A comparison of a local enhanced alcohol and violence monitoring system to the A&E contract minimum data set.

Produced by: West Midlands Commissioning Support Unit (WMCSU), University of Birmingham, in co-operation with the Sandwell Community Safety Partnership

Commissioned by: Sandwell Drug and Alcohol Team (DAAT)

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An enhanced emergency department (ED) data set is used to monitor attendances specifically related to violence and / or alcohol in some hospitals in the Region. The data set was designed in co-operation with the Community Safety Partnership and is intended to capture useful intelligence concerning trends in violence and alcohol misuse resulting in hospitalisations. It has been introduced in all of the EDs in Birmingham. It is provided by a private company as a stand-alone system that runs in parallel to the national minimum dataset (MDS) and is completed on the reception desk of participating EDs. Unlike the MDS, it collects a lot of descriptive data about the circumstances of the incident leading to attendance.

Sandwell drug and alcohol team wanted to undertake some analysis of the outputs of the system that had been installed in City Hospital, but were unsure how comprehensive the data capture was.

They approached the West Midlands Commissioning Support Unit to conduct a brief reconciliation exercise to check this. Assault cases were counted on both the MDS using systems for a period of time for which data were available.

Three calendar months of data were checked in 2010, as these were the latest available and it was found that the enhanced surveillance system was undercounting cases to a large degree. However the degree of undercounting appeared to reduce over the period of observation from 44% in January to 37% in February and to 33% in March. It may be that the data capture was still being embedded into practice and capture would improve with no further action.

A recommendation was made to repeat the exercise at a time convenient for Sandwell DAAT and if the system was still under-capturing, to undertake some data linkage between the systems to investigate possible causes such as shift patterns on ED reception.