



Australian Government

Department of Health



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Availability of Medicare Data

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What are Medicare records?

- Medicare records are records of **benefit payments** for Medicare services.
- They do not include:
 - DVA services
 - Public patients in hospital
 - Outpatients or ED departments



Strengths and Weaknesses

Limitations

- No clinical or diagnostic information
- Items may be used for multiple purposes
- Multiple operations rules
- Not all pathology captured

Strengths

- Track individual patients
- Track individual providers



Publicly released data

- Department of Health website -
Summary statistics updated quarterly. BTOS, national, State, RA.
- Department of Human Services website -
Interactive tool by item and groups, patient age and sex, State, national, Medicare Local.
- National Health Performance Authority -
Interactive tool for statistics by Medicare local areas.
- Medicare Local website – statistics for non-referred Attendances with BTOS A, B and M by Medicare Local.



Small area data

- Usually SA3 level or above.
- SA2 level (suburbs) only if a strong case is made.
- Confidentialisation ensures the privacy of patients and providers
- If the area is too small, confidentialisation may limit usefulness of the data.



Accessing research data

- DHS's External Request Evaluation Committee (EREC) considers requests.
- EREC has Health and DHS representatives.
- The committee considers requests against privacy and secrecy considerations, and resource use.



EREC: assessing requests for data

Tests

- Purpose
- Anonymity
- Consent
- Secrecy
- Resource use
- Reputation
- Other policies

Restrictions

- Only use for the purpose given
- Destroy/return data on completion



Data linkage

- Data linkage can bring benefits such as highlighting new health risks.
- A national framework for data linkage considers privacy and confidentiality of individuals and organisations.
- Researchers wanting health data for linkage should contact AIHW.
- More information: www.nss.gov.au.



MBS 10% sample

- Department of Health preparing a report to the Data Governance Council.
- Considering options for researchers to access de-identified MBS data.