

Provisional Monthly Hospital Episode Statistics for Admitted Patient Care, Outpatients and Accident and Emergency data: Data Completeness

Admitted Patient Care Data Completeness

Monthly provisional data may be incomplete or contain errors which have not been investigated or adjusted yet. In general, counts produced from the monthly provisional data are likely to be lower than those generated for the same period in the final annual dataset. We have provided this article to demonstrate data coverage this month compared to earlier data periods.

In the following three charts, the difference between the bars is the improvement in that month's completeness from one monthly publication to the next, for example M1 to M12 represent each of the 12 provisional monthly publications. M13 represents a final provisional collection before the data is finalised for the annual report.

Where there is little change the figure for that month is stable, data will however remain incomplete due to a number of providers submitting no data throughout the year.

Please also see the data quality note for known data quality issues.

Table - Showing Data Coverage (FCEs) for the latest Provisional monthly data, compared to the previous month's data

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	Change (latest months)
Apr 2016	1,579,025	1,593,465	1,587,269	1,595,397										0.51%
May 2016		1,612,642	1,625,051	1,626,281										0.08%
Jun 2016			1,621,916	1,656,434										2.13%
Jul 2016				1,615,950										
Aug 2016														
Sep 2016														
Oct 2016														
Nov 2016														
Dec 2016														
Jan 2017														
Feb 2017														
Mar 2017														

What can HES Monthly data be used for?

High level, aggregate analysis demonstrating approximate trends in activity.

What should HES Monthly data not be used for?

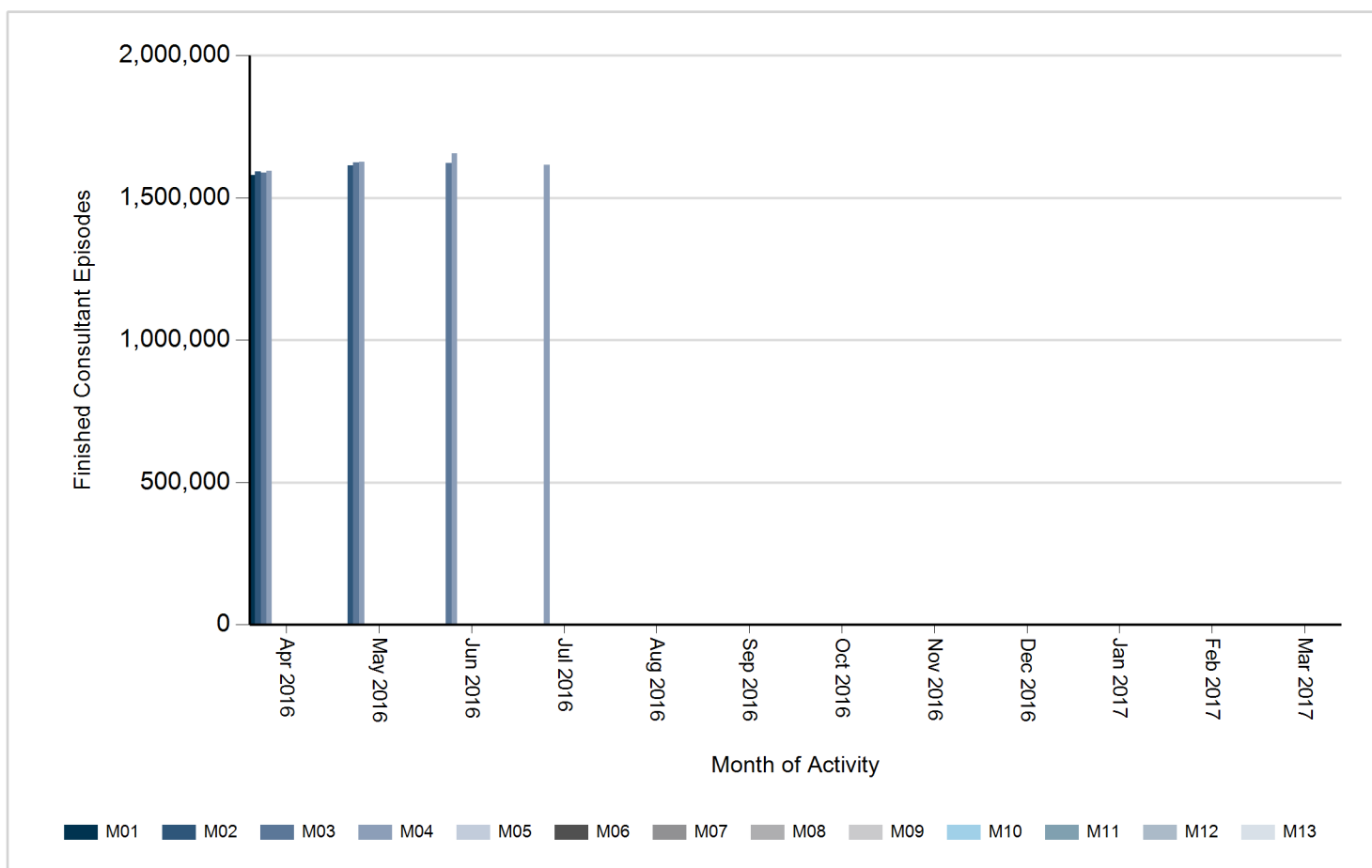
Lower level analysis should be approached with caution as not all activity will be correctly processed until the final annual data is produced.

Contact us

If you would like to discuss particular data quality issues in more detail or particular uses of monthly HES data then please contact us at enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk quoting 'HES Monthly' in the subject title.

The variation from the previous months' data is more pronounced when considering clinical (procedures and diagnoses) coverage. 10.2% more procedures and 11.9% more diagnoses were coded in the HES data submitted to SUS (Month 04) - the extract used for this publication - compared to the HES data submitted to SUS by (Month 03) - the extract used for the previous publication. We accordingly recommend extra caution using clinical codes for the most recent months data.

Chart - Showing Data Coverage (FCEs) for the latest Provisional monthly data compared to the previous month's data



Source statement

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Digital. NHS Digital is the trading name of the Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Finished Consultant Episode (FCE)

A finished consultant episode (FCE) is a continuous period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. FCEs are counted against the year in which they end. Figures do not represent the number of different patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the same stay in hospital or in different stays in the same year.

Provisional data

The data is provisional and may be incomplete or contain errors for which no adjustments have yet been made. Counts produced from provisional data are likely to be lower than those generated for the same period in the final dataset. This shortfall will be most pronounced in the final month of the latest period, i.e. November from the (month 9) April to November extract. It is also probable that clinical data are not complete, which may in particular affect the last two months of any given period. There may also be errors due to coding inconsistencies that have not yet been investigated and corrected.

Outpatients Data Completeness

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Table - Showing Data Coverage (Appointments) for the latest Provisional monthly data, compared to the previous month's data

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	Change (latest months)
Apr 2016	9,306,574	9,605,378	9,642,128	9,656,882										0.15%
May 2016		9,345,582	9,466,679	9,615,983										1.58%
Jun 2016			9,681,253	10,147,695										4.82%
Jul 2016				9,251,967										
Aug 2016														
Sep 2016														
Oct 2016														
Nov 2016														
Dec 2016														
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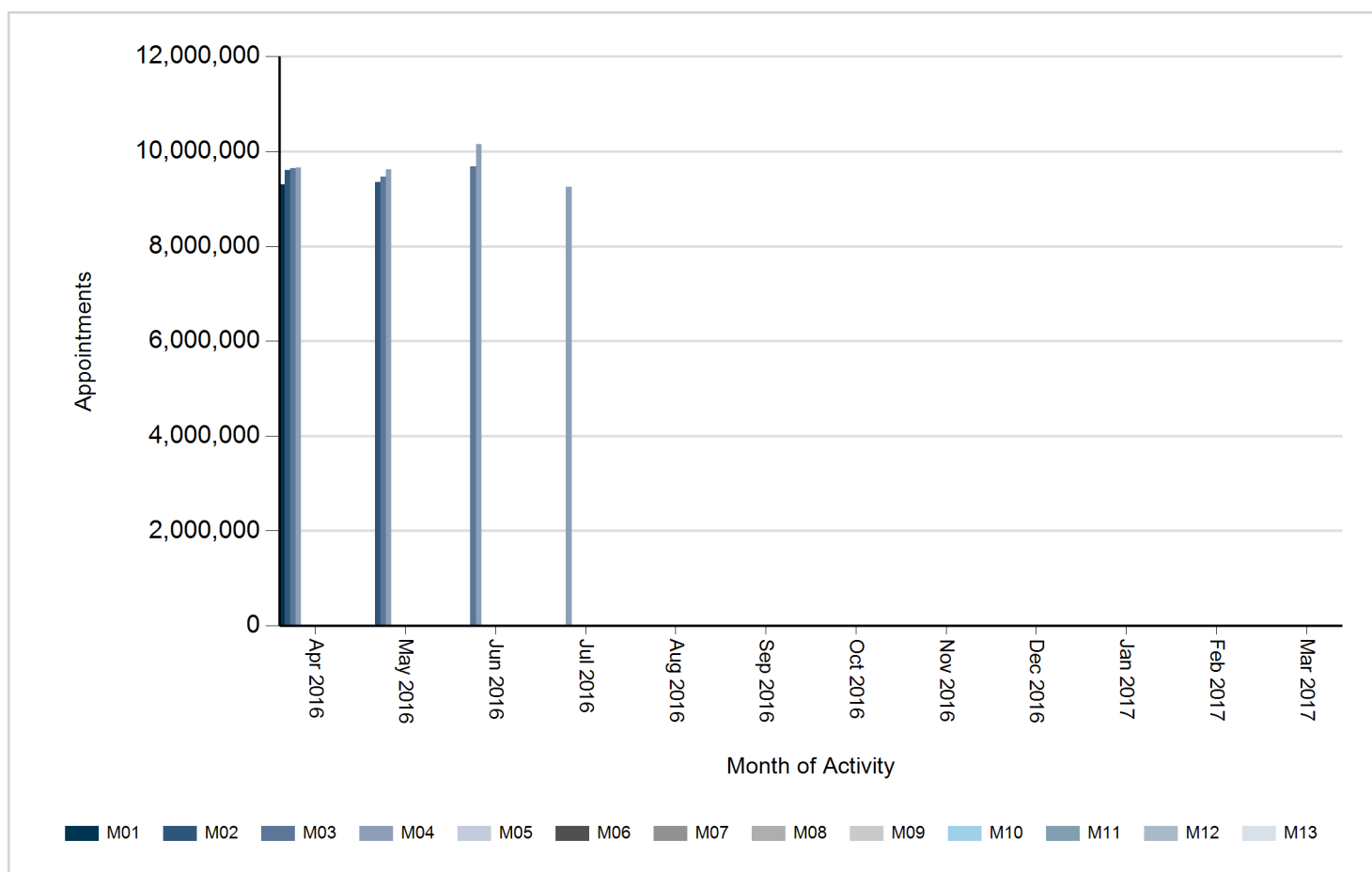
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Appointment Count

The number of planned/booked appointments for outpatients. The HES database contains one row per appointment that was made, whether it was attended or not.

Outpatient Data Quality

Outpatient Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data were collected for the first time in 2003-04 and data quality, particularly for clinical information, remains poor. It is not mandatory to code procedures on outpatient records and only around 2% of records have completed clinical codes. We have no reliable existing data source to validate this data against, as Department of Health aggregate returns have never collected clinical codes; it is not clear how representative the figures are. The data represents a sample of outpatient attendances. Statistical estimates (such as median and 90th percentile waiting times for main operations) must be regarded as potentially unreliable until it is possible to assess the quality of local coding.

Activity included

Activity in English NHS Hospitals and English NHS commissioned activity in the independent sector

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Accident and Emergency Data Completeness

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Table - Showing Data Coverage (A&E Attendances) for the latest Provisional monthly data, compared to the previous month's data

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	Change (latest months)
Apr 2016	1,631,020	1,677,720	1,679,526	1,677,373										-0.13%
May 2016		1,823,489	1,860,136	1,862,114										0.11%
Jun 2016			1,695,584	1,746,945										3.03%
Jul 2016				1,836,992										
Aug 2016														
Sep 2016														
Oct 2016														
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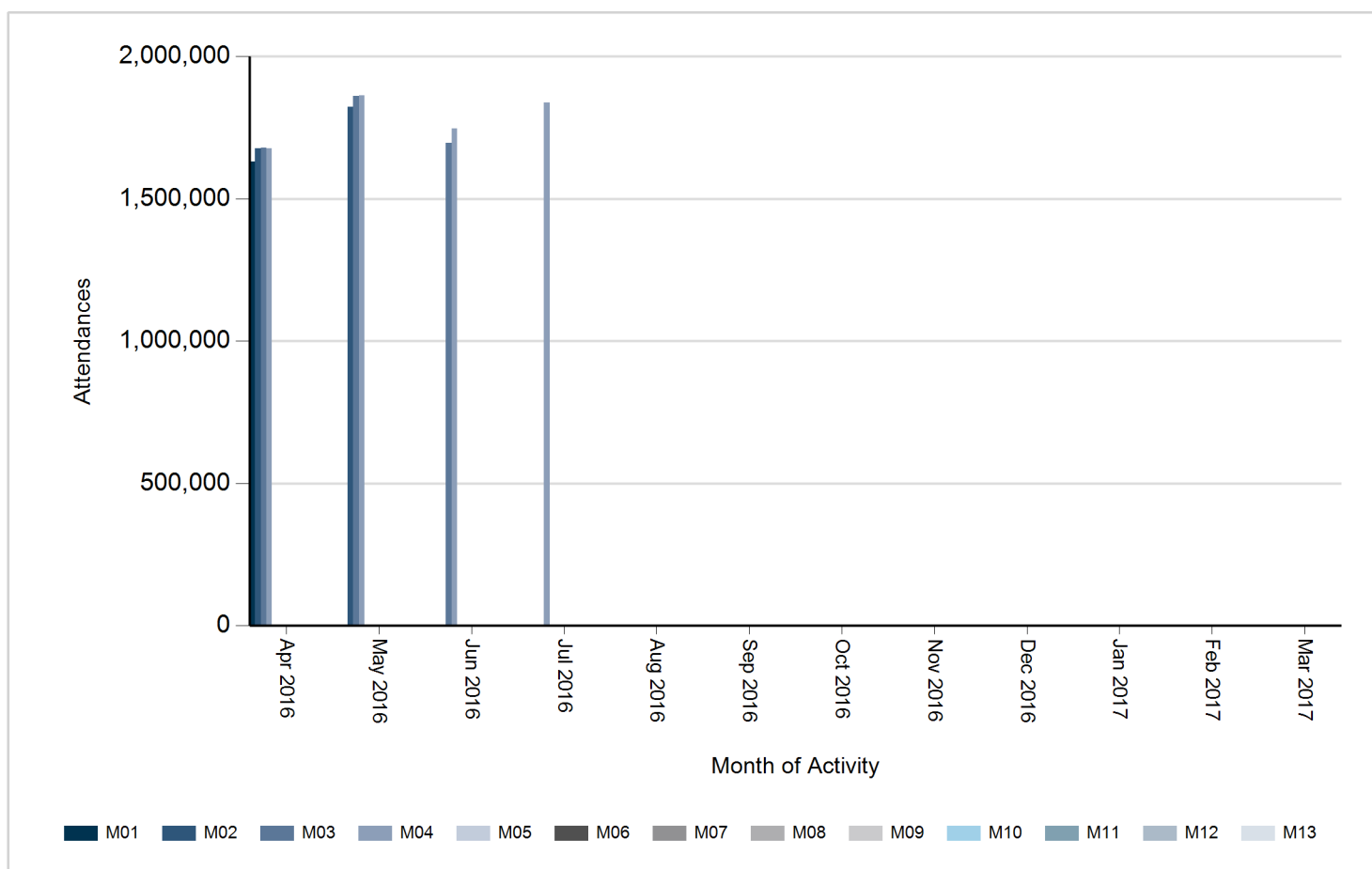
What should HES Monthly data not be used for?

Lower level analysis should be approached with caution as not all activity will be correctly processed until the final annual data is produced. More information on this can be found in the annual A&E HES Report at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/searchcatalogue?q=title%3A%22accident+and+emergency+attendances%22&area=&size=10&sort=Relevance&topics=0%2FHospital+care>

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A&E attendances

A&E Attendances in HES, relates to the number of recorded attendances. A&E attendances do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

A&E data quality

Accident and Emergency Hospital Episode Statistics (A&E HES) are compiled from data submitted by more than 210 providers in England. NHS Digital liaises closely with these organisations to encourage submission of complete and valid data and seeks to minimise inaccuracies. While this brings about improvement over time, some shortcomings remain.

Source statement

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