

Australian Health Performance Framework: PI 2.2.3– Sentinel events, 2020

Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Indicator
Indicator type:	Indicator
Short name:	AHPF PI 2.2.3–Sentinel events, 2020
METEOR identifier:	728343
Registration status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health, Qualified 16/02/2022

Description: A [sentinel event](#) is a particular type of serious incident that is **wholly preventable** and has caused **serious harm** to, or the **death** of, a patient.

To be classified a sentinel event, a strict set of criteria need to be met:

- The event should not have occurred where preventive barriers are available
- The event is easily recognised and clearly defined
- There is evidence the event has occurred in the past.

Sentinel events are further specified into eight events:

1. Haemolytic blood transfusion reaction resulting from ABO (blood group) incompatibility
2. Infant discharge to the wrong family
3. Intravascular gas embolism resulting in death or neurological damage
4. Maternal death associated with pregnancy, birth or the puerperium
5. Medication error leading to the death of a patient reasonably believed to be due to incorrect administration of drugs
6. Procedures involving the wrong patient or body part resulting in death or major permanent loss of function
7. Retained instruments or other material after surgery requiring re-operation or further surgical procedure
8. Suicide of a patient in an inpatient unit.

Rationale: Sentinel events have the potential to seriously undermine public confidence in the healthcare system and are a subset of the most serious incidents reported through each jurisdiction's incident reporting system. The intent is not to measure episodes that do not end in death or ongoing morbidity.

Indicator set: [Australian Health Performance Framework, 2020 Health](#), Standard 13/10/2021

Collection and usage attributes

Computation description: Number of sentinel events

Computation: Count

Numerator: Number of separations with an external cause code for sentinel event and a place of occurrence of public hospitals only

Numerator data elements:

Data Element / Data Set

[Establishment—number of sentinel events, total N\[NNN\]](#)

Data Source

[State/territory sentinel events data](#)

NMDS / DSS

[Sentinel events NBEDS](#)

Guide for use

Data source type: Administrative by-product data

Disaggregation data elements:

Data Element / Data Set

[Establishment—Australian state/territory identifier, code N](#)

Data Source

[State/territory sentinel events data](#)

NMDS / DSS

[Sentinel events NBEDS](#)

Guide for use

Data source type: Administrative by-product data

Data Element / Data Set

[Establishment—type of sentinel event, code N](#)

Data Source

[State/territory sentinel events data](#)

NMDS / DSS

[Sentinel events NBEDS](#)

Guide for use

Data source type: Administrative by-product data

Comments:

1. Sentinel events definitions can vary across jurisdictions.
2. NSW data for reporting periods prior to 2016-17 include events that occurred in private hospitals and day procedure centres and are therefore not comparable with data for 2016-17.
3. NSW data are sourced from the NSW Maternal and Perinatal Mortality Review Committee. Data for all prior years included in the table have been updated to reflect the modified definition, and are not comparable to results published in the 2014 Report and prior versions.
4. Victoria has supplied data using the sentinel event definition applicable to the data collection period. Most other jurisdictions have retrospectively applied the amended definition.
5. WA has supplied data using the sentinel event definition applicable to the data collection period. Most other jurisdictions have retrospectively applied the amended definition.
6. The NT has supplied data using the sentinel event definition applicable to the data collection period. Most other jurisdictions have retrospectively applied the amended definition.
7. The total includes sentinel events for the ACT which are not reported in the 8 sub categories of sentinel events due to confidentiality issues.

Representational attributes

Representation class: Count
Data type: Real
Unit of measure: Episode
Format: NN[N]

Data source attributes

Data sources: **Data Source**
[State/territory sentinel events data](#)
Frequency
Annual
Data custodian
State/territory health authorities

Accountability attributes

Reporting requirements: Australian Health Performance Framework
Organisation responsible for providing data: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Accountability: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Origin: Productivity Commission
Reference documents: Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. 2020. [Australian Sentinel Events List \(version 2\) Specifications | Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care](#), viewed April 2021.

Relational attributes

Related metadata references: See also [Sentinel events NBEDS](#)

- [Health](#), Qualified 02/08/2022