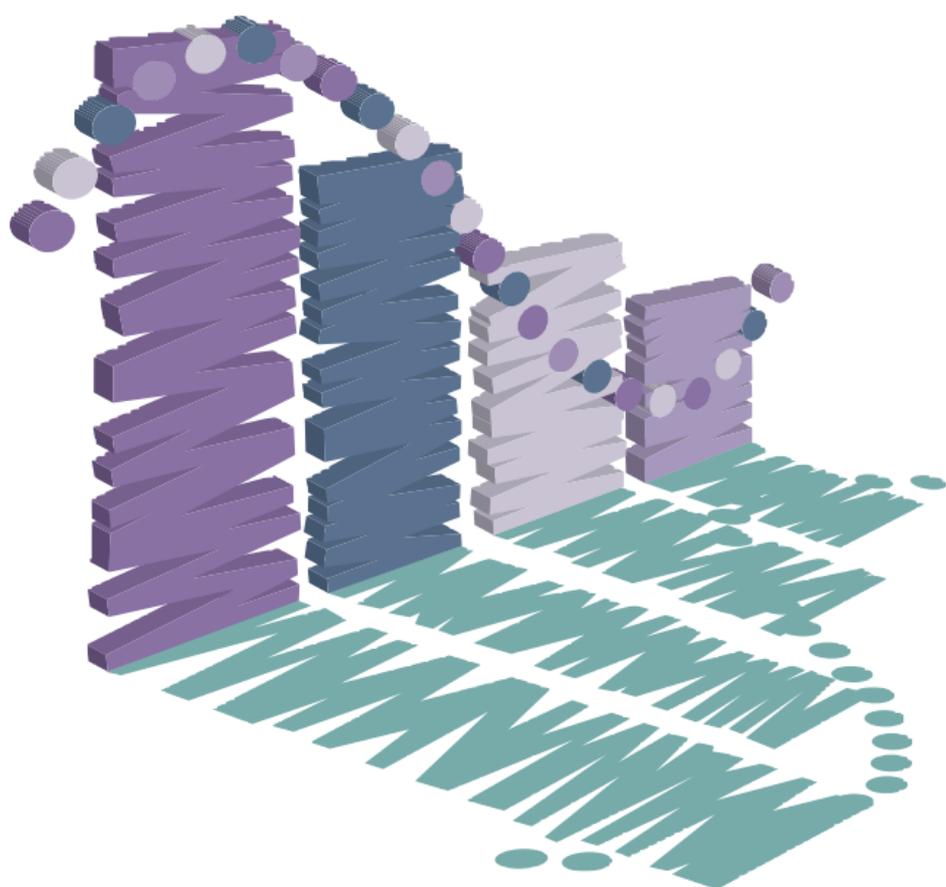




An Introduction to the
**National Hospital
Care Survey**



Sponsored by:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Health Statistics





Introduction and background

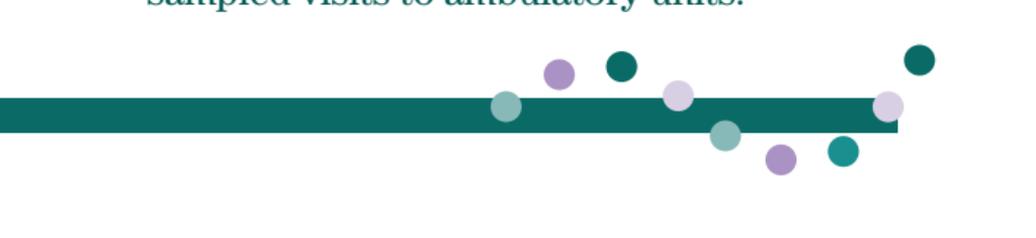
The National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS) provides nationally representative data on inpatient hospital care, as well as care delivered in emergency departments and outpatient departments. More information about NHCS can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs.htm>.

Purpose of the survey

The purpose of NHCS is to describe national patterns of health care delivery in hospital-based settings. Patient-level data is collected to provide national estimates of service use and allow policy makers and researchers to study relationships between the organization and delivery of health care.

Participation

Participation in NHCS includes the following:

- An interview to determine the eligibility of your hospital and its emergency department (ED), and outpatient departments (OPDs);
 - An annual inpatient hospital questionnaire;
 - In-person and telephone interviews with hospital administrators and staff in eligible EDs and OPDs every 15 months;
 - Electronic submission of Uniform Bill (UB)-04 administrative claims data, an electronic file in the same format as the file submitted to the state or medical record data submitted electronically from Electronic Health Records.
 - Abstraction of medical records data from sampled visits to ambulatory units.
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Each of these activities will occur on separate time tables. The submission of your electronic data will be continuous while the completion of questionnaires and the abstraction of medical records will be less frequent and in some cases not start for several months following the submission of the data.

You may be asked to participate in special studies on occasion but participation in these studies will be voluntary.

Participation in this project is voluntary, and there is no penalty for not participating. However, the success of the survey depends on health care professionals like you to provide information on current health care services in the United States.

Your health care facility was randomly chosen to provide representative data not only for your hospital but also for similar hospitals of the same service type, bed size, and geographic location. Selections were made to obtain enough facilities of different sizes, service types, and geographical locations to ensure that the hospitals in our study are nationally representative. Thus, it is not possible to substitute another hospital since this might introduce bias or inaccuracies into the data we collect.

Health information management staff will be eligible for continuing education credits for taking time to learn about the survey.

(http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs/continuing_education.htm.)





Data collection

The following information will be collected:

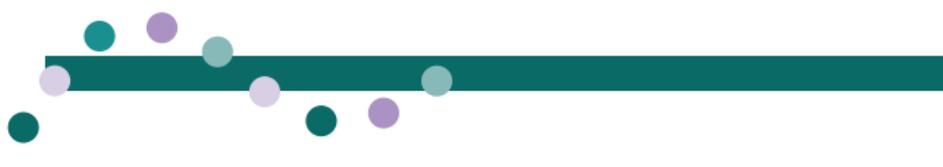
- **Hospital characteristics:** e.g., ownership, the hospital's trauma level rating and whether it is a teaching hospital
- **Inpatient characteristics:** e.g., number of total admissions and total births
- **Emergency department characteristics:** e.g., electronic health record adoption and crowding
- **Outpatient department characteristics:** e.g., electronic health record adoption

In addition, we are asking hospitals to electronically submit data for inpatient and ambulatory visits from your hospital. A sample of visits from your emergency department and outpatient departments for a specific reference period will be abstracted from medical records data.

Confidentiality and data safeguarding

NCHS is required by law to keep all data regarding patients and facilities confidential and to use these data only for research and statistical purposes as stated in the Public Health Services Act and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act. All project staff members have signed confidentiality agreements and are prohibited by law from using the information they receive for anything other than this project. Any other use is a violation of federal law and is subject to heavy fines and imprisonment.





NHCS is approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

This study conforms to the Privacy Rule as mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), where disclosure of patient data is permitted for public health purposes. The Privacy Rule permits hospitals to make disclosures without patient authorization for public health purposes and for research that has been approved by an IRB. This survey meets both of these criteria.

Sponsorship

The CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is sponsoring NHCS. NCHS is the Nation's principal health statistics agency and is responsible for assessing the health status and health care needs of people in the United States. More information about NCHS can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/>.

NCHS has contracted with Westat for recruitment and data collection activities of NHCS. Westat is an agent of NCHS. More information about Westat can be found at: <http://www.westat.com>.





For more information

If you have any concerns or questions, you may contact Ms. Carolyn Almen, NHCS Recruitment Manager at our toll-free number:

888-377-7161, extension 4744

For further NHCS information, contact:

Dr. Carol DeFrances

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Or visit the National Hospital Care Survey

website: *<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs.htm>*

