



1.1 Readmissions within 30 days in psychiatric hospital wards (in the same hospital, % of admissions) (MH-11)

1.1.1 Documentation sheet

Description	Proportion of readmissions within 30 days in psychiatric hospital wards
Calculation	Numerator: Number of readmissions in the same hospital within 30 days after discharge. Denominator: Number of stays in psychiatric hospital (PH) or in psychiatric services of general hospital (PSGH)
Rationale	Hospital readmission rates are commonly used as proxy for relapse or complication following a psychiatric inpatient stay: they can point to premature discharge or lack of coordination with outpatient care or a lack of continuity of care.
Data source	MPG – RPM
Technical definitions	Data is reported based on the region of the patient's residence. Some hospitals have a unique stay number rather than a unique patient number (readmissions are not counted as such). Only hospital stays where the patient was discharged are included.
International comparability	This indicator is currently included in the international mental health comparison from the NHS Benchmarking Network, ¹ it was proposed by the OECD mental care panel. ² The NHS Benchmarking Network defines emergency readmissions as unplanned/unexpected admissions for patients who have been recently discharged from inpatient psychiatric care (typically in the previous 28-30 days) for a problem that is the same or similar to the original complaint for which the patient was treated. ¹ This does not include planned follow up admissions, or a return of patients from a period of leave. Emergency readmissions may occur if a patient was discharged too early or if their support in the community following discharge was inadequate. Emergency admissions are not always avoidable and can reflect a relapse in clinical symptoms and illness triggered by other events. ¹
Limitations	International comparisons for this indicator are limited.
Dimensions	Quality (Appropriateness)
Related indicators	
Reviewer	Nathalie Terryn (FPS Public Health)



1.1.2 Results

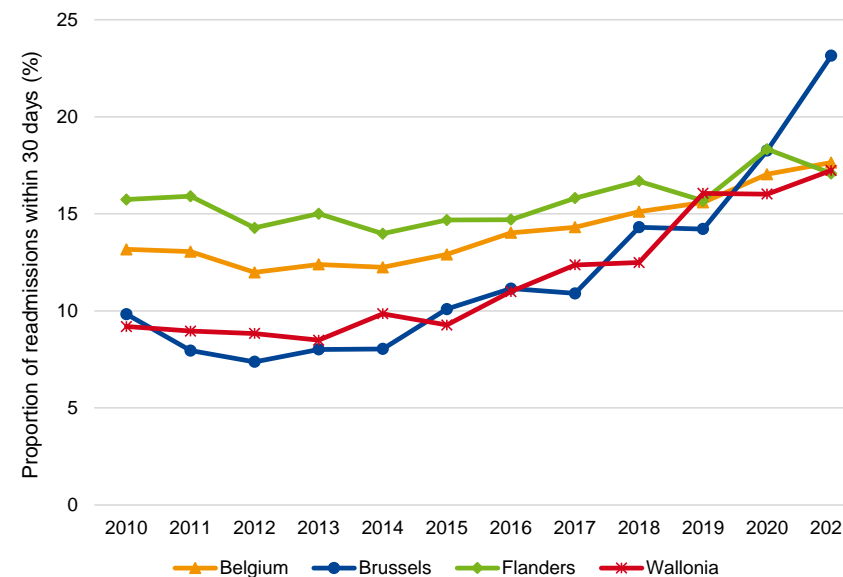
Belgium

The rate of 30 days readmissions in Belgium increased from 13.17% in 2010 to 17.64% in 2021.

Regional comparison

The rate of 30 days readmissions increased across all regions between 2010 and 2021, and especially since 2015 (see Figure 1). Brussels has a higher rate (23.15% in 2021) than Wallonia (17.24%) and Flanders (17.08%). The higher rates of 30 days admissions in Flanders compared to Brussels and Wallonia until the year 2015, come partly from an artefact. Brussels had two psychiatric services of general hospital (out of a total of 19 for both PH and PSGH) that had a unique number for stays instead of a unique number for patient: those hospitals had a nil readmission rate. Wallonia had a similar problem with one psychiatric service of a general hospital (out of a total of 41 for both PH and PSGH). These problems have been resolved from 2016 on. Rates in Brussels increased substantially in the last two years, by 63% between 2019 and 2021.

Figure 1 – 30 days readmission rate in psychiatric hospital or in psychiatric services in general hospital, by patient region (2010-2021)



Source: FPS Public Health (RHM-RPM)

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

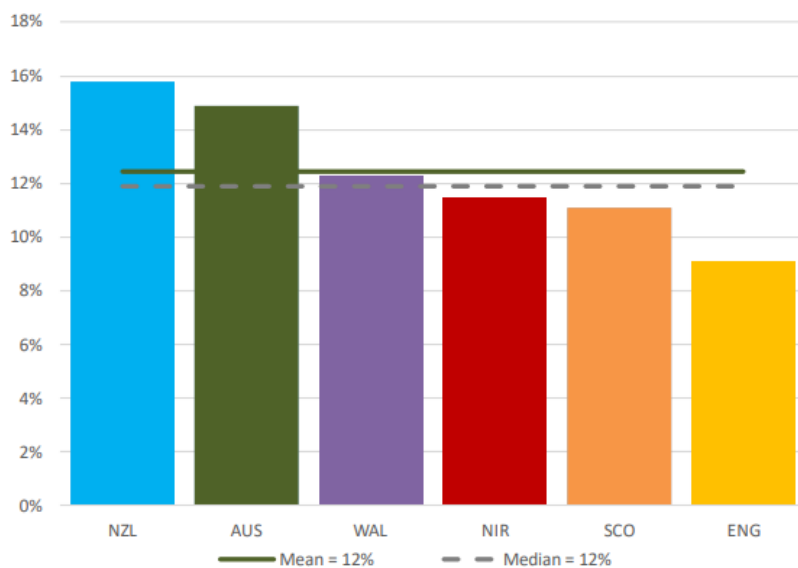
Based on the data available, it not clear what was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on readmissions within 30 days in psychiatric hospitals.



International comparison

The NHS Benchmarking Network is setting up an initiative to compare mental health service for adults and older adults; emergency readmissions is in the indicators set. The mean readmission rate among the countries (Australia, New Zealand, Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland and England) was 12% and the median 12% in 2022 (see Figure 2), which was lower than the rate in Belgium in 2021.

Figure 2 – Unplanned readmission rate for adults in mental healthcare: international comparison (2022)



Source: NHS Benchmarking Network 2022

NZE: New Zealand, AUS: Australia, SCO: Scotland, WAL: Wales, ENG: England, NIR: Northern Ireland.

Key points

- **Belgium has a 30 days readmission rate for mental illness of 17.64% in 2021, which is in the range of other similar countries.**
- **In 2021, Brussels has a higher rate (23.15%) than Wallonia (17.24%) and Flanders (17.08%).**

References

1. NHS Benchmarking Network. International Mental Health Benchmarking. 2022.
2. Hermann RC, Mattke S. Selecting indicators for the quality of mental health care at the health systems level in OECD countries. Paris: OECD; 2004. OECD Health Technical Papers 17 (17)