**Perioperative mortality explorer and public-facing infographic**

**Questions and answers**

**Public-facing infographic**

**What’s the purpose of the infographic?**

The infographic shows how safe surgeries are in Aotearoa New Zealand and makes surgical data accessible and available to the public, including health care professionals, consumers and whānau. The infographic provides a high-level summary of surgeries and the people who have them.

**How is the infographic useful?**

If you are a doctor or health care professional the infographic provides you with information to reassure your patients about the safety of an upcoming surgery. If you or your whānau are having surgery, you can see how safe it is. The infographic provides useful resources for more information on the last page.

**What do I need to do if I think I need surgery or if I am concerned about my upcoming surgery?**

If you are unwell, talk to your doctor or health care professional early. There are benefits and risks to every surgery; your doctor or health care professional will help you decide if surgery is right for you.

**What is inequity?**

As a first step in trying to make things fairer, it is important to measure the size of the differences in health and health care. ‘Inequity’ is when health care and outcomes (like deaths after surgery) vary between different groups of people. Health inequities are avoidable and unfair differences in health outcomes, caused by social, economic and environmental conditions. Equity recognises different people with different levels of advantage may require different approaches and resources to get the same outcomes.

**Why is there inequity between some ethnicities?**

The reasons for these inequities are varied and complex. Our health care system works well for our majority European population but does not work as well for Māori and Pacific peoples, resulting in poorer access to primary and secondary care, and inequitable health outcomes. For more information about inequities in perioperative mortality for Māori, [watch this video of Dr Jason Gurney who talks about inequity in surgery](https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/resources/resource-library/surgery-and-risk-in-aotearoa-new-zealand/#Videos).

**Is it safe to have surgery in Aotearoa New Zealand?**

There are benefits and risks to every surgery. Our data confirms that surgery in Aotearoa New Zealand is as safe as surgery in countries like Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Planned (or elective) surgery is more common and safer than emergency surgery. Emergency surgery is often undertaken to save someone’s life who will likely die if they do not have surgery.

**What is the Perioperative Mortality Review Committee doing about the inequity that exists?**

The new perioperative mortality explorer shows where inequities in surgical outcomes exist. By providing this information we anticipate that health care professionals will be supported to make changes or set up quality improvement initiatives to improve surgical outcomes and reduce inequities.

**What can I do to increase my chances of having a safer surgery?**

The infographic provides links to useful resources on the last page.

**Perioperative mortality explorer**

**Who is the perioperative mortality explorer for?**

The perioperative mortality explorer is for health care professionals such as clinicians, surgeons, hospital quality assurance officers, researchers and epidemiologists.

**How can the explorer be used/How will it be useful?**

The explorer can be used for research, to interrogate perioperative mortality data. Te Whatu Ora districts (formerly district health boards) can see how they are tracking with their surgical mortality rates.

**Are private hospitals included in the data?**

The explorer only contains publicly funded surgeries. Currently, not all private hospitals contribute their data to the national data set used by the explorer. The Perioperative Mortality Review Committee is looking at options to include private hospital data in future.

**How can the explorer be used to reduce perioperative mortality?**

By highlighting mortality data, this can identify areas for improvement at Te Whatu Ora district level.

**How do I gain access?**

The Health Quality & Safety Commission will contact Te Whatu Ora districts and professional bodies to organise access to the explorer. Additionally, health care professionals can [request access via the Commission’s website](https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-data/subscribed-apps/perioperative-mortality-explorer).

**Why is access limited to the groups noted above?**

The data in the explorer is complex and needs expertise to be able to interpret it.

**Can the explorer be used to calculate an individual’s mortality?**

No, the explorer shows population-level data.

**Can I see my hospital in the explorer?**

You will be able to see mortality across Te Whatu Ora districts, age group and ethnicity but not at a hospital level.

**Can I identify individual patients/surgeons/clinicians?**

Patients, and the medical professionals involved in their care, will not be identifiable.

**How often will the data be updated?**

The data will be updated annually.

**What is happening to the Perioperative Mortality Review Committee following the recent independent review of the national mortality review function?**

In October 2022, it was announced that a single national mortality review committee will be established next year, operating from 1 July 2023.

All five current statutory mortality review committees, including the Perioperative Mortality Review Committee, will continue to exist until 30 June 2023. Subject matter experts will provide advice on national trends in perioperative deaths under the transformed national mortality review function.

For more information on the independent review of the national mortality review function, visit the Health Quality & Safety Commission [website](https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/news/changes-planned-to-improve-aotearoa-new-zealands-mortality-review-function/).