

# Cervical screening data 2016–2017; Quality Statement

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## Identifying and definitional attributes

<b>Metadata item type:</b>	Data Quality Statement
<b>METEOR identifier:</b>	699940
<b>Registration status:</b>	<a href="#">AIHW Data Quality Statements</a> , Standard 29/01/2019

## Data quality

### Data quality statement summary:

### Summary of Key Issues

- Cervical screening data are highly relevant and timely for monitoring trends in cervical screening participation and abnormality detection trends.
- These data are the final cervical screening data collected under the previous NCSP, that ceased on 30 November 2017.
- Only 18 months of participation data (instead of the usual 24 months) and 6 months of cytology/histology data (instead of the usual 12 months) are included.
- It is important that these data are only used to monitor what occurred in the time period covered, and not used to extrapolate to the end of the previous NCSP.

### Description

A new National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) with a new source of data commenced on 1 December 2017. This quality statement relates to data from 1 January 2016 to 30 June 2017, collected under the previous NCSP, and sourced from state and territory cervical screening registers.

Under the previous NCSP, cervical screening programs in each state and territory interrogated their own cervical screening register in accordance with detailed data specifications to supply aggregate data annually to the AIHW. These data were compiled into the only repository of national cervical screening data, although because these were aggregate and not unit record data, these data do not exist in a database per se, and cannot be interrogated further.

Any Pap test performed in Australia, unless the woman had opted-off, were historically included in NCSP data. This means that NCSP data are a virtually complete repository of all cervical screening performed in Australia up to 30 June 2017.

<b>Institutional environment:</b>	<p>The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is a major national agency set up by the Australian Government under the <a href="#">Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987</a> to provide reliable, regular and relevant information and statistics on Australia's health and welfare. It is an independent corporate Commonwealth entity established in 1987, governed by a management Board, and accountable to the Australian Parliament through the Health portfolio.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987</a>, in conjunction with compliance to the <a href="#">Privacy Act 1988</a> (Cth), ensures that the data collections managed by the AIHW are kept securely and under the strictest conditions with respect to privacy and confidentiality.</p> <p>For further information see the AIHW website <a href="http://www.aihw.gov.au">www.aihw.gov.au</a>.</p> <p>The AIHW has been receiving cervical screening data since 1989.</p>
<b>Timeliness:</b>	<p>Under the previous NCSP, cervical cytology data were available within about 6 months (there could be a lag of up to 6 months in the transmission of test results from pathology laboratories to cervical screening registers).</p> <p>Data to allow performance indicators to be calculated up to 30 June 2017 are included. This restriction means that early rescreening and the cytology-histology correlation could not be included in the data supply.</p> <p>These cervical screening data are for women participating in cervical screening between 1 January 2016 and 30 June 2017 and for cervical cytology and histology tests performed between 1 January 2017 and 30 June 2017.</p>
<b>Accessibility:</b>	<p>Cervical screening data are published annually in the report Cervical screening in Australia, available on the AIHW website <a href="http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/cervical-screening/">http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/cervical-screening/</a> where they can be downloaded without charge. Supplementary data tables that provide more detailed data are also provided to accompany each report, and these, too, are available on the AIHW website where they can be downloaded without charge.</p> <p>General enquiries about AIHW publications can be made to the Digital and Media Communications Unit on (02) 6244 1000 or via email to <a href="mailto:info@aihw.gov.au">info@aihw.gov.au</a>.</p>
<b>Interpretability:</b>	<p>While many concepts in the report Cervical screening in Australia are easy to interpret, other concepts and statistical calculations are more complex. All concepts are explained within the body of the report presenting these data, along with footnotes to provide further details and caveats. Additional detail on the data sources, classifications, and the statistical methods used can be found in the Appendixes of the report.</p>
<b>Relevance:</b>	<p>Cervical screening data are highly relevant for monitoring trends in cervical screening participation and abnormality detection trends. The data are used for many purposes by policy-makers and researchers, but are supplied and analysed specifically to monitor and inform the NCSP.</p> <p>NCSP data is a virtually complete repository of all cervical screening performed in Australia.</p>

**Accuracy:** All data provided by state and territory cervical screening programs, once analysed, are supplied back for verification.  
Further, National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council (NPAAC) Performance Measures for Australian Laboratories Reporting Cervical Cytology exist for the previous NCSP which allow some cervical screening data compiled and reported by the AIHW to be compared to data that are also sourced from state and territory cervical cytology registers for a different purpose.  
Some duplication may occur where the same test is reported to the cervical cytology data in two or more jurisdictions. AIHW is unable to identify or resolve these instances, but the level of duplication is believed to be small.

**Coherence:** Cervical screening data are reported and published annually by the AIHW. State and territory cervical screening registers changed every day, and not just because new records were added; existing records were changed if new, more precise information became available or if typographical errors were discovered by routine data checking procedures. As a result, the number of women participating, as well as other data reported by the AIHW for any particular year may change slightly over time. Further data published by a jurisdictional cervical screening program at a certain point in time may differ slightly from what is published by the AIHW at a different time.

## Relational attributes

**Related metadata references:** Supersedes [Cervical screening data 2015–2016: Quality Statement](#)  
[AIHW Data Quality Statements](#), Superseded 29/01/2019