

For the Record – Press Statements

Publication	Express & Star
Date of article	10 th December 2013
Reporter	Heather Large
Headline	Mortality rates have improved, report says
First paragraph/s of article	<p>A ratio used to measure mortality rates in Dudley has shown an improvement in 12 months, new figures reveal.</p> <p>A report published by healthcare analysts Dr Foster provides the latest mortality indicator figure for the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.</p>
Press enquiry	<p>Heather Large would like further clarification and information about figures published by Dr Foster relating to mortality data.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the Trust like to comment on the published data? • Can we explain what mortality indicators mean? • Does mortality data relate to actual numbers of deaths?
Trust response	
<p>COMMENT FROM PAUL HARRISON, MEDICAL DIRECTOR, THE DUDLEY GROUP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST</p> <p>What mortality data means</p> <p>Mortality data collection is not designed or intended to identify ‘unnecessary’ or ‘excess’ deaths nor does it measure quality and safety. They are a smoke alarm or flag that something might need further investigation.</p> <p>Sir Bruce Keogh’s overview report of the ‘Review into the quality of care and treatment provided by 14 hospital trusts in England’ states “However tempting it may be, it is clinically meaningless and academically reckless to use such statistical measures to quantify actual numbers of avoidable deaths.”</p>	

Is it actual numbers of deaths?

This text below was published in The Dudley Group data pack produced by the Sir Bruce Keogh review team. The data pack is available on the NHS Choices website. The numbers cannot be related into actual individual deaths but are statistical estimates only and cannot be used to describe avoidable or unnecessary deaths. The only way to do this is through reviewing individual case notes.

HSMR Definition What is the Hospital Standardised Mortality Ratio? The Hospital Standardised Mortality Ratio (HSMR) is an indicator of healthcare quality that measures whether the mortality rate at a hospital is higher or lower than you would expect. Like all statistical indicators, HSMR is not perfect. If a hospital has a high HSMR, it cannot be said for certain that this reflects failings in the care provided by the hospital. However, it can be a warning sign that things are going wrong.

How does HSMR work? The HSMR is a ratio of the observed number of in-hospital deaths at the end of a continuous inpatient spell to the expected number of in-hospital deaths (multiplied by 100) for 56 specific groups (CCS groups); in a specified patient group. The expected deaths are calculated from logistic regression models taking into account and adjusting for a case-mix of: ageband, sex, deprivation, interaction between ageband and co-morbidities, month of admission, admission method, source of admission, the presence of palliative care, number of previous emergency admissions and financial year of discharge.

How should HSMR be interpreted? Care is needed in interpreting these results. Although a score of 100 indicates that the observed number of deaths matched the expected number; in order to identify if variation from this is significant confidence intervals are calculated. A Poisson distribution model is used to calculate whether performance is higher or lower than expected based on 95% and 99.9% confidence intervals. SOURCE: The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust Data Pack produced by the Sir Bruce Keogh Review team.

06.12.2013 – JD note

Update: Local news Midlands Today and BBC Radio WM focussed on the fourth worst in the west midlands i.e. the three hospitals under Heart of England and the QE. Stafford reported to be the most improved according to the guide.