

NURSE-ON-CALL

Quarterly Newsletter 1 January-31 March 2008

How have Victorians responded to NURSE-ON-CALL?

Since NURSE-ON-CALL began approximately 20 months ago, over 704,400 calls have been answered.

During the January to March Quarter, over 85,000 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?

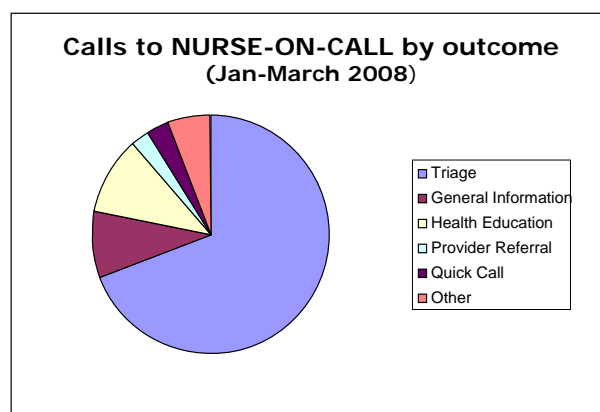
- 87% of calls received were directly from the public and 13% of calls were transferred from hospitals;
- 75% of callers were female;
- 39% of patients were male;
- 74% of the total calls received were from metropolitan Victoria and 26% from regional Victoria.



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	69%
General Information Provided	9%
Health Education	11%
Provider Referral	2%
Quick Call (Includes wrong numbers, prank/hoax calls)	3%
Other (not recorded, admin file, transferred internally, etc)	6%



What advice did callers seek this quarter?

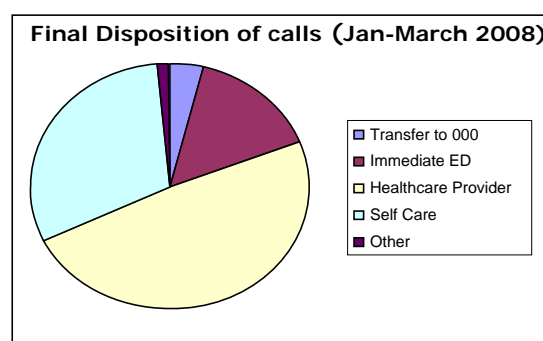
The most frequently requested Health Education topics were: Chicken Pox (5.9%), Fever in children (4.8%), Shingles (4.0%) and Contraception – The Morning After Pill (1.8%).

Summary of Top 10 Triage Guidelines Used	
1. Abdominal Pain/Discomfort 3.9%	6. Medication Questions Encounters 2.0%
2. Fever (Paediatric) 3.8%	7. Bites and Stings – Insects/Spiders 1.9%
3. Vomiting (Paediatric) 3.0%	8. Rashes, Widespread, Cause Unknown (Paediatric) 1.9%
4. Chest Pain/Discomfort 2.5%	9. Trauma-Head (Paediatric) 1.8%
5. Nausea/Vomiting 2.5%	10. Diarrhoea (Paediatric) 1.3%

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	3.9%
Attend Emergency Department Immediately	15.3%
See Healthcare Provider	48.5%
Self Care	30.9%
Other (includes Poisons, Police, etc)	1.4%
Total	100%

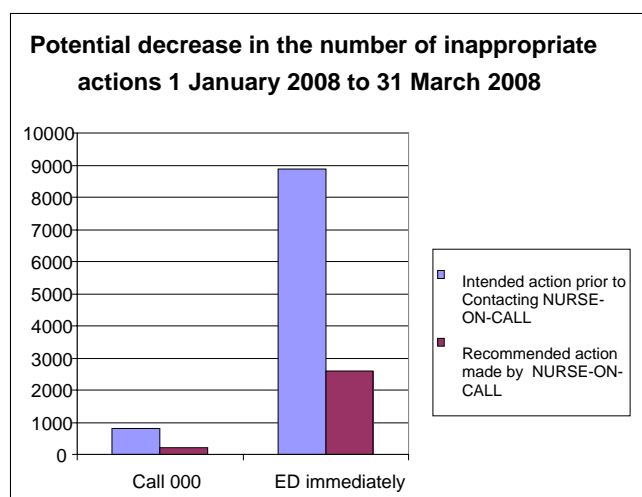


*Disposition refers to the recommendation made by NURSE-ON-CALL

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 803 callers who indicated that they would have rung an ambulance if they had not rung NURSE-ON-CALL, only 211 (26%) of them were assessed as needing an ambulance transfer. Of the 8,864 callers who indicated that they would have gone to a hospital emergency department immediately, only 2,603 (29%) were advised to go to an emergency department. See graph.

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 8,363 callers surveyed in January - March 2008 who said that they would have cared for themselves at home, 158 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