How to read the hospital mortality rate (HSMR) trend

The Hospital Standardised Mortality Ratio (HSMR) measures whether the number of people who die in hospital is higher or lower than you would expect.

Each group of patients is looked at to see how often, on average, across the whole country, they survive their stay in hospital, and how often they die after taking into account their age, the illness and issues such as whether they live in a deprived area.

This chart shows how the hospital mortality ratio varies over time in relation to the national average of 100. As such it provides the hospital with an indicator of whether their mortality rates are above average and needing further investigation.

What do they mean?

The HSMR is within expected limits if quarterly figures are within the control limit lines (i.e. the blue line is between the red and green).

The HSMR is high and/or worthy of further investigation

- If the latest quarter local value (blue diamond) lies above the upper control limit (red line).
- If there are 6 or more consecutive points over 100 including the latest quarter.
- If there are 6 or more consecutive points each greater than the last.

Key issues to note about HSMRs

Hospital Standardised Mortality Ratios are complex indicators. If they are high your local hospital will be investigating the reasons but there may be many factors unrelated to the clinical care the hospital gives. The NHS in the East of England is committed to making care as safe as possible and reducing mortality ratios.

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust: HSMR Commentary

The HSMR for West Herts, is within expected limits, although there is a rising trend over the last 4 quarters.
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