# Australian Health Performance Framework: PI 2.2.3–Sentinel events, 2021

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# Australian Health Performance Framework: PI 2.2.3–Sentinel events, 2021

## Identifying and definitional attributes

| | |
|---|---|
| **Metadata item type:** | Indicator |
| **Indicator type:** | Indicator |
| **Short name:** | AHPF PI 2.2.3–Sentinel events, 2021 |
| **METEOR identifier:** | 771654 |
| **Registration status:** | Health, Standard 07/09/2023 |
| **Description:** | A **Sentinel event** is an incident that is **wholly preventable** and has caused **serious harm** to, or the **death** of, a patient. |

To be classified a sentinel event, strict 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.

Sentinel events are further specified into ten events:

1. Surgery or other invasive procedure performed on the wrong site resulting in serious harm or death
2. Surgery or other invasive procedure performed on the wrong patient resulting in serious harm or death
3. Wrong surgical or other invasive procedure performed on a patient resulting in serious harm or death
4. Unintended retention of a foreign object in a patient after surgery or other invasive procedure resulting in serious harm or death
5. Haemolytic blood transfusion reaction resulting from ABO incompatibility resulting in serious harm or death
6. Suspected suicide of a patient in an acute psychiatric unit or acute psychiatric ward
7. Medication error resulting in serious harm or death
8. Use of physical or mechanical restraint resulting in serious harm or death
9. Discharge or release of an infant or child to an unauthorised person
10. Use of an incorrectly positioned oro- or naso- gastric tube resulting in serious harm or death

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|---|---|
| **Rationale:** | Sentinel events can seriously undermine public confidence in the healthcare system. They are a subset of the most serious incidents that are reported in each jurisdiction. The indicator measures episodes that end in death or ongoing morbidity. |
| **Indicator set:** | Australian Health Performance Framework, 2021<br>Health, Standard 11/07/2023 |

## Collection and usage attributes

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| **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 2019- |
| | **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 2019- |
| | **Guide for use** |
| | Data source type: Administrative by-product data |
| | ┌─ **Data Element / Data Set** ─────────────────────────── |
| | Establishment—type of sentinel event, code N[N] |
| | **Data Source** |
| | State/territory sentinel events data |
| | **NMDS / DSS** |
| | Sentinel events NBEDS 2019- |
| | **Guide for use** |
| | Data source type: Administrative by-product data |

| **Comments:** | 1. Data is for the reporting period 2019-2020 |
| | 2. Australian health ministers agreed version 2 of the Australian sentinel events list (10 events) in December 2018. All jurisdictions implemented these categories on 1 July 2019 |
| | 3. Data includes reporting periods up to 2019-2020. |

## 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

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|---|---|
| **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

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|---|---|
| **Submitting organisation:** | Australian Institute of Health and Welfare |
| **Origin:** | Productivity Commission |
| **Reference documents:** | PC (Productivity Commission) (2022) Report on Government Services. Canberra: PC. Viewed 09 January 2023, [Report on Government Services - Productivity Commission (pc.gov.au)](#) |
| | Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. 2020. Australian Sentinel Events List (version 2) Specifications. Viewed 9 January 2023, [https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/publications-and-resources/resource-library/australian-sentinel-events-list-version-2-specifications](#) |

## Relational attributes

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|---|---|
| **Related metadata references:** | See also [Sentinel events NBEDS 2004–2019 Health,](#) Standard 20/12/2022 |
| | See also [Sentinel events NBEDS 2019- Health,](#) Standard 07/09/2023 |