

NURSE-ON-CALL

Quarterly Newsletter 1 October - 31 December 2008



How have Victorians responded to NURSE-ON-CALL?

Since NURSE-ON-CALL began approximately 34 months ago, over 964,954 calls have been answered.

During the October to December 2008 Quarter, over 79,000 calls were answered.

In this quarter, weekends consistently remain the busiest times, with most calls received on a Sunday evening. Further, calls received on the weekend account for 32% of the total calls received.

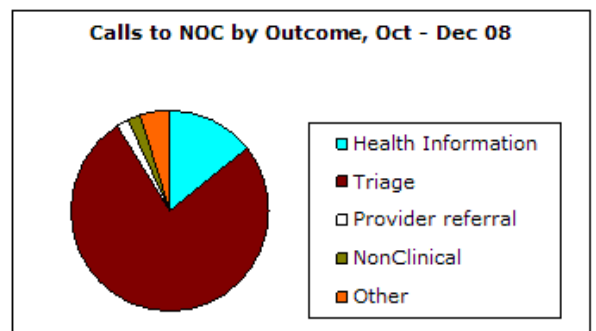
Who has been calling NURSE-ON-CALL?

- 85% of calls received were directly from the public and 5% of calls were transferred from hospitals
- 60% of callers were female
- 40% of patients were male
- 73% of the total calls received were from metropolitan Victoria and 27% from regional Victoria.

What happened when people called NURSE-ON-CALL?

- On average, the call handle time was close to 10 minutes each. This includes talk time, after call work and hold time.
- Triage accounted for the majority of calls – a full summary is shown below.

Summary by Outcome - % of total calls	Percentage
Triage	72.6%
General Information Provided	9.0%
Health Education	13.5%
Provider Referral	1.7%
Quick Call (Includes wrong numbers, prank/hoax calls)	2.2%
Other (not recorded, admin file, transferred internally, etc)	4.3



What advice did callers seek this quarter?

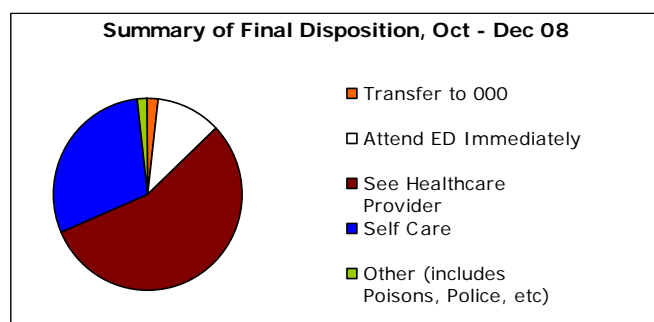
The most frequently requested Health Education topics were: Chicken Pox (7.5%), Fever in children (4.2%), Shingles (4.6%) and Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (3.1%).

Summary of Top 10 Triage Guidelines Used	
1. Vomiting (Paediatric) 4.0%	6. Nausea/Vomiting 2.5%
2. Abdominal Pain/Discomfort 3.7%	7. Chest Pain/Discomfort 2.6%
3. Fever (Paediatric) 3.4%	8. Nausea/Vomiting 2.5%
4. Medication Questions Encounters 3.4%	9. Diarrhoea (Paediatric) 1.9%
5. Rashes, Widespread, Cause Unknown (Paediatric) 2.8%	10. Trauma-Head (Paediatric) 1.8%

NB: Data from similar services in other states indicates that the most frequently used guidelines and top health information topics vary each season.

What were the final dispositions* of calls to NURSE-ON-CALL this quarter?

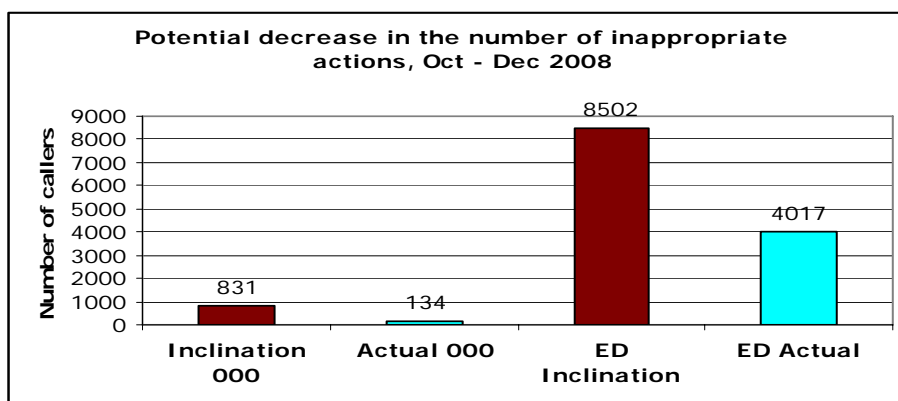
Summary of Final Disposition	Percentage
Transfer to 000	2.0%
Attend Emergency Department Immediately	11.0%
See Healthcare Provider	48.5%
Self Care	30.0%
Other (includes Poisons, Police, etc)	1.4%
Total	100%



*Disposition refers to the recommendation made by NURSE-ON-CALL

What did Callers intend to do and what were they advised by NURSE-ON-CALL?

Approximately 70% of callers are asked what they would have done if they had not rung NURSE-ON-CALL. In some cases the action that callers intended to take was different to the action NURSE-ON-CALL advised them to take. For example, of the 831 callers who indicated that they would have rung an ambulance if they had not rung NURSE-ON-CALL, only 134 (16%) of them were assessed as needing an ambulance transfer. Of the 8,502 callers who indicated that they would have gone to a hospital emergency department immediately, only 4,017 (47%) were advised to go to an emergency department. See graph below.



Each month there are also a small proportion of callers who do not realise the severity of their illness and intend to stay at home and care for themselves. For example, of the 9,817 callers surveyed in October to December 2008 who said that they would have cared for themselves at home, 115 of them needed an ambulance.

NB: It should be noted that whilst NURSE-ON-CALL may recommend a certain action the caller may not necessarily heed the advice given.

For more information about NURSE-ON-CALL and previous quarterly newsletters see our web page at www.health.vic.gov.au/nurseoncall