

At-home care recipients spend double the time in hospital compared to aged care residents, finds Australian study

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New research from the Registry of Senior Australians (ROSA) at SAHMRI, has revealed senior people receiving home care packages

spend more than twice the amount of days in hospital, compared to those living in residential aged care.

The study, recently [published](#) in the *Australian Health Review*, involved collaboration between Flinders University, the University of South Australia and the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network, and was led by Dr. Stephanie Harrison, examining [emergency department](#) (ED) presentations, unplanned hospitalizations, potentially preventable hospitalizations and time in hospital.

The national data included people aged 65 years and older from around Australia, with 203,278 individuals living in residential aged care and 118,999 receiving home care packages in the community.

"We found individuals receiving home care packages spent 7,745 days in hospital per 1,000 individuals, compared to 3,049 days for individuals living in residential aged care," Dr. Harrison said.

"These people had more ED presentations, and unplanned and potentially preventable hospital visits."

Individuals with home care packages accounted for 43% of ED presentations, 40% of unplanned hospitalizations and 12% of preventable hospitalizations.

This was contrasted by 38%, 33% and 8% in the same categories for individuals living in [residential aged care](#).

Unplanned hospitalizations and ED presentations are burdensome both for patients and the health system.

These findings highlight the challenges faced in long-term care settings, particularly those receiving home care, and the need for further efforts

to address high rates of unplanned hospitalizations and ED presentations experienced by an increasing number of older Australians.

More information: Stephanie L. Harrison et al, Hospitalisations and emergency department presentations by older individuals accessing long-term aged care in Australia, *Australian Health Review* (2024). [DOI: 10.1071/AH24019](https://doi.org/10.1071/AH24019)

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