Data Cleansing
Activities and Tools

Quality improvement

To ensure high quality data, it is essential to maintain your patient database with data cleansing and data quality improvement practices that are designed to keep health records accurate and current.

Why should you cleanse your practice data?

To achieve the benefits of sustainable digital health activities, it is important to have a continuous focus on data quality improvement.

Your staff should invest the time to cleanse your practice data regularly because:

- maintaining quality records will provide better quality data analysis and reporting
- better quality data can improve patient care, health outcomes and business potential
- high quality healthcare records are easier for patients to access and understand
- the PIP QI (Practice Incentives Program Quality Improvement) requires practices to demonstrate they are working towards recording the majority of diagnosis and clinical metrics electronically for active patients. For more information about the PIP QI, refer to the FAQs.

How can you cleanse your practice data?

Your staff can cleanse practice data by:

- archiving inactive or deceased patients
- removing sample patients
- merging or removing duplicate patients
- confirming patient identifiers such as name, address and date of birth at each patient visit
- conducting Online Patient Verification (OPV) checks through Medicare Australia and Online Veterans' Verification (OVV) via the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Your medical staff can cleanse practice data by:

- confirming patient identifiers such as name, address and date of birth at each patient visit
- maintaining recall lists
- updating medications
- actioning and clearing outstanding actions or requests in the practice software.

Identifying active and inactive patients

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) defines an active patient as a person who has visited the practice a minimum of three times in the past two years.

After you have identified and excluded inactive patients, you can examine your patient demographics to identify incomplete or incorrect patient identifiers.

For example, in the Medical Director software, you can search all patients and generate a report to identify which ones do not have an address, date of birth, telephone or Medicare number recorded.

Free tools for your practice

There are free tools available that your practice can use to improve data quality, streamline systems, identify income potential, classify patients with chronic disease and run preventative healthcare activities.

Clinical Audit Tool (CAT) Plus

At WAPHA, we provide practices with a free licence for the CAT Plus suite of applications by Pen CS in exchange for their de-identified practice data.

If your practice would like to use CAT Plus and participate in the PIP QI, we can arrange to have the tool installed and guide you through the PIP QI requirements. To find out more, email our Digital Health team via digitalhealth@wapha.org.au

Canning Data Extraction Tool

The Canning Data Extraction Tool, also known as the Canning Tool, is a user-friendly application for extracting and analysing primary healthcare data. You can download the Canning Tool for free from the Arche Health website.

Resources and helpful links

- CAT Plus General Practice Resources
- CAT Recipes - Improve Data Quality
- Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) Template
- RACGP Standards for general practices