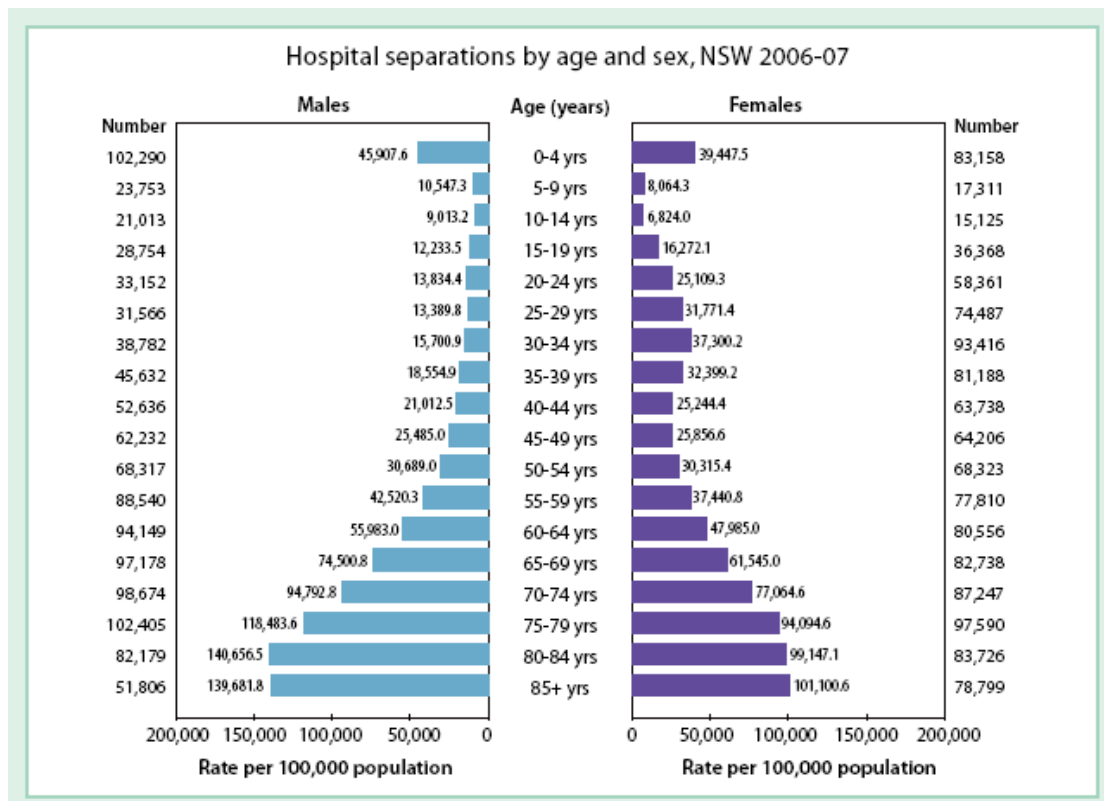


## Guide to interpreting figures in the CHO Summary Report

In the new CHO Summary Report a number of sections contain graphs of age-specific rates and numbers of events (such as hospital separations or deaths), and a breakdown of age-specific events by cause. Taking page 55 from section 5.1 Burden of Disease as an example, this document explains how to correctly interpret information in these graphs.

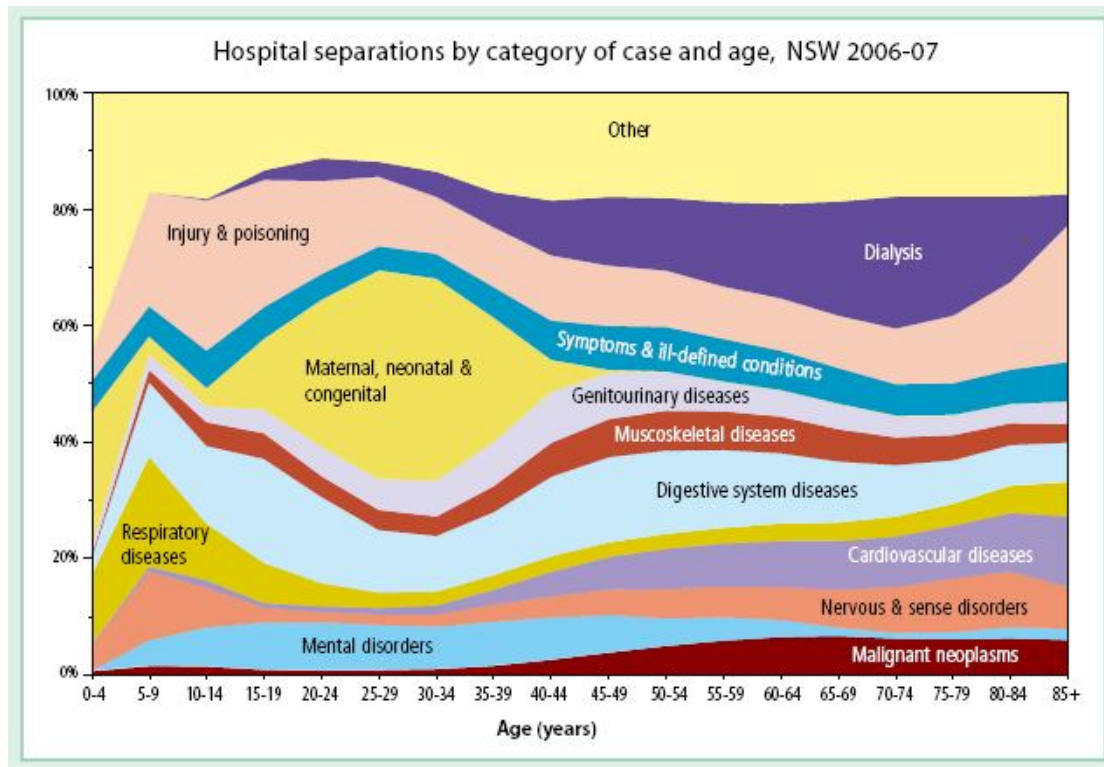
### Age-specific rates and numbers of events

The below figure provides an indication of the total burden of hospital separations in NSW during 2006-07 by sex and age-group. That is, sex and age-specific rates and numbers of hospital separations for all causes during this period. In this figure it is apparent that total hospital separation rates tend to increase with age for both sexes, with the exception of 0-4 years of age and females from 20-39 years of age. Hospital separations include birthing services and births of liveborn infants, which explain the differing patterns of hospitalisation for young children and women of child-bearing age. This figure does not provide an overview of the reasons for hospitalisation.



## Percentage contribution of leading causes of events

The below figure provides a breakdown of total hospital separations in NSW during 2006-07 by age-group and principal diagnosis. The height of the individual coloured areas at each age simply represents the percentage (%) of total hospital separations at that age due to the stated cause. This figure does not provide any indication of burden as measured by the number or rate of hospital separations but rather, is designed to provide a high-level overview of the how the distribution of causes of hospital separations changes by age. As this graph was created by extrapolating between the results for each age-group, only the height of the coloured areas at actual age-group tick-marks should be interpreted.



### An example

This graph shows the reasons why people of different ages are admitted to hospital. We can see that respiratory diseases were responsible for a relatively large proportion (18.7%) of hospitalisations in 5-9 year olds, and a relatively small proportion of hospitalisations in 75-79 year olds (3.7%). Conversely hospitalisations relating to dialysis increasingly accounts for a larger proportion of hospitalisations as people get older.

What this graph does not show is the burden of disease or take into account the number of hospitalisations. To do that we would need to dig a little deeper. Following on with the above example, the 18.7% of hospitalisations in children aged 5-9 years who were admitted to hospital for respiratory disease actually represents a total of 7,679 hospitalisations, while the 3.7% for those aged 75-79 years represents 7,455 hospitalisations. In other words, the actual numbers of hospitalisations for respiratory disease were highly similar in these two groups despite the fact that a considerably greater proportion (over five times) of hospitalisations in the 5-9 year age group were due to respiratory diseases than in 75-79 year age group. This is because there were also approximately five times more hospitalisations in persons aged 75-79 years than in those aged 5-9 years, as shown in the graph on page 1.