Statistics on Drug Misuse

England, 2016

Data Quality Statement

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This report may be of interest to members of the public, policy officials and other stakeholders to make local and national comparisons and to monitor the quality and effectiveness of services.

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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparability and Coherence</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness and Punctuality</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility and Clarity</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality, Transparency and Security</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background

This annual compendium report presents a range of up-to-date information on drug use and misuse among both adults and children from a variety of sources, including previously published information from reports such as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on deaths related to drug misuse; National drug treatment monitoring system (NDTMS); Crime survey for England and Wales (CSEW); Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use (SDD) and What About Youth (WAY).

This report also presents new analyses by the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) which consists of statistics on the number of NHS hospital admissions attributable to drug related mental health and behavioural disorders and on the number of NHS hospital admissions attributable to poisoning by illicit drugs.

The report mainly focuses on England only where possible, but does include some international comparisons.

Relevance

This publication is considered to be of particular interest to NHS and independent sector providers in England and to English NHS commissioning organisations. However, data and findings are likely to also be of interest to a much broader base of users.

Accuracy

This report is a National Statistic and is produced according to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Most of the information in this report has been previously published. The sources of the information are trusted sources; the majority being either National or Official Statistics. Most sources referenced in this report include a Methodology section for further information.


Specific data quality issues for the inpatient data for 2014/15 can be seen via the data quality note which accompanied the “Hospital Episode Statistics, Admitted Patient Care, England - 2014-15” report at: http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB19124

Drug Related Hospital Admissions

HES data is available from 1989-90 onwards. During this time there have been on-going improvements in data quality and coverage, which particularly affect earlier data years. Some of the increase in figures for later years (particularly 2006-07 onwards) may be due to the improvement in the recording of secondary diagnoses and the coverage of independent sector activity. The former is particularly relevant for the measure ‘Hospital admissions with a primary or secondary diagnosis of drug-related mental and behavioural disorders’ as this are more dependent on the use of secondary diagnoses than the other measures.

There has been a number of changes to the classifications used within HES records. The data presented in this report are for inpatients only and therefore does not reflect all hospital
activity. This should be considered when interpreting the data as recording and clinical practice may vary over time and between regions.

Some caution is necessary when looking at these data as, drug misuse may only be suspected and may not always be recorded by the hospital and, where drug misuse is recorded it may not be possible to identify which drug(s) may be involved.

**Survey data**

Some of the information presented in the report is taken from survey data. Sometimes the mode of data collection used in a survey can have an impact on how respondents answer the questionnaire. For example, surveys conducted via a face-to-face interview such as the Health Survey for England (HSE) provide an opportunity for an interviewer to use a computer to record the respondent’s answers which will improve the quality of the data by ensuring all the questions are completed and not allowing any invalid answers. By comparison data collected via a postal survey such as What About Youth (WAY) will have none of these inbuilt validations.

Face-to-face interviews also provide an opportunity to guide the respondent through any interpretation issues such as the definition for new psychoactive substances, which is more difficult in a postal survey.

Both modes however, may suffer from respondents being tempted to give answers which are considered to be more socially acceptable. This could occur either through the surveys being completed in the home when other family members are present, or through the interviewer being present at a face-to-face interview. This effect may be reduced in surveys such as Smoking, Drinking and Drugs (SDD) which is conducted in schools in exam conditions.

**Comparability and Coherence**

This, like other national statistics published by the HSCIC that report on extracts of HES inpatient data, allocate episodes to time periods on the basis of episode end date.

Some international comparisons are included within the report.

All tables have been updated to change 2013/14 HES data from provisional to final and to add 2014/15 HES data.

Table 5 presents a time series of hospital admissions with a primary diagnosis of poisoning by illicit drugs. ICD 10 code T40.4 has been excluded from 2012/13 onwards because it was reclassified to include the legal drug Tramadol. Consequently, comparisons with years prior to 2012/13 should be made with caution. This code accounted for 283 cases (2.3%) in 2011/12.

Tables which include standardised rates (tables 2, 4 and 6) now use the European Standard Population to calculate the rates. In previous years, the England estimated resident mid-year population has been used. More information is available from the methodological change notice at: [http://www.hscic.gov.uk/media/21409/MethChange20160623Drugs_Compendium/pdf/MethChange20160623_Drugs_Compendium.pdf](http://www.hscic.gov.uk/media/21409/MethChange20160623Drugs_Compendium/pdf/MethChange20160623_Drugs_Compendium.pdf)
Timeliness and Punctuality

This compendium report is published annually and presents or signposts to the most up-to-date information available.

Accessibility and Clarity

This report is published online and is available free of charge with accompanying tables (in an Excel (.xls) and Comma Separated Values (.csv) format).

Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

The compendia reports on drug misuse, alcohol, smoking and obesity were subject to a National Statistics consultation earlier in 2016. The report on the findings of the consultation and the HSCIC response are available at: http://www.hscic.gov.uk/article/6770/Consultation-on-Lifestyles-Compendia-Reports

The HSCIC is keen to gain a better understanding of the users of this publication and of their needs; feedback is welcome and may be sent via the “Have your say” link within the feedback section on the publication page, or by sending an email to enquiries@hscic.gov.uk with “Statistics on Drugs Misuse” as the subject heading. Information on the Users and Uses of the report are included in an annex to the main report.

Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

All data used within this report is either already published or is part of an existing dataset. Therefore there are no data collected specifically for this report.

Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

The data contained in this publication are National Statistics. The code of practice for official statistics is adhered to from collecting the data to publishing. www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/guidance/index.html

Statistical Governance Policy

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