Appropriateness of Accident and Emergency attendance in Haringey

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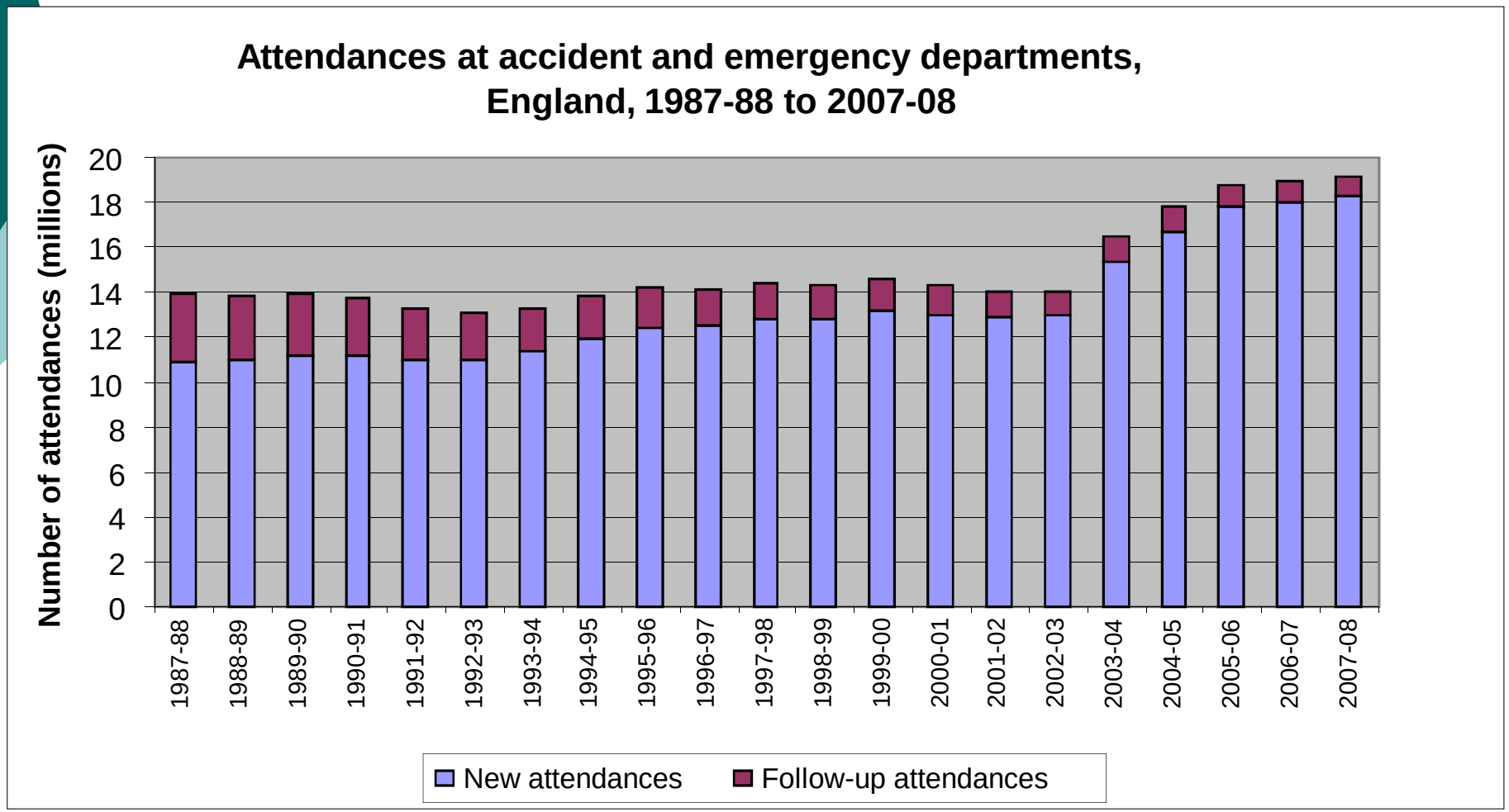
NHS
Haringey

Background



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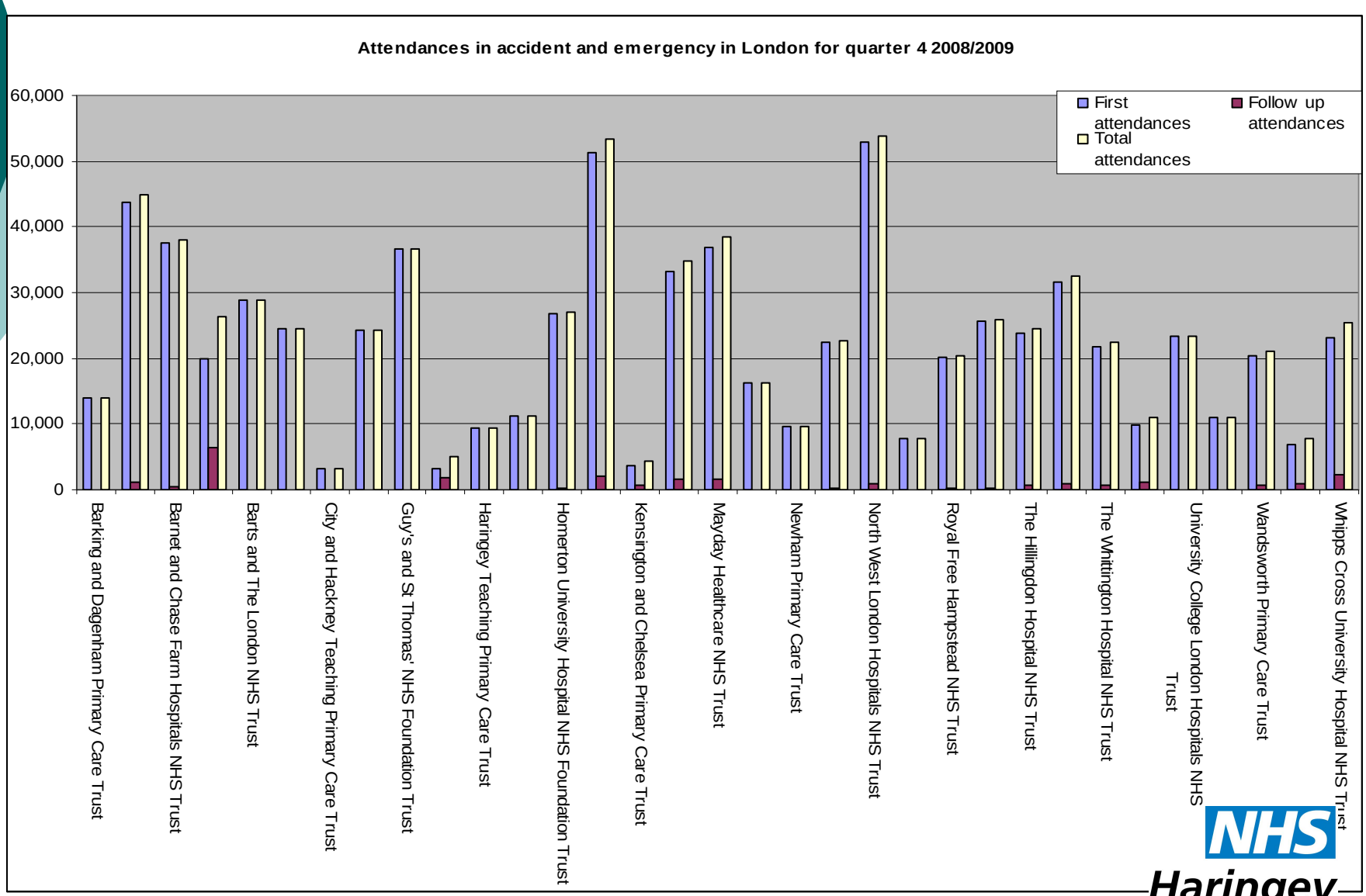
Attendances at London Hospitals 2008-9



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Healthcare for London

- ‘Unscheduled care is any planned contact with the NHS by a person requiring or seeking help, care or advice. It follows that such demand can occur at any time, and that services must be available to meet this demand 24 hours a day’

- Unscheduled care includes urgent care and emergency care

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London data – 2007-2008

- Over 12 million A&E attendances
- 41% discharged without follow-up
- 20% admitted
- 17% discharged with GP follow-up
- 3.6% left the department without treatment or refused treatment (452,000)

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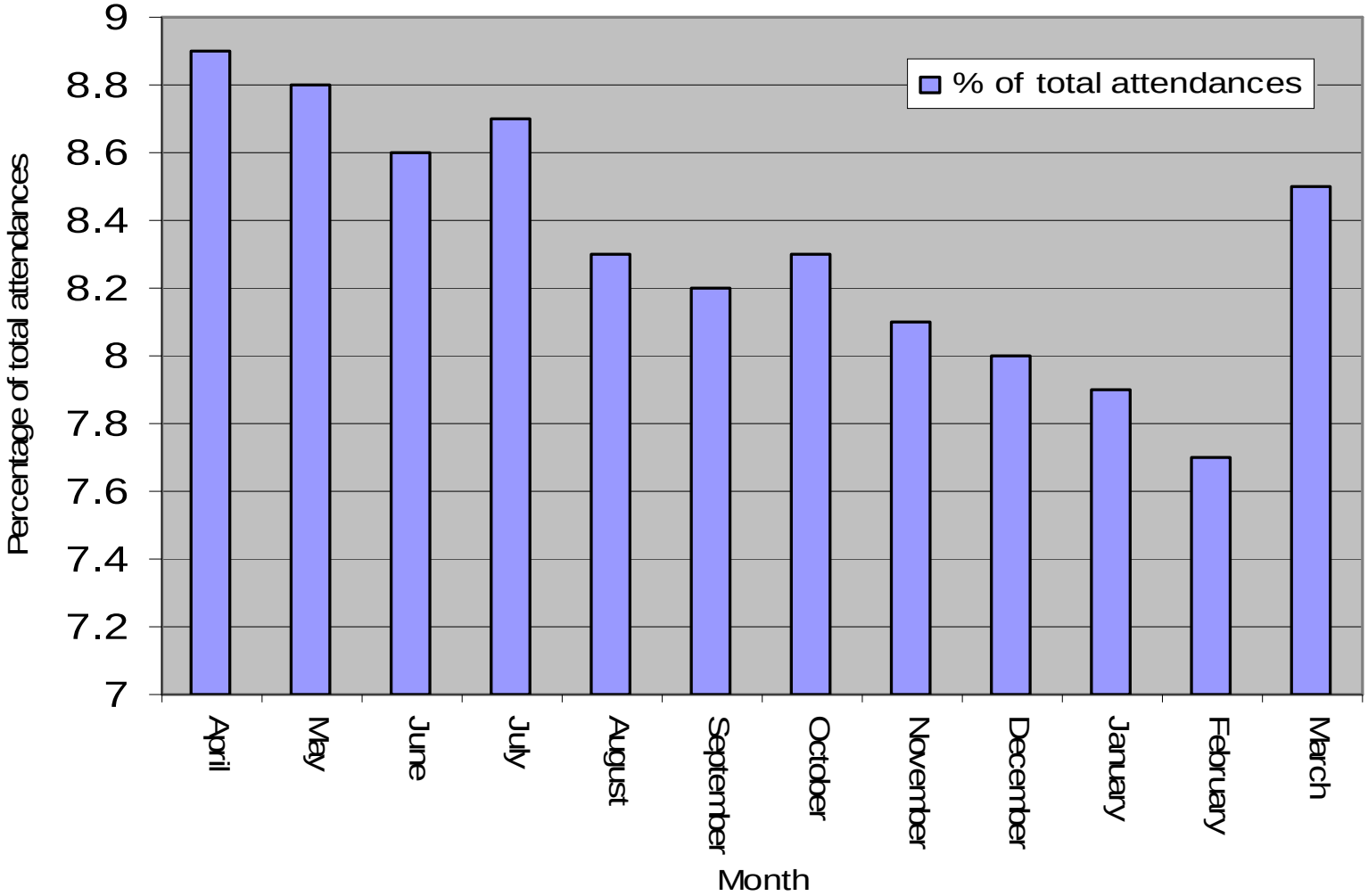
A&E attendances by month (2007-2008)



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London data 2007-2008

- Coding – 5 million attendances not correctly coded
- Monthly attendances did not vary much
- Monday – highest number of attendances
- 10am – midday peak time
- 20-29 years – highest attendance

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Costs

- Ambulance - £225
- A&E - £68
- GP appointment £15-£30
- From the study 25% of patient used an ambulance

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Healthcare for London

- ‘Healthcare for London: A Framework for Action – July 2007 (Lord Darzi)

- In-depth examination of unscheduled care systems across six PCTs across London (February to September 2008)

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Healthcare for London – The case for change

- More can be done to prevent people entering the unscheduled care system
- Access to care needs to improve and be more responsive to patients needs
- System needs to be less complex and easier to navigate
- Standards and quality needs to improve
- Whole system approach and improved patient experience

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Literature review 1

- 6-89% are 'inappropriate' (social class, distance from hospital)
- Up to 20% had seen their GP up to five days previously
- 20% of A&E patients referred by their GP
- 50% of young adults unaware of out-of-hours arrangements

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Literature review 2

- Media campaigns unsuccessful to raise awareness
- Once in hospital, inappropriate investigations!
- Walk-in centres have not reduced demand
- BME groups have particular issues

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The project

- A&E data from North Middlesex and Whittington Hospital from April 2007 to December 2008
- Aim was to identify the case mix and whether the attendance was appropriate or inappropriate
- Private providers – Camidoc and Walk-in centre have not provided data despite repeated requests
- Swine flu has delayed London Ambulance data

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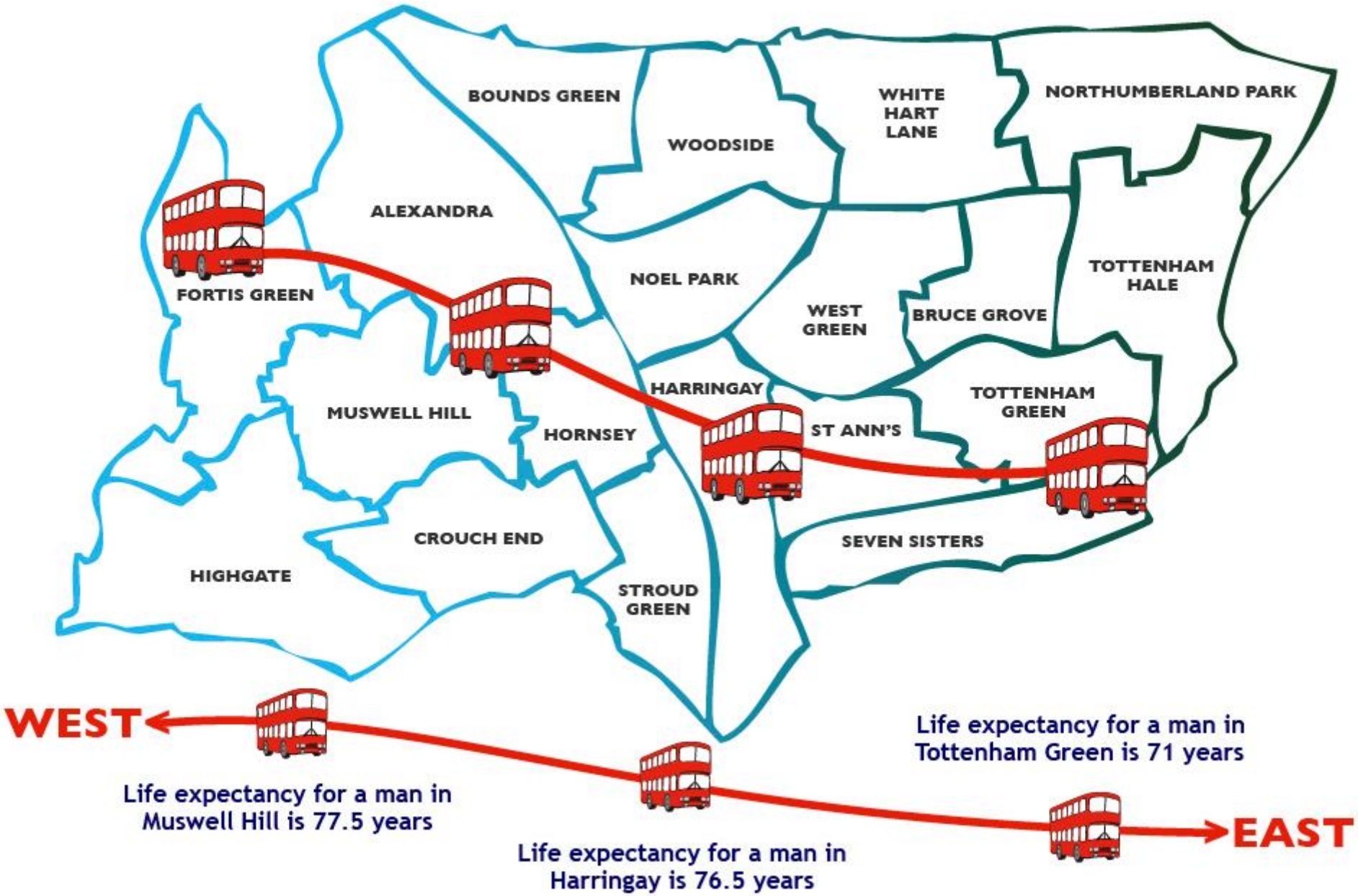
HOP ON THE HARINGEY LIFE EXPECTANCY LINE

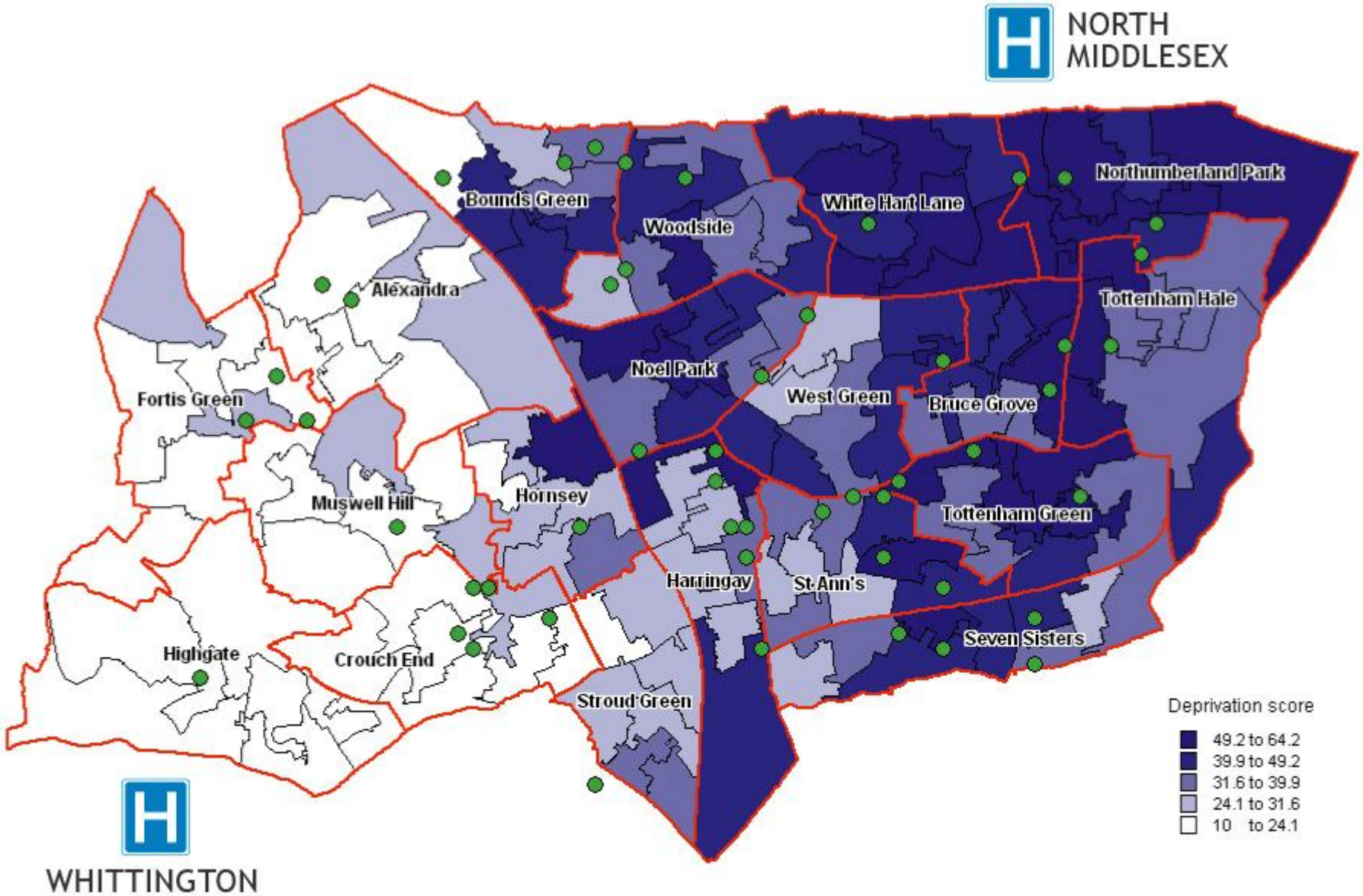
Haringey



HARINGEY GPs PLOTTED AGAINST DEPRIVATION SCORES

(December 2008)

NHS Haringey



Age and sex distribution

- Men and women in equal proportions which is different from NHS London data (more women and children)
- Age distribution at both A&Es is almost identical
- Highest attendances in 20-44 year age group
- Both hospitals had a very high attendance in children under 18 years old
- The number of older people was relatively small

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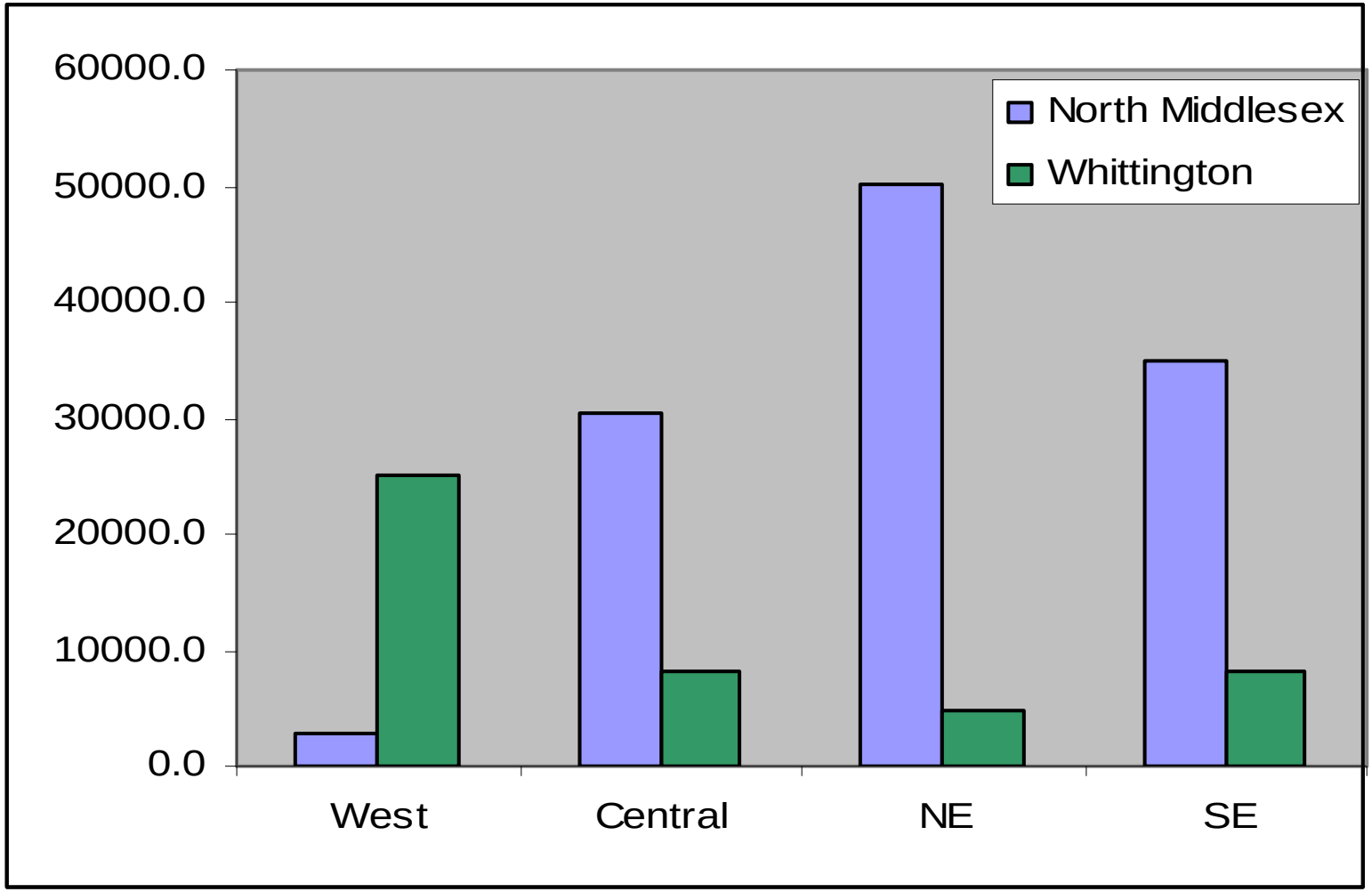
Attendance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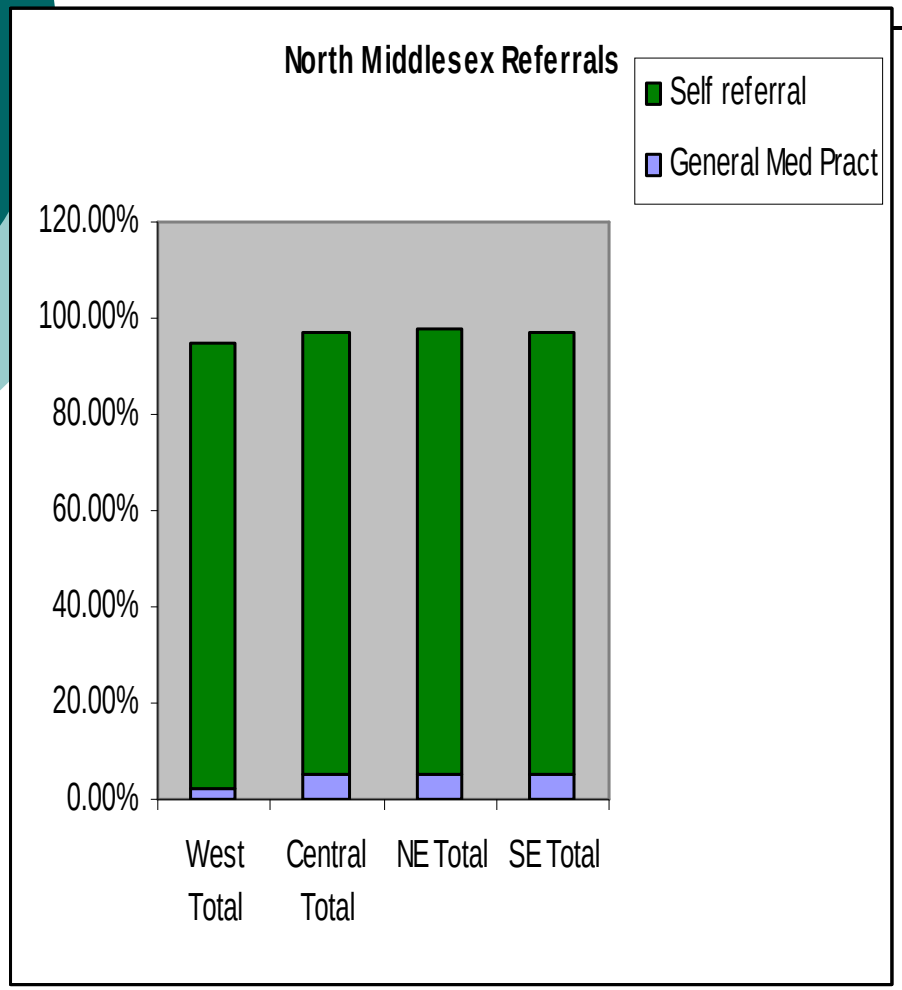
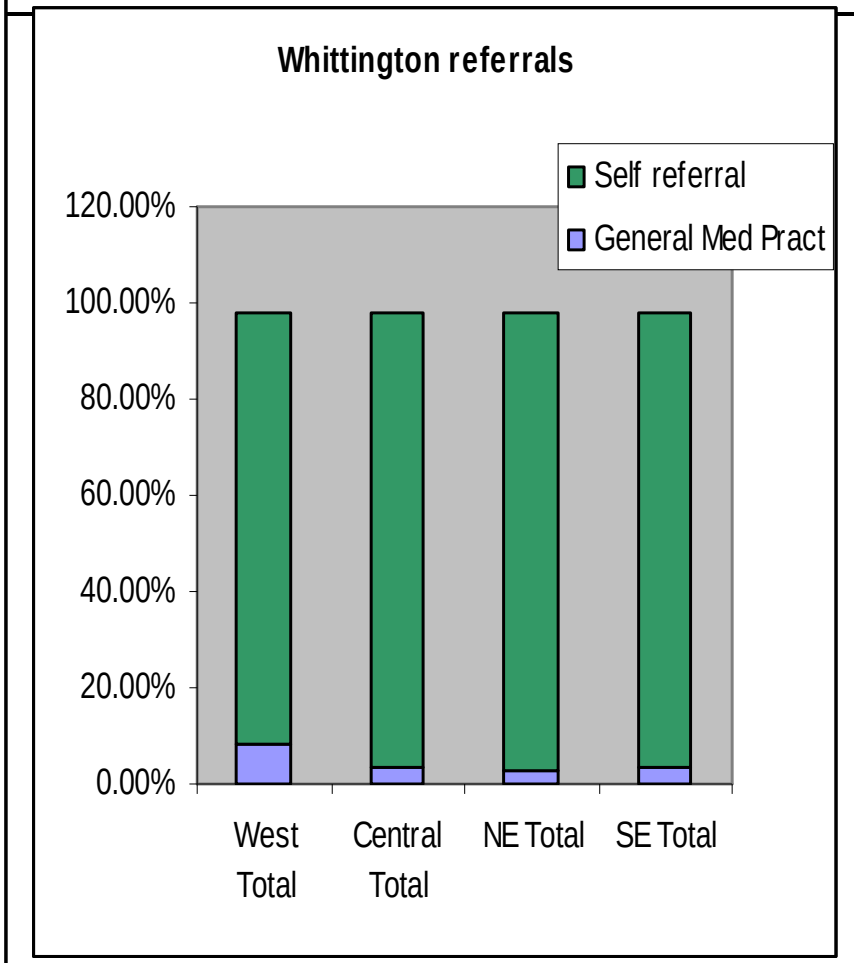
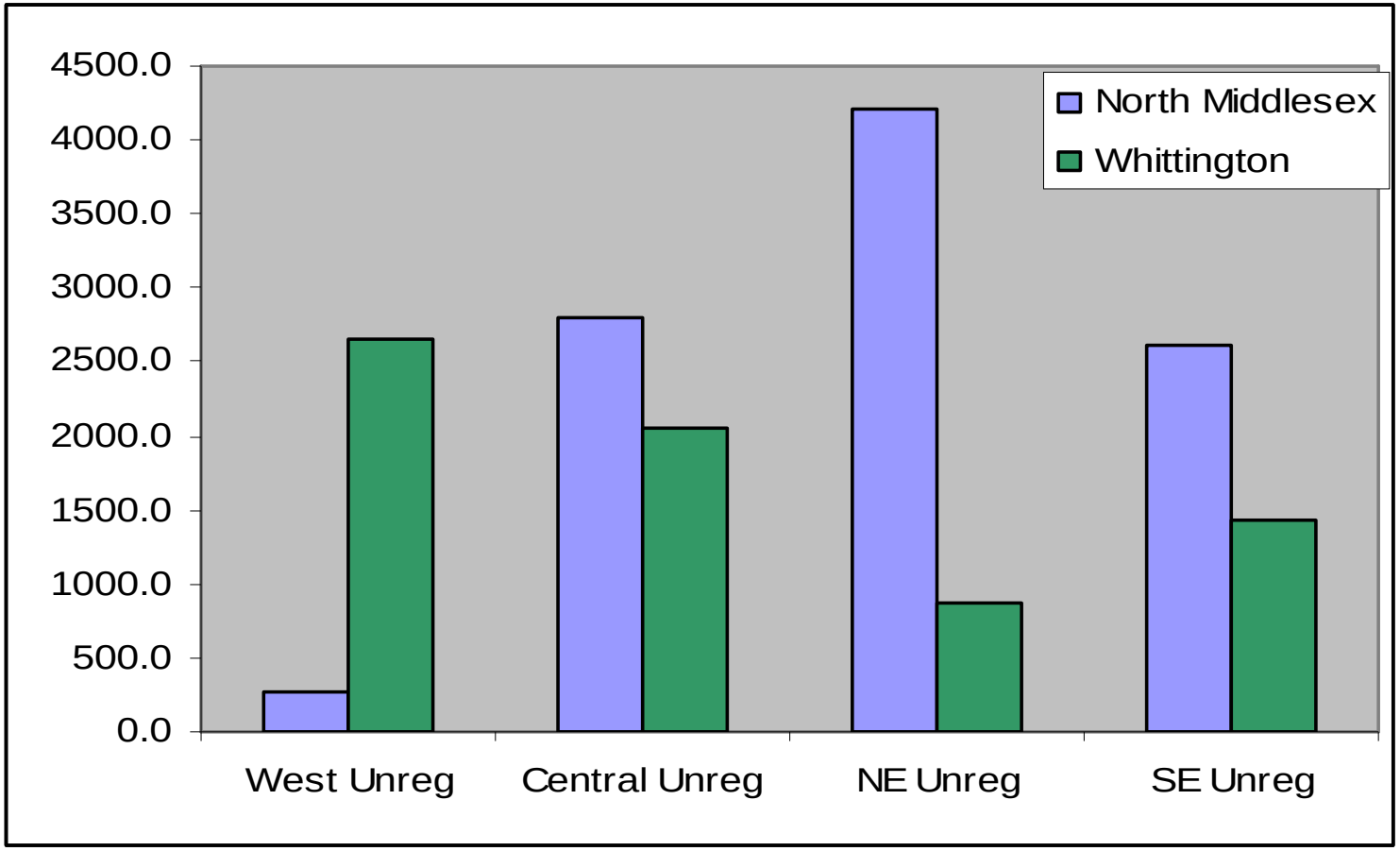
North Middlesex
Whittington
West
Central
NE
SE

Referral Source





Unregistered patients



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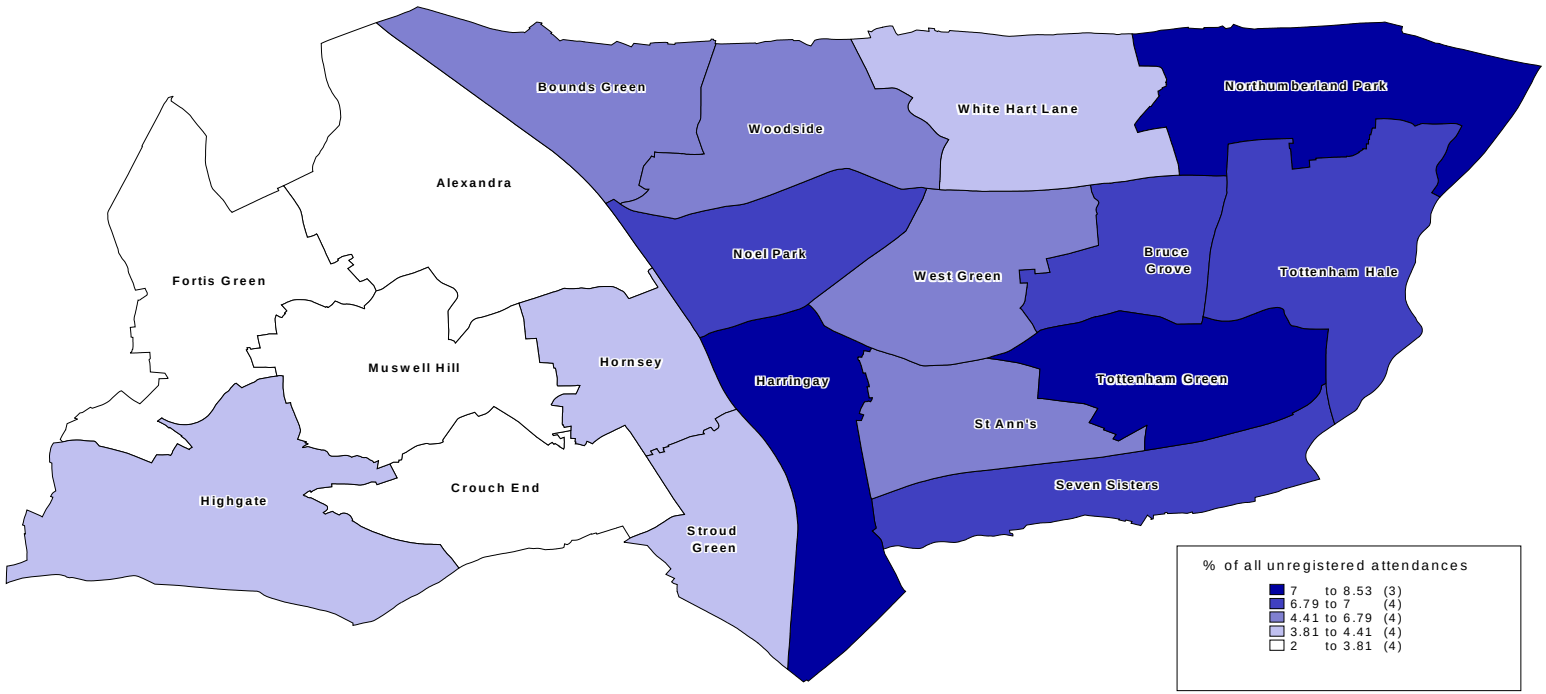


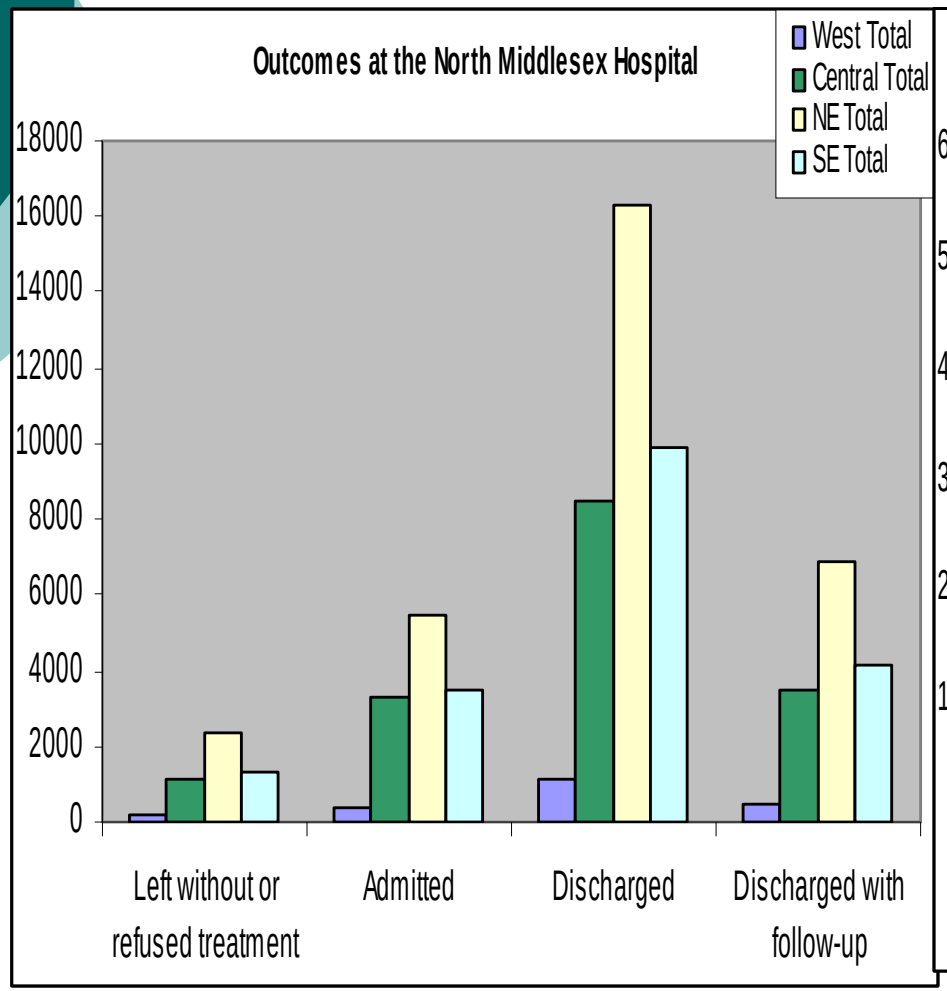
Appropriateness of hospital attendance

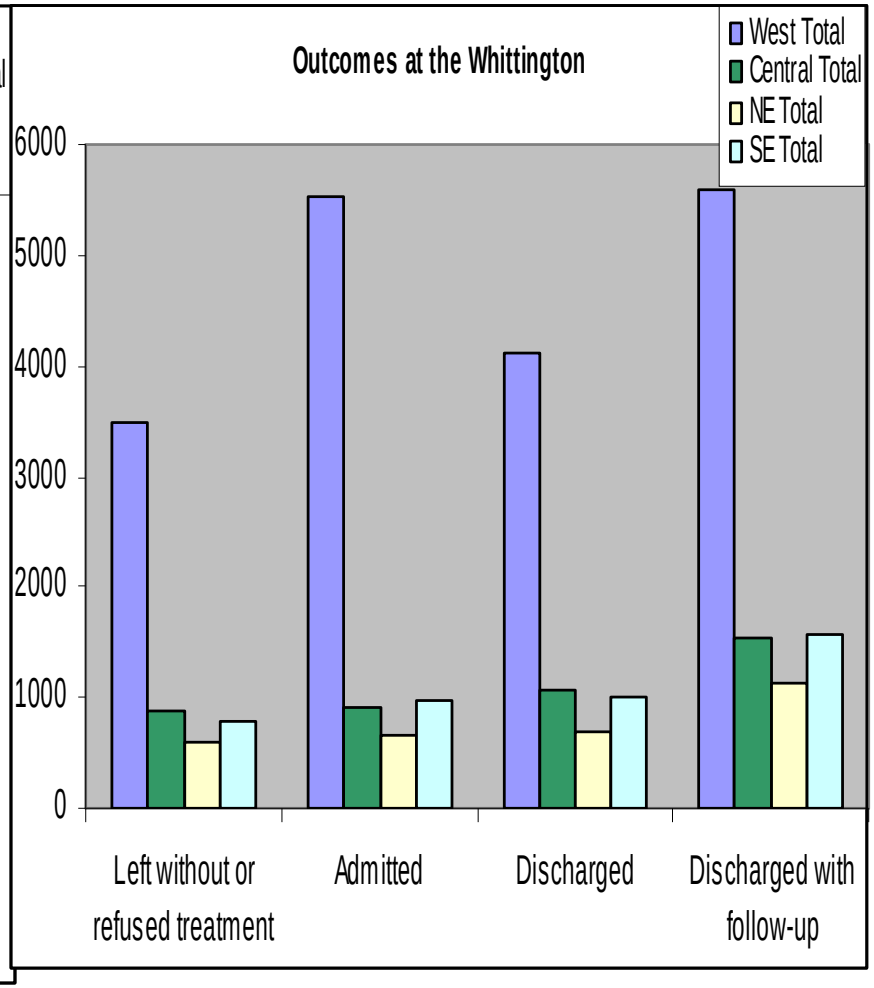
- ‘Inappropriate’ refers only to attendance in A&E and implies that they could be seen by a doctor in another location
- All patients who are not investigated, discharged without treatment and not referred to other hospital services are deemed ‘Inappropriate’
- For simplicity, all patients were included (but should have excluded 5% GP referrals)
- Grossly underestimates adult appropriateness – junior doctors do a lot of unnecessary investigations!
- Diagnoses that do not fit into this methodology include anaphylaxis and some trauma

Appropriateness of hospital attendance

- 37% of adults and 60% of children are attending A&E inappropriately
- The pattern is similar in both hospitals and across the collaboratives
- As a rate, the Whittington has lowest inappropriate attendance but the proportions remain as above

Outcome following A&E attendance

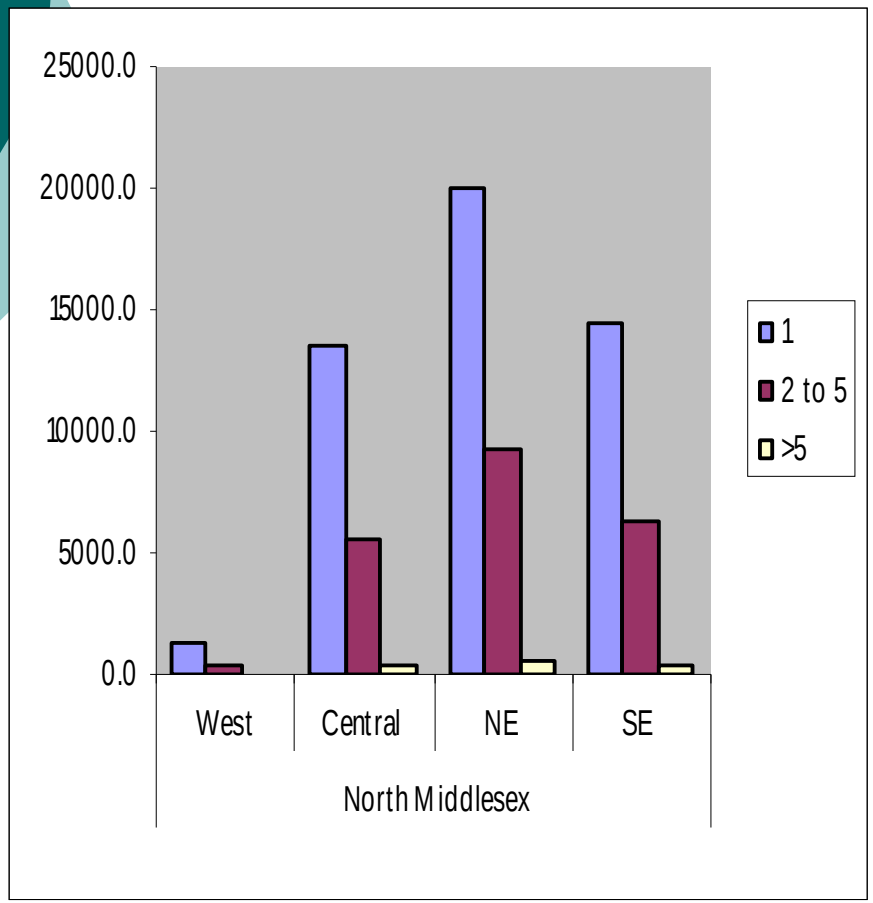


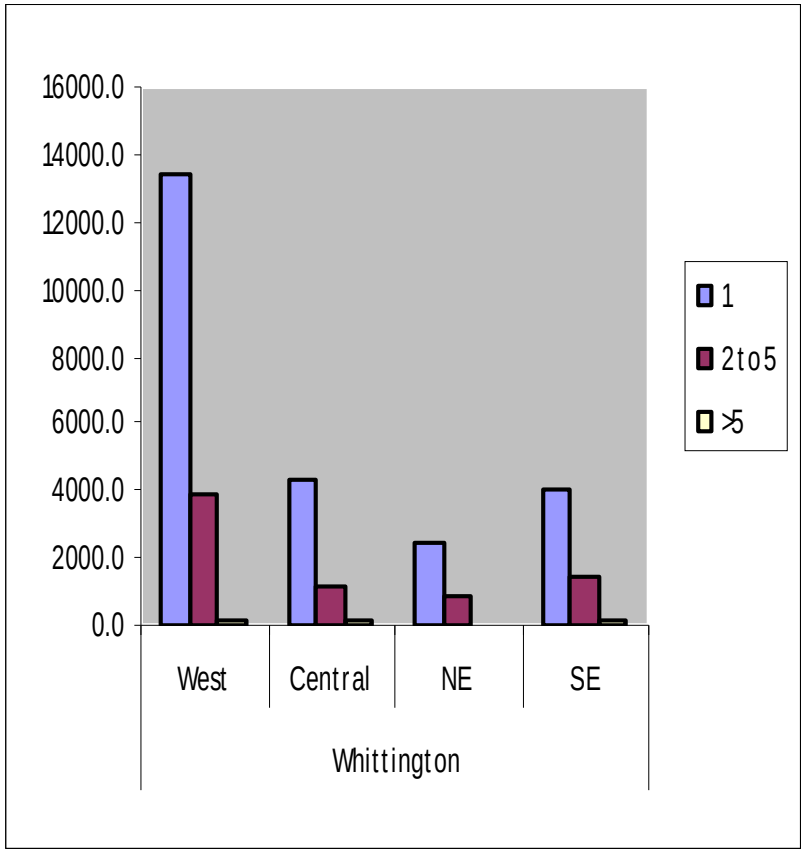


Outcomes

- A large number of people left without treatment or refused the treatment (5021 North Middlesex, 5745 Whittington)
- Attendances are charged on booking into A&E
- A large number of people were discharged without follow-up or were not admitted to hospital (35,797 at the North Middlesex and 6849 at the Whittington).

Frequent attenders



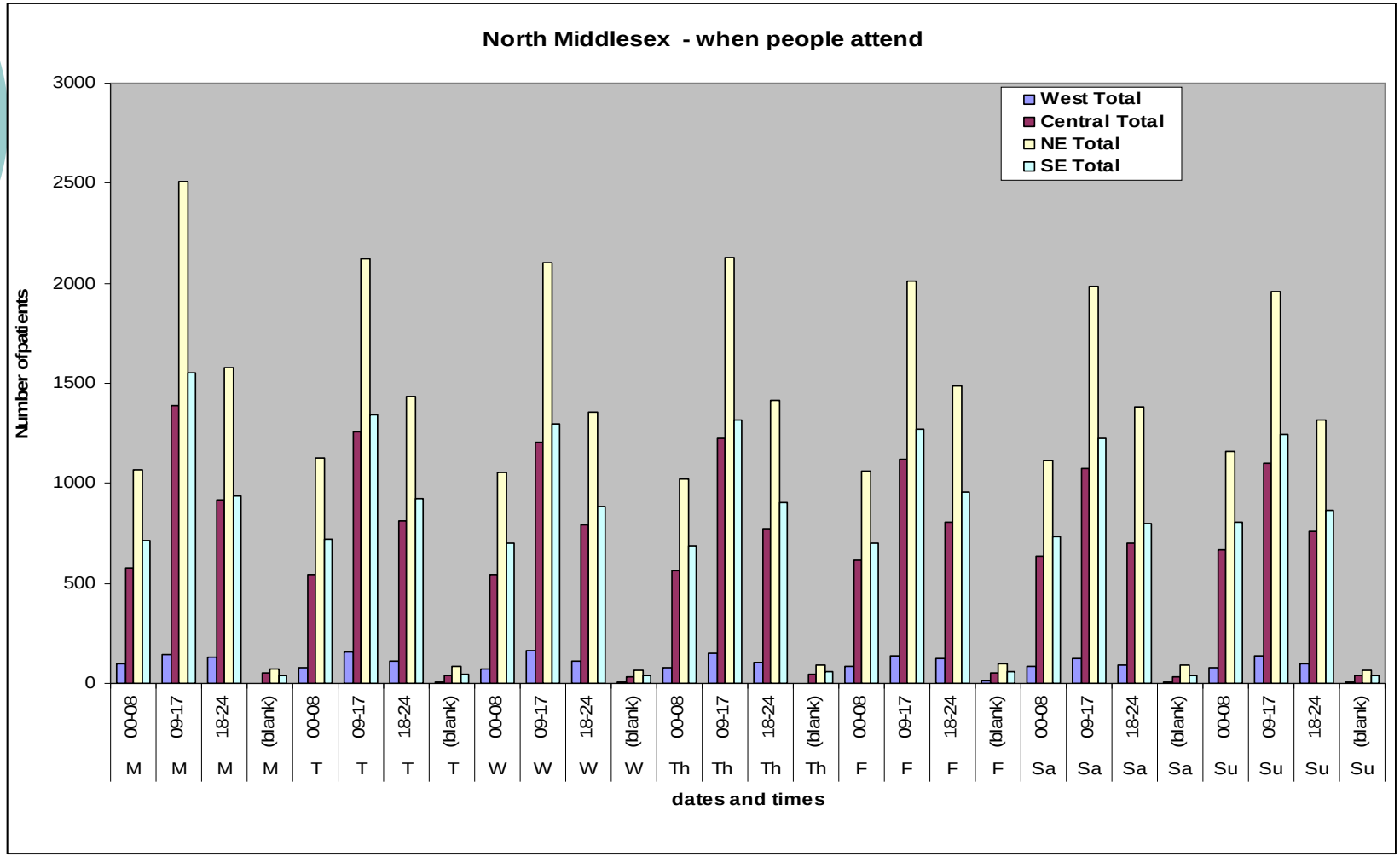


Frequent attenders

- 10,000 patients attended A&E between two and five times

- The majority of these were from the NE (6329), Central (3367) and SE (3776)

Timing of A&E attendance



Timing of A&E attendance

- The peak attendance time is 9am-5pm. Monday to Sunday.
- Using attendance rates – 1/3 of all attendances are during GP working hours
- The North East was the highest user of out-of-hours services followed by the South East

Conclusion

- Many A&E attendances are inappropriate and patients could be seen elsewhere
- Registered patients are choosing not to access GP services during their normal working hours
- There are still many unregistered patients in Haringey

Further questions that need to be addressed

- Why are patients choosing to bypass primary care?
- Why do such high numbers of children attend A&E – worried parents? Lack of confidence in primary care?
- Although the patterns are similar across Haringey, there may be different underlying reasons for this.