

Addendum – Comparison with the Western Australian Abortion Notification System

There were differences in the number of induced abortions in Western Australia among the Western Australia Abortion Notification System (WAANS), the National Hospital Morbidity Database (NHMD) and the Medicare data (see Table 2.6 and Table 2.9). Since the publication of this report, the Western Australian Department of Health has provided additional information that in part accounts for these differences.

Comparison of the NHMD with the Western Australian Abortion Notification System

The Western Australian Department of Health, using data from the WAANS, advised that in 2003, 374 induced abortions were incorrectly classified as in-hospital services in the WAANS. The comparison of the NHMD with the WAANS for in-hospital services has been redone using the revised data for the WAANS for 2003.

In 2003, 43.4% (3,446) of the 7,933 abortions notified to the WAANS were provided in hospital. There were 3,446 induced abortions carried out in hospitals notified to the WAANS, compared with 3,615 separations with induced abortion in the NHMD for Western Australia, a difference of 4.9% (Table 2.6). The age distributions were similar, however, there were fewer induced abortions notified to the WAANS than were reported to the NHMD for all age groups. The largest difference was in the 15–19 year age group where 66 fewer induced abortions were notified to the WAANS than were reported to the NHMD. Age was not reported for 58 (1.7%) induced abortions notified to the WAANS, so the actual differences could be greater.

Table 2.6: Comparison of the number of in-hospital induced abortions reported to the WAANS^(a) and the NHMD^(b) for Western Australia, by 5-year age group, 2003

Age group	WAANS	NHMD	Difference	% Difference
<15	10	12	-2	-20.0
15–19	677	743	-66	-9.7
20–24	928	981	-53	-5.7
25–29	685	706	-21	-3.1
30–34	550	604	-54	-9.8
35–39	356	383	-27	-7.6
40–44	165	167	-2	-1.2
>44	17	19	-2	-11.8
Not reported	58	0	58	100.0
Total	3,446	3,615	-169	-4.9

(a) Unpublished data on in-hospital services from the Western Australian Abortion Notification System.

(b) AIHW National Hospital Morbidity Database.

Induced abortion estimate for Western Australia

The Western Australian Department of Health, using data from the WAANS, advised that 2,434 induced abortions were included in the NHMD but identified in the Medicare data as non-hospital services. Therefore, applying the estimation methodology developed in this report would result in double counting of these services.

The estimate for Western Australia has not been revised using these additional data because they are not sourced from the routine national data collections. Their use would require a deviation from the methodology developed in this report for routine national reporting of induced abortion in Australia. Therefore, the estimate for Western Australia was determined by applying the age-specific rates of induced abortion calculated for all states and territories except Western Australia to the female population of Western Australia (see Table 3.1).