Deputy Sorca Clarke
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

15th April 2025

PQ 16330/25 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of children admitted to general inpatient hospital wards with a primary diagnosis of mental health difficulties in each of the years 2023 to 2024 and to date in 2025, in tabular form; the average length of time children spent in general wards with this diagnosis; and if she will make a statement on the matter. - Sorca Clarke

Dear Deputy Clarke,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Hospital In-Patient Enquiry (HIPE) is a health information system, managed by the Healthcare Pricing Office (HPO) of HSE Finance and is designed to collect clinical and administrative data on discharges from, and deaths in, acute public hospitals in Ireland. HIPE discharges are clinically coded from charts in the hospitals, this includes translating medical terminology into alpha-numeric code and using the entire chart to extract the conditions and procedures to create an adequate picture of the patient's health care encounter.

The requested data is in the included Excel file provided by HIPE. Please see the notes included with the table provided, and outlined below:

- Note that HIPE does not collect activity from psychiatric units/wards in acute hospitals.
- The median is a better measure of the central tendency of the group as it is not skewed by exceptionally high or low characteristic values.

It is important to note that the HIPE system is not an operational database, it is not updated nationally at the HPO on a real-time or daily basis and is also not considered final until it is closed in the following year. Therefore, data for 2025 to date cannot be provided.

I trust this is of assistance to you.

Yours Sincerely.

Nessa Lynch
General Manager
Access & Integration

Notes:

In-patient discharges are reported only; ED and out-patient attendances are not recorded on HIPE.

HIPE data is based on hospitalisations which may include multiple admissions for the same patient. Therefore, it is not possible to use HIPE to examine certain parameters such as the number of hospital encounters per patient, or to estimate incidence or prevalence of disease.

Diagnosis and Procedures are coded using ICD-10-AM/ACHI/ACS (2023 used 10th edition, from 2024 12th edition is used). This change in the coding classification needs to be considered when looking at the data across years.

ICD-10-AM is the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision, Australian Modification.

The ICD-10-AM disease component is based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) ICD-10. ICD-10-AM is used in conjunction with the Australian Classification of Health Interventions (ACHI), and the Australian Coding Standards (ACS) to reflect an accurate health episode of care.

Definitions:

Principal Diagnosis is the diagnosis established after study to be chiefly responsible for occasioning an episode of admitted patient care, an episode of residential care, or an attendance at the health care establishment, as represented by a code.

Source: National Casemix and Classification Centre (NCCC), 2013: The International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, Australian Modification (8th Ed): Australian Coding Standards. NCCC, Australian Health Services Research Institute, University of Wollongong.

Table: Total in-patient discharges with mean and median LOS (Length of Stay), age less than or equal to 16, reported to HIPE from acute public hospitals with a principal diagnosis code F00-F99 (mental and behavioural disorders), 2024

Year	2023	2024
N	764	819
Mean LOS	11.0	8.9
Median LOS	3	3

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The median is a better measure of the central tendency of the group as it is not skewed by exceptionally high or low characteristic values.