

Do's and don'ts of using the Health Quality & Safety Commission's health system quality dashboard

Don't try to turn this into a ranking system, league table or similar

Although each indicator is presented as a relative position on a consistent scale to allow comparison, they are not designed to be aggregated into an overall score. To try to do so would make assumptions about the scope and weighting of the indicators selected, which the design of the indicators did not allow for, and the construction of this tool did not intend. Any such attempt would create misleading conclusions that the Commission would not support.

Do look for patterns

The dashboard is designed to have similar themes located next to each other. A cluster of indicators in a similar position is likely to point to a pattern of results that may well have a common underpinning cause. Looking for the patterns on the dashboard, and confirming these using the tooltip, is an excellent way to use the dashboard.

Don't just fixate on the 'outlier' indicators

The dashboard is designed to show a single point in time. Indicators in the outer layer, or beyond, on the dashboard, are not necessarily a concern or the most pressing priority for improvement. Indicators can change substantially each time they are measured, particularly for smaller district health boards (DHBs), where small numbers can make a big difference. For this reason, we show values of an indicator over time in the Change section.

Do click on the maunga/points on the dashboard

The indicators on the dashboard are represented by maunga or points. Click on these to see more information in the right-hand side of the page. 'Measure' shows indicator values for the group of interest and the reference group, for a chosen time period. 'Change' shows how the indicator has changed over time. 'Variation' shows the differences between DHBs. In particular, Change is really important to understand.

Don't confuse relative with absolute

The scales used in the dashboard for each indicator are relative ones – they only compare the group of interest with the reference group. In some indicators, there is little variation in the DHB values. Here, results that are better than the reference group may actually be very similar to results that are worse than the reference group. When there is a lot of variation in the DHB values, results that are better will be considerably better than results that are worse than the reference group. Look at the Variation part of the dashboard to understand the scale of variation more clearly.

Do use the Reference filter for different comparisons

Use the Reference filter for different comparisons with your DHB. Select 'NZ current' to compare your DHB with the New Zealand current value. Select 'NZ baseline' to compare your DHB with the New Zealand baseline value. These comparisons can give quite different results, depending upon national trends over time

Do use the tooltip

If you hover over any given point, a pop-up will display details about the indicator: DHB, description of the indicator, indicator value and time period, depending on the chart. These are important to provide context and detail for further examination.

Do look at the reporting period in the 'Measure' section on the right-hand side of tab

As there is a difference in reporting cycle between the dashboard and the source data, the dashboard may not show the latest results for some indicators. Please always check the reporting period in the 'Measure' section.

Do use the 'Help' tile on the 'Home' tab

The 'Help' tile gives instructions about how to use and read the dashboard in the domain and Māori Health Equity Report tabs.