

7. The care of patients who did not undergo surgery

Size of unit

A greater proportion of emergency patients underwent surgery at large units than at intermediate or remote units.

The data were analysed to ascertain whether the type of unit into which emergency patients were admitted was associated with a difference in the likelihood of receiving palliative care rather than surgery (Figure 2).

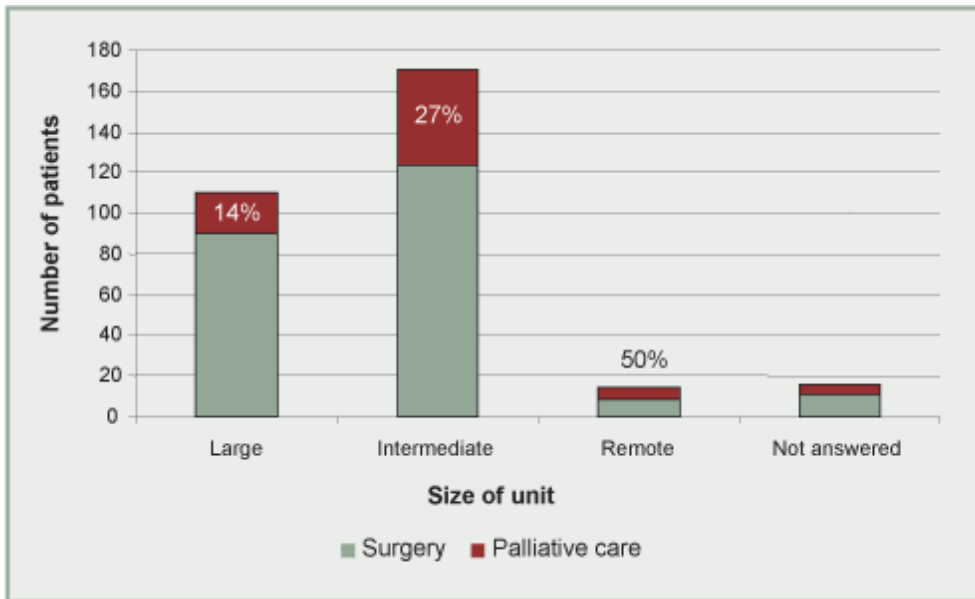


Figure 2. Care of patients by size of vascular unit $n=342$

The smaller the size of the unit, the more likely it was that the patient would receive palliative care. As reported in the chapter on Method, NCEPOD has been unable to carry out case-mix correction so these differences may be due to differences in patient population. Also, if surgery did take place, data was collected from the hospital where the operation took place. If a patient was admitted to one hospital and then transferred to another hospital for surgery, data was collected about the patient from the receiving hospital not the referring hospital. It may have been that smaller units transferred out patients with a good chance of survival, consequently more patients overall at smaller units would have received palliative care.