
MEDIA RELEASE

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Greater clinical transparency to improve patient experience

Variations in cost, length of stay in hospital and readmissions for urology and ear, nose and throat procedures are highlighted in two new reports designed to encourage specialist conversation about the best ways to improve private hospital clinical outcomes and patient care.

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) and Medibank have released the second in a series of reports to improve surgeons' understanding about variations in surgical practice.

"Currently, surgeons have limited access to information on indicators such as the median length of patient stay, rates of readmission or admission to ICU, and prices charged for services, for different procedures within their speciality particularly in the private sector," Medibank Chief Medical Officer Dr Linda Swan said.

"As the nation's leading health insurer, we are constantly trying to offer members a better experience both in and out of hospital and these reports allow clinicians to consider what could be improved.

"From this data we can see big differences in the way surgeons are performing operations. For example, although 311 surgeons billed Medibank for an endoscopic prostatectomy, only 175 of them billed for at least five of these procedures. This is an important insight as there is a correlation between the volume of surgeries performed and patient outcomes," Dr Swan said.

"These reports provide surgeons with information that will assist them in gaining a better understanding of variations, for the benefit of the services they provide to their patients and the community," RACS President Phil Truskett said.

"RACS and Medibank are working together to further develop the information provided in these reports so that they are as meaningful and useful as possible for all clinicians," Mr Truskett said.

For the *Surgical Variance Report – Ear, Nose and Throat*:

- 5,455 tonsil and adenoid procedures funded by Medibank in 2014 were analysed. For those procedures:
 - Although 380 surgeons billed Medibank for tonsil and adenoid procedures, only 276 surgeons billed Medibank for at least five operations;
 - The median patient age was 7 years old, and in 83 per cent of hospital separations, the patient stayed in hospital for at least one night.

For the *Surgical Variance Report – Urology*:

- 2,556 endoscopic prostatectomy procedures funded by Medibank in 2014 were analysed. For these procedures:

- Although 311 surgeons billed Medibank for an endoscopic prostatectomy, only 175 surgeons billed Medibank for at least five operations
- Patient stay in hospital varied between 0 nights and 7 nights, with the median stay of 2 nights for surgeons who performed at least five procedures that year.

“Medibank covered more than 1.2 million hospital admissions in the 2014-15 financial year. These reports demonstrate our commitment to work collaboratively and constructively across the health sector to support continuous improvement in clinical practice in Australia,” Dr Swan said.

The first of the Surgical Variance Reports on general surgery procedures was released in April 2016 and two more reports will be released by RACS and Medibank. The data contained in these reports is taken from de-identified Medibank claims data that RACS has analysed and interpreted. No individual surgeon or patient can be identified.

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For copies of the reports and media interviews:

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