



PRESS RELEASE

18th March 2010

CHKS welcomes shared HSMR methodology and the development of an industry standard

CHKS has issued reassurance to all hospital trusts that it is replicating the hospital standardised mortality ratio (HSMR) which was devised by Imperial College and is currently published on the NHS Choices website.

Since it joined the working party set up by the Department of Health to examine the use of HSMRs, CHKS has been given access to the current methodology behind the HSMR that is published on NHS Choices. This means that CHKS client hospital trusts, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities will have access to both the CHKS risk adjusted mortality index (RAMI) and the HSMR that was devised by Imperial College.

CHKS was invited to join the working party by NHS medical director Bruce Keogh after the publication of mortality ratios last year led to confusion within the health service. Members of the working party include representatives from the National Patient Safety Agency, the Care Quality Commission and the NHS Information Centre. Each has agreed that HSMRs have limitations and that guidance on their use and interpretation is needed.

Having analysed HSMRs for some time, CHKS understands the impact that factors unrelated to quality of care can have on mortality ratios. For example, CHKS has proven that extensive palliative care coding and the depth of coding have a significant impact upon HSMRs, and this will be valuable experience which CHKS will bring to the DH working party. CHKS has always advised its clients to view HSMRs alongside other measures of mortality (such as actual numbers of deaths) and never as a panacea for evaluating the quality of care.

Jason Harries, managing director, CHKS said: “The fact that we can now include the published HSMR alongside the CHKS RAMI will offer reassurance to the NHS. We are looking forward to the first meeting of the working party when we can bring our 20 years of experience in measuring hospital performance to the table.”

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Notes to editors:

1. CHKS Ltd, part of the Capita Group Plc, is the leading independent provider of healthcare intelligence and quality improvement services to the NHS and independent healthcare sector. With over 20 years' experience and working internationally with 480 clients, CHKS has a portfolio of information products, internationally-recognised accreditation programmes and consultancy services which provide clinicians and managers with the information needed to drive improvements inpatient care, financial efficiency, clinical effectiveness and quality. CHKS has an Advisory Board to provide direction and advice on strategic healthcare issues in the UK and overseas.

2. The Department of Health has launched a review into the use of risk adjusted mortality ratios as a measure of the quality of care. CHKS has joined the working group that will investigate these ratios, agree a single methodology and prepare guidance on what they mean and how they should be interpreted.

3. For a copy of the detailed report into risk adjusted mortality ratios please go to: www.chks.co.uk

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