Scottish Atlas of Healthcare Variation

NHS Highland Case Study

ISD Atlas Team and NSS Discovery Wraparound Service
Background

In the first release of the Atlas in September 2018, NHS Highland was one of the areas identified as having **significantly higher rates** than the Scotland average for the following procedures:

- Elective primary hip replacements
- Elective primary knee replacements
- Cataract procedures (65 yrs+)
Questions

- Following the release of these maps, NHS Highland sought to understand the reasons behind the variations.

- They were also keen to understand how changes to their waiting list activity might have impacted on the activity displayed in the maps.

- NHS Highland requested bespoke analysis from the Discovery Wraparound service to help understand the possible drivers behind the Health Board's higher procedure rates.
"We have been working to reduce waiting lists at a time that many health boards appear to be growing their waiting lists. We wonder whether this may be skewing the analysis?"

NHS Highland
Methods of analysis

The Discovery Wraparound Service used content available in the Discovery system alongside other national data to investigate potential reasons for this variation.

- Demand
- Waiting Times / Lists Information
- Activity Changes
- Cross Boundary Flow
- Regional Planning
Sources of information used for the investigation

- Atlas of Healthcare Variation
- Cross Boundary Flow Information
- Demand
- Additions to Inpatient/Day Case Waiting List
- Waiting Times Information
- Regional Planning Procedures
Summary of Results

The Discovery Wraparound Service collated large amounts of data from different sources and provided a detailed analysis to NHS Highland. In summary, they found that for all three of the surgical procedures presented on the maps:

- NHS Highland has seen increased activity as a result of increased inpatient and day case (IPDC) demand in their area.
- Further analysis showed that a reason for the increased IPDC demand was a consequence of NHS Highland reducing their outpatient waiting lists in these specialties.
- The increased demand and activity has not been experienced across Scotland, and this is why they appeared as an "outlier" within the Atlas.
Atlas Feedback Loop

Atlas maps published

NHS Board reviews own data

Questions sent to Discovery Wraparound Team

Discovery Wraparound Team "deep dive" the data

NHS Board reviews analysis to understand variation in original map
Collaboration at national and local level

NHS Highland Planning and Performance

Scottish Atlas of Healthcare Variation

Discovery Wraparound Service
Conclusion

Planning & Performance colleagues from NHS Highland have advised that they found the bespoke analysis to be a useful starting point towards understanding variation, however, there remain unanswered questions which need to be addressed to fully understand the differences between their Board and elsewhere in Scotland.

The Atlas maps do not suggest ideal rates for procedures or treatments. Instead they are intended to:

- **facilitate conversations and reflections** on services between clinicians and managers within Health Boards.
- **promote collaboration** across different Health Boards in Scotland, in order to drive improvements.
Please contact us for further information

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https://www.realisticmedicine.scot/