

Title of the work:

NHS winter pressures: Being in hospital

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Where's it from?

<https://www.health.org.uk/blogs/nhs-winter-pressure-being-in-hospital>

Type of work

Blog post

Why it's significant?

The post covers the what increased demand on the NHS (the UK's health service) due to the winter respiratory season really means. In this case, equipment and staff availability.

What is most relevant, is the frank tone in which triage is discussed:

"The difficult decisions that hospital staff have to make to manage demand are not shown in the data. These decisions include delaying planned operations for patients who are likely to need critical care post-operatively, if critical care beds are under pressure from winter-related admissions."

Note here, how the pre-2020 tone on triage varies with what we've read about this risk of hospitals being overrun over the course of this pandemic. It is seen, as a normal if unfortunate thing.

Of further importance, is the highlighting of a general downtrend in NHS bed resources year on year:

“The number of hospital beds in England has been falling since at least the 1980s, if not earlier. This has largely been facilitated by shorter hospital stays and the development of less invasive medical procedures. But the number of hospital beds is no longer keeping pace with demand...However, data from 2016 onwards suggest that as admissions are continuing to rise, nursing numbers are not. Winter peaks in [sickness absence](#) for all hospital staff further exacerbate this situation.”

This points out that the healthcare system in the UK will often experience strain during a normal respiratory season and points out that the solution is to increase healthcare capacity, which has clearly been a long-standing issue predating 2020.

On a scale of 1-10, what level of hysteria do think this piece reflects?

3- It's a calm analysis of pressure on the NHS, suggesting rational solutions.