Scottish Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme Statistics

Year ending 31 March 2018

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

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About this release

This release by Information Services Division provides an annual update on the Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) screening programme in Scotland. This programme aims to reduce the number of deaths caused by abdominal aneurysms in men aged 65 and over.

Main Points

Results for the year ending 31 March 2018:

- In Scotland over 30,000 men were routinely eligible for screening in the latest year. Over 25,500 were tested and 324 (1.3%) had a positive result.
- Uptake of screening was high with 84.5% of men tested within the target time period. This exceeded the programme’s essential threshold of 75%.
- The uptake of screening was high across Scotland, with a rate of 80% or higher in all NHS Boards.
- Uptake of screening was lower in the more deprived areas (most deprived 76.1%, least deprived 89.1%).

Percentage of men offered screening who are tested before age 66 and 3 months by deprivation, Scotland; men who turned 66 in year ending 31 March 2018
• For men identified as having a high risk of aneurysm rupture, 91.1% were seen by vascular specialist services within two weeks. This is an increase from 74.5% in the year ending March 2017 and is the first year the essential threshold of 75% has been met.

• 46.0% of men deemed appropriate for aneurysm repair surgery were operated on by a vascular specialist within eight weeks. This was below the essential threshold of 60% but an increase from 31.2% in the year ending March 2017.

• The AAA screening programme in Scotland met or exceeded the essential threshold in 10 of the 12 performance indicators.

• Since the screening programme began in 2012, nearly 139,000 men routinely eligible for screening in Scotland have been tested and 1,982 (1.4%) had a positive result.

Background

An Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm is a swelling of the aorta, the main artery in the body, as it passes through the abdomen. The condition is most common in men aged 65 and over and usually there are no symptoms. Large aneurysms are uncommon but can be very serious. As the wall of the aorta stretches, it becomes weaker, and it can rupture (burst). If the aneurysm ruptures, this leads to life-threatening internal bleeding and, in 8 out of 10 cases, death.

Men aged 65 are sent an invitation to attend screening. Men over 65 years of age, who have not been screened previously, can self-refer into the screening programme. The test is a simple ultrasound scan of the abdomen. Most men have a normal result and are discharged from the screening programme. Men with detected small or medium aneurysms are invited for regular scans to monitor the size of the aneurysm. Men with large aneurysms are at high risk of aneurysm rupture and are referred to vascular specialist services for assessment and to discuss treatment options.

The Scottish AAA screening programme has 12 Key Performance Indicators it uses to help assess the performance of the screening programme. Each indicator has an essential and a desirable threshold. The essential threshold is the minimum level of performance the screening programme is expected to meet.

Please see News and Updates section of our website for more details.

Contact

Judith Tait  
Principal Information Analyst  
0131 275 6833  
Email: nss.isdaaascreen@nhs.net

Salomi Barkat  
Senior Information Analyst  
0131 275 7871

Further Information

Find out more in the full report. The data from this publication is available to download from our web page. For more information on AAA Screening see the AAA Screening section of our website. The next release of this publication will be in March 2020.

ISD and Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of ‘Official Statistics’. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Further information about our statistics.