

Announcement of a methodological change to the Summary Hospital-level Mortality Indicator (SHMI)

Background

The SHMI methodology does not make any adjustment for patients who are recorded as receiving palliative care. This is because there is considerable variation between trusts in the way that palliative care codes are used. Using the same spell level data as the SHMI, there are two contextual indicators which cover palliative care. These present crude percentage rates of finished provider spells and deaths with palliative care coding, respectively. This is where a palliative care code has been used at either diagnosis or specialty level.

A change to treatment function codes requires us to make a methodological change as paediatric palliative care is now covered using a new code.

Methodological changes

Trust level, site level and diagnosis group level data

There is no change to the main SHMI methodology used to calculate expected deaths and SHMI values at trust, site and diagnosis group level. These do not use palliative care codes as no adjustment for palliative care is made in the SHMI model.

Palliative care contextual indicators

Previously, the two palliative care contextual indicators described in the *Background* section, flagged patients under two palliative care categories. These categories flagged patients if they were treated under the palliative care speciality (TREATMENT_PALLIATIVE_FLAG) or if they had a diagnosis of palliative care recorded (DIAGNOSIS_PALLIATIVE_FLAG).

Both these categories are combined (COMBINED_PALLIATIVE_FLAG) to give the overall data for these two indicators.

TREATMENT_PALLIATIVE_FLAG was previously set to equal "Y" if the following condition was met in Hospital Episode Statistics Admitted Patient Care (HES APC) data:

- For any episode in the spell TRETSPPEF = 315

Following this methodological change this condition is altered as follows:

- For any episode in the spell TRETSPPEF in (240, 315)

The code 240 is the new code for Paediatric Palliative Care.

Timing

The first publication to be affected by this change will be the October 2022 release, which will cover discharges in the period June 2021 – May 2022.



Digital

Methodological Changes

Impact

This change will have no immediate impact as no use of the new code has yet been detected in the SHMI record-level data. It is expected that this code will be used in the future and the change has been made in anticipation of this.

NHS Digital will monitor use of the new code within the SHMI record-level data going forward. If use of the new code starts to have a substantial impact on published SHMI data users will be informed of this through the SHMI background data report which is part of the monthly publication.

Further information

Questions and feedback on this change are welcomed and should be sent to enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk or alternatively call 0300 303 5678.