

National Radiotherapy Waiting Times Database, 2013–14; Quality Statement

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Quality Statement
Synonymous names:	National Radiotherapy Waiting Times Database (NRWTD), 2013–14 (pilot collection)
METEOR identifier:	611518
Registration status:	AIHW Data Quality Statements , Superseded 02/11/2016

Data quality

Data quality statement summary:

The NRWTD (METeOR id: 598445) is a compilation of data supplied to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) based on the Radiotherapy waiting times Data set specification (DSS) (METeOR ID: 517220) which was collected from participating radiotherapy providers for the period 2013–14 as a pilot collection. Each record provides information relating to a course of radiotherapy that began in the reference period (that is, the waiting period associated with the course of radiotherapy that ended in the reference period). Other data collected includes administrative details, patient demographic characteristics and some clinical information:

- Establishment identifier
- Establishment location (Australian statistical geography standard 2011, SA2)
- Ready-for-care date
- Radiotherapy start date
- Person identifier
- Emergency status (yes, no)
- Intention of treatment (Prophylactic, curative, palliative)
- Principal diagnosis (ICD-10-AM 8th edition)
- Sex
- Date of birth
- Indigenous status
- Patient area of usual residence (SA2).

Summary of key issues:

- The 2013–14 pilot year of collection was not mandatory.
- The retrospective and pilot nature of this collection increases the likelihood that definitions such as the ready-for-care and radiotherapy start date, as used by clinicians and providers, may vary from the agreed DSS definition.
- Waiting times data could not be reported for private providers for this pilot year as:
 - Coverage for private providers was low—only 5 private providers, out of the 16 who reported to the collection, and the 34 private sites nationally, reported waiting times data to the NRWTD.
 - Some practices may differ across sectors, particularly in setting of ready-for-care dates, which cannot be resolved or compensated for in this retrospective collection.
- Victoria was unable to supply data on emergency status for this pilot collection as this information was not recorded in their information systems.
- Many providers had difficulties coding patient's area of usual

residence as an SA2 code; in many cases, SA2 was derived from postcode. This affects the accuracy of socioeconomic and remoteness calculations. There was also a high degree of missing data for this item (39% of all records did not have these data).

- There was also a high degree of missing data for Indigenous status—47% of all records were missing this information and report data was of unknown quality.
- Western Australia noted that erroneous data were not corrected at source by the provider for this pilot collection and this included, for example, cases where the ready-for-care date was incorrectly reported as a date after the Radiotherapy start date, resulting in negative waiting times (note that no negative waiting times were included in calculation of waiting times). Western Australia also noted that the number of courses reported may have been decreased when records missing ready-for-care data were excluded from the 2013-14 submission, estimating that this may have led to a potential undercounting of approximately 180 courses. They also noted that the number of 'emergency' patients is low and does not reflect the true count.
- Waiting Times for South Australia were not able to be included in 2013-14 due to concerns regarding the quality of the ready-for-care date.

Institutional environment:

The AIHW is a major national agency set up by the Australian Government under the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987 to provide reliable, regular and relevant information and statistics on Australia's health and welfare. It is an independent corporate Commonwealth entity governed by a management board, and accountable to the Australian Parliament through the Health portfolio.

The AIHW aims to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians through better health and welfare information and statistics. It collects and reports information on a wide range of topics and issues, ranging from health and welfare expenditure, hospitals, disease and injury, and mental health, to ageing, homelessness, disability and child protection.

The Institute also plays a role in developing and maintaining national metadata standards. This work contributes to improving the quality and consistency of national health and welfare statistics. The Institute works closely with governments and non-government organisations to achieve greater adherence to these standards in administrative data collections to promote national consistency and comparability of data and reporting.

One of the main functions of the AIHW is to work with the states and territories to improve the quality of administrative data and, where possible, to compile national datasets based on data from each jurisdiction, to analyse these datasets and disseminate information and statistics.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987, in conjunction with compliance to the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth), ensures that the data collections managed by the AIHW are kept securely and under the strictest conditions with respect to privacy and confidentiality.

For further information see the AIHW website www.aihw.gov.au.

The state and territory health authorities received the data used in this report from public radiotherapy providers. States and territories use these data for service planning, monitoring and internal and public reporting. Radiotherapy providers may be required to provide data to states and territories through a variety of administrative arrangements, contractual requirements or legislation.

Some private providers that have a contract or partnership arrangement in place to provide services to public patients were required to participate, while other private providers participated voluntarily. Some private providers submitted data directly to the AIHW while others submitted through their state or territory health authority.

Timeliness:	The reference period for this data set is 2013–14. This includes records for all patients who started a course of radiotherapy between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2014. These data were first published in November 2015.
Accessibility:	The AIHW publish data from this collection on the AIHW website at: http://www.aihw.gov.au .
Interpretability:	<p>Metadata information for the RWT DSS is published in the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry (METeOR) and the National health data dictionary.</p> <p>METeOR and the National health data dictionary can be accessed on the AIHW websites, respectively:</p> <p>/content/index.phtml/itemId/517220</p> <p>http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=10737422826</p>
Relevance:	The purpose of the DSS for radiotherapy waiting times is to collect information about the period of time that patients wait for radiotherapy in Australia and those factors which can impact on waiting times. The scope of the DSS is patients who began a course of radiotherapy in the reporting period in Australia.
Accuracy:	<p>For 2013–14, all but one public radiotherapy centre provided data for the RWT DSS. Only a small subset of all private providers are included in this collection, and therefore the reported data may not be representative of that sector as a whole.</p> <p>This is a pilot collection—and the data were requested retrospectively, so some providers may not have recorded all data items or may not have recorded items according to agreed definitions—this may particularly affect assignment of ready-for-care dates.</p> <p>Providers are primarily responsible for the quality of the data they provide. However, the AIHW undertakes extensive validations on receipt of data. Data are checked for valid values and logical consistency. Potential errors are queried with jurisdictions at the time data are loaded, and corrections and resubmissions may be made in response to these edit queries. The AIHW does not adjust data to account for possible data errors or missing or incorrect values.</p> <p>Some codes have been mapped from local coding systems—for example, for Intention of treatment, many providers use a code for 'radical' treatment which is not supported in this collection.</p> <p>Many providers had difficulties coding patient's area of usual residence as an SA2 code; in many cases, SA2 was derived from postcode. This may affect the accuracy of socioeconomic and remoteness calculations. There was also a high degree of missing data for this item (39% of all records did not have these data).</p> <p>Data on Indigenous Australians should be interpreted with caution as there was a high proportion of courses of radiotherapy for which the Indigenous status of the patient was not reported, and where Indigenous status was reported, the quality of the data is unknown.</p> <p>Victoria was unable to supply data on emergency status for this pilot collection as this information was not recorded in their information systems.</p> <p>Waiting times for South Australia were not able to be included in 2013–14 due to concerns regarding the quality of ready-for-care data.</p>
Coherence:	2013–14 is the first pilot year of collection of radiotherapy waiting times data.

Data products

Implementation start date: 01/07/2013

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:

Has been superseded by [National Radiotherapy Waiting Times Database, 2014–15; Quality Statement](#)

[AIHW Data Quality Statements](#), Superseded 02/08/2017

See also [Radiotherapy waiting times DSS 2013-15 Health!](#), Superseded 13/11/2013