

## **Explanatory Notes for *Acute Episode-Based Activity Statistics***

### **General Notes**

The information presented in *Acute Episode-Based Activity Statistics* is sourced from the Hospital Inpatient System. The data relate to all episodes within the Acute Programme of Care (PoC 1). Activity recorded under Maternity & Child Health, Elderly Care, Mental Health and Learning Disability (PoCs 2, 4, 6 and 7) is excluded. In addition, from 2008/09, Independent Sector activity carried out within HSC hospitals is excluded.

Provided information is based on finished consultant episodes (FCEs). Only those episodes that ended during or before the final day of the financial year (31<sup>st</sup> March) are included in the figures provided for that year. However, episodes that began in a previous year (i.e. prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April) but ended during the year under consideration will be included.

## **The Hospital Inpatient System (HIS)**

The HIS provides information on admitted patient care delivered by Health and Social Care Hospitals in Northern Ireland. It is a patient-level administrative data source and each record relates to an individual consultant episode. During a single hospital admission, a patient may be transferred from the care of one consultant to another, generating an additional consultant episode. Episode-based data is therefore not equivalent to admission-based data, as each admission may be made up of one or more consultant episodes.

The HIS records information on patients admitted to acute hospitals as inpatients or day cases. It does not hold information on patients attending hospital as outpatients or who attended an Emergency Care Department and were not admitted, nor does it hold details of patients treated in the Primary Care setting. The HIS also does not hold details of patients admitted under any psychiatric or mental health specialties.

## Data Availability

The HIS contains over half a million records for each year but, because those relate to individual admitted patients, it is not possible to allow direct, unsupervised access to them. Many questions can, however, be answered by summarising the data. For example, 'How many admissions were there for heart attacks?' or, 'What was the average number of days spent in hospital for patients undergoing a coronary artery bypass graft?'

As the data are of general interest, Hospital Information Branch publishes tables that can be downloaded free of charge from this site. Subject to resources and data confidentiality requirements, it may be possible for the Branch to provide data breakdowns beyond the scope of the tables available or to provide presentation of the data in a different format. If you require such additional information, please contact us at [statistics@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@health-ni.gov.uk). If you require access to the entire dataset for research purposes, you may submit an application to the Honest Broker Service. Further information on eligibility and the processes involved is available on their website <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2454.htm>

Please exercise care when comparing HIS figures across time, as fluctuations in the data can occur for a number of reasons, for example organisational changes, reviews of best practice within the medical community, the adoption of new coding schemes and data-quality problems that are often year-specific. These variations can lead to false assumptions about trends. We advise users of time series data to carefully explore the relevant issues before drawing any conclusions about the reasons for year-on-year changes.

## Published Data

Details of all episode-based data that are currently freely available from this website are provided below.

### HTML format publication

- Acute Episode-Based Activity Statistics Volume 1: Specialty
- Acute Episode-Based Activity Statistics Volume 2: Diagnoses
- Acute Episode-Based Activity Statistics Volume 3: Procedures / Operations
- Acute Episode-Based Activity Statistics Volume 4: Healthcare Resource Group (HRG)

The HTML is prefaced by a summary of activity by admission type and age bands.

### Downloadable data

The data presented in the HTML publication is available for download in Excel format.

### Acute Episode Based Activity Statistics Headline Figures

These tables give overview totals for the year, broken down by admission type (emergency, planned, etc.) and age bands.

### Acute Episode Based Activity Statistics Volume 1: Specialty

The specialty reflects that of the consultant with prime responsibility for the patient. The specialties, recognised by the Royal Colleges and Faculties, reflect broad ranges of skills and expertise and provide a quick summary of areas of treatment. The specialty codes consist of three numbers and are followed by a description.

## Acute Episode Based Activity Statistics Volume 2: Diagnoses

Diagnoses are recorded using International Classification of Diseases 10<sup>th</sup> Revision (ICD-10) codes. Each episode may have a primary diagnosis (the main condition treated or investigated during the episode of care) and up to sixteen secondary diagnoses.

This set of tables includes 3 components:

1. A summary of activity by primary diagnosis chapter and block
  - This groups together broadly associated diagnosis codes into blocks, which may be grouped into chapters. The codes in each chapter and block are at a 3-character level that consists of a letter followed by two numbers (such as 'A00') and are accompanied by a complete description of the diagnosis group.
  - Note that the same diagnosis will be included in two groupings – both in a chapter and a block within that chapter. For example, the ICD-10 code 'A00 – Cholera' appears within the chapter grouping, '1 – Certain infectious and parasitic diseases (A00-B99)' and in the block, 'A00-A09 – Intestinal infectious diseases'.
2. Activity for each primary diagnosis code (at the 3-digit level)
3. Activity for each diagnosis code (at the 3-digit level), regardless of position

## Acute Episode Based Activity Statistics Volume 3: Procedures / Operations

Procedures / interventions are recorded using OPCS codes. Each episode may have a primary procedure / intervention and up to twelve secondary procedures / interventions.

This set of tables includes 3 components:

1. A summary of activity by primary procedure / intervention chapter and block
  - This groups together OPCS codes into blocks and chapters in line with the OPCS structure. The codes in each chapter and block are at a 3-character level that consists of a letter followed by two numbers (such as 'A02') and are accompanied by a complete description of the procedure / intervention group.
  - Note that the same procedure / intervention will be included in two groupings – both in a chapter and a block within that chapter. For example, the OPCS code 'A02 – Excision of lesion of tissue of brain' appears within the chapter grouping, 'A – Nervous System (A01-A84)' and in the block, 'A1 – Tissue of brain (A01-A10)'.
2. Activity for each primary procedure / intervention code (at the 3-digit level)
3. Activity for each procedure / intervention code (at the 3-digit level), regardless of position

## **Acute Episode Based Activity Statistics Volume 4: Healthcare Resource Group (HRG)**

Healthcare Resource Groups (HRGs) are standard groupings of clinically similar treatments that use common levels of healthcare resource. The table contains data and descriptions relating to episodes grouped according to HRG version 4. The abbreviation “CC” is used in this table to refer to *complications and comorbidities*.