
Hospital Standard Mortality Ratio

The Hospital Standard Mortality Ratio (HSMR) is an important measurement tool that provides hospitals with a starting point to assess their mortality trends, identify opportunities for improvement and track their progress.

It is calculated by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), and the results are posted annually on the CIHI website. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will provide a link to these results as of December 30, 2008.

How is HSMR calculated?

$$\text{HSMR} = \frac{\text{Observed Deaths}}{\text{Expected Deaths}} \times 100$$

Observed deaths: Number of deaths in a hospital

Expected deaths: Expected number of deaths based on overall mortality in the reference year (2004-2005)

The HSMR is adjusted for other factors affecting mortality, such as age, sex, and length of stay.

Are HSMR results posted for all Ontario hospitals?

No, only certain hospitals are included in the CIHI reporting. Some hospitals' results were not included because they did not meet CIHI's sample size requirements (2,500 qualifying cases in each of the years released). The HSMR calculation is less precise when hospitals treat fewer cases.

In addition, specialty hospitals were not included because they treat a different type of patient. The information gathered from specialty hospitals would not be comparable to figures compiled by general hospitals.

How should HSMR be interpreted?

- An HSMR equal to 100 suggests that there is no difference between the hospital's mortality rate and the overall average rate;
- An HSMR greater than 100 suggests that the local mortality rate is higher than the overall average;
- An HSMR less than 100 suggests that the local mortality rate is lower than the overall average.

It is important to note that HSMR is not designed for comparisons between hospitals; it is intended to track a hospital's trend over time.
