
Director General for Regulation

Mark Svenson
Head of Profession for Statistics
NHS England
(By email)

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Dear Mark

Over the last 18 months, the Office for Statistics Regulation has investigated a series of issues raised in England, Wales and Scotland about statistics on accident and emergency (A&E) performance. These investigations have been published individually on the Authority website. However, there are many important learning points about the development and assurance of performance measures that emerge from this work which we have now summarised [in a review](#) which we have published today. This review has wider applicability to the development of any performance measures with a view to publishing statistics based upon them.

There is value in statisticians being involved in the design and operation of performance management systems. Doing so enables statisticians to promote the use of administrative data for statistical purposes and to encourage the adoption of common classifications and definitions, without damaging the primary purpose of the system.

The review therefore has two simple pieces of advice for decision makers to build on the experience from the cases we looked at:

- work with statisticians in the health system. They will help address the risks surrounding A&E statistics and enhance public confidence in the published statistics.
- be clearer on the purpose of A&E statistics. Doing so will minimise the tensions that can lead to the triple challenges facing these high-profile statistics: misunderstanding, misstatement and misleading use of statistics.

I hope you find the review valuable and can discuss the lessons it offers with your team.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation