

**INQUIRY INTO OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF  
THE NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL**

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 22 June 2019

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Partially  
Confidential

Early this year, our four year old grand daughter's health started to go downhill around one midday. This was on a day that we look after her and her younger sister at our Mona Vale home, for their Mum and Dad who are both working.

My wife phoned her Mum at her workplace and advised that was hot, pale, lack lustre and just wanted to cuddle up - totally unlike her lively spirit. Her Mum (who is a Doctor herself) phoned their family Doctor at Mona Vale and arranged an appointment straight away due to the thought of a possibility of a form of Meningococcus as there had been a few outbreaks around that time.

We visited the Doctors surgery and he saw straight away. He had some doubts about Meningococcus but, was unsure of her condition. He said to take her to Northern Beaches Hospital (NBH) straight away if she vomited. She vomited as she came back out into the waiting room. The Doctor rang NBH to advise that was about to be on her way to the hospital with an undiagnosed illness. My wife and I bundled the girls into our car and departed for the hospital.

Upon arrival at NBH Emergency, we attended the front desk and were advised that a Triage Nurse would see shortly. The front desk had two women working from desks and chairs down behind the counter. The Emergency Dep't Waiting Room was completely empty at that time.

Approximately five minutes later we were ushered into Triage. My wife advised that Doctor had phoned NBH to advise of condition and the Triage Nurse responded "we don't take any notice of that". The Triage Nurse took details and conducted a couple of basic checks. The Triage Nurse then advised us to take a seat in the Waiting Room to await a Doctor.

**That wait lasted two and a half hours (for a 4 year old with an undiagnosed illness)** and during that time vomited three more times. My wife cleaned up with tissues and it was only after the third vomit that the front desk arranged for someone to come out and mop the floor - any nursing staff to attend to during those two and a half hours seemed to be non existent. At approximately the two hour mark our daughter in law arrived from work in the city to take over looking after , whilst awaiting for a NBH Doctor.

After examination, condition remained unknown. She went home after approximately, three and a half hours, with a script. Fortunately, improved markedly after two days and was just about normal by the fourth day. That adverse condition remained a mystery.

We had a feeling that there was none or, only one NBH Emergency Doctor and few nurses on duty as two and half hours later, the Emergency Waiting Room had gone from empty to all but full with people waiting to be seen.

To further disappointment, whilst waiting in the Emergency Waiting Room, at about the two hour mark, a very elderly well dressed gent took a seat. After waiting roughly a half hour he stood up and started taking all of his clothes off, to start putting some pyjamas on - it would

seem he had dementia. My wife went to the front desk and drew their attention to what was occurring. Two nurses then came out from behind a door and shielded him with a blanket and had him redress himself, then he sat himself back down.

About 20 minutes later, he did the same thing again. My wife again alerted the front desk and one nurse came out and helped the gent dress himself again. At no time was this gent afforded any dignity by taking him aside and placing him into a separate room - he obviously had a problem and he should have been treated with some respect instead of placing him into a position that allowed him to strip down naked in front of the sizeable numbers of people in the Waiting Room. He was eventually taken thru a door somewhere but, it was disgraceful treatment.

Our first experience at NBH was deplorable and we vowed then that if anything similar happened again, we would go straight to RNS, despite the added distance. Consequently, we have not had any further dealing with NBH since that time however, we are aware of other unfortunate NBH experiences that friends and acquaintances have encountered since our visit but, that is for them to tell.

Yours sincerely