a specialist) was another **2 hours** (an average of 4.05 additional hours).

For the 172 patients who were eventually discharged, the total overall median wait from presentation to discharge was 5.75 hours.

For the 84 patients who were admitted, the median total median wait from presentation to discharge was 19.08 hours.

Base: Patients reported on (n=292); Number of Emergency Medicine Specialists who participated in the study (n=189)