

10 MAR 2014

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Ref: H201400803

Dear Mr Body

Thank you for your email of 3 March 2014 requesting official information on the numbers and costs of spinal fusion surgeries.

The tables presented in this response cover estimated medical and surgical costs. The cost of individual custom implants or devices used during surgery and the cost of rehabilitation are not included as the Ministry of Health does not hold this information.

Hospital data reported to the Ministry of Health is coded using the International Statistical Classification of Diseases. Currently New Zealand is using the 6th edition of the Australian Modification of the Tenth Revision (ICD-10-AM-VI). These codes do not include any information about the nature of implants that are used; they only identify the procedures that were performed.

The hospital discharge information reported to the Ministry of Health is stored in the National Minimum Dataset (NMDS). The NMDS holds a derived costweight that can be used to calculate the estimated cost of a hospital event; it does not record the actual cost of an event. The methodology used to calculate costweights can be found on the Ministry's website via this link:
<http://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/data-references/weighted-inlier-equivalent-separations?mega=Health%20statistics&title=Weighted%20Inlier%20Equivalent%20Separations>

The procedure codes we record do not correspond to the categories you have requested. As such, we have used the following ICD-10-AM-VI procedure codes to best approximate the categories that you are interested in:

Category	Block	Code	Description
Anterior spinal fusion excluding cervical	1389*	4866000	Anterior spinal fusion, 1 level
		4866900	Anterior spinal fusion, >= 2 levels
Posterior spinal fusion	1389*	4864200	Posterior spinal fusion, 1 or 2 levels
		4864500	Posterior spinal fusion, >= 3 levels
		4865400	Posterior spinal fusion with laminectomy, 1 level
		4865700	Posterior spinal fusion with laminectomy, >= 2 levels
Posterolateral spinal fusion	1389*	4864800	Posterolateral spinal fusion, 1 or 2 levels
		4865100	Posterolateral spinal fusion, >= 3 levels
		4865401	Posterolateral spinal fusion with laminectomy, 1 level
		4865701	Posterolateral spinal fusion with laminectomy, >= 2 levels

Decompression of cervical spinal cord with anterior fusion	46*	4033200	Decompression of cervical spinal cord with anterior fusion, 1 level
		4033500	Decompression of cervical spinal cord with anterior fusion, >= 2 levels

* Indicates that not all procedures within that block code are included.


The table below contains the numbers and estimated costs of events containing these procedures. It should be noted that this includes any other procedures that may have been performed during the hospitalisation:

Year	Anterior spinal fusion excluding cervical		Posterior spinal fusion		Posterolateral spinal fusion		Decompression of cervical spinal cord with anterior fusion	
	Discharges	Estimated Cost	Discharges	Estimated Cost	Discharges	Estimated Cost	Discharges	Estimated Cost
2008/09	251	\$4,706,269.17	521	\$11,403,329.62	191	\$3,264,545.79	110	\$1,882,223.59
2009/10	276	\$5,624,586.47	469	\$13,788,923.11	260	\$5,479,411.56	139	\$2,921,505.30
2010/11	243	\$5,128,918.23	549	\$16,786,532.55	299	\$6,532,601.93	139	\$3,347,621.32
2011/12	251	\$7,175,642.80	617	\$21,532,790.79	292	\$8,286,294.23	131	\$3,654,215.35
2012/13	263	\$7,538,109.40	584	\$20,744,164.08	367	\$10,078,518.07	151	\$4,154,195.26

If you have any queries about this data, please direct them to Analytical Services, Ministry of Health. They can be contacted by phone on (04) 496-2000, fax on (04) 816-2898 or by e-mail (data-enquiries@moh.govt.nz).

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision on this request.

Yours sincerely


 PP Michael Hundleby
 Acting National Director
 National Health Board
 Ministry of Health