

Tenth Patient Report of the National Emergency Laparotomy Audit

April 2023 to April 2024

Case Ascertainment Methodology

October 2025

NELA uses national data provided by NHS England (NHSE; Hospital Episodes Statistics [HES] data based on ICD10 and OPCS coding) and the Welsh Government (Patient Episode Database for Wales [PEDW]) to estimate case ascertainment (CA) rates at national level and for each hospital that undertakes eligible surgery. We report CA rates as the number of locked/submitted cases divided by the number of HES/PEDW-estimated cases. This methodology is described in more detail [here](#).

In the [Tenth Annual Patient Report](#), the process for calculating case ascertainment rates was modified from that used in previous annual reports.

Due to the way data is released by NHSE, NELA received data for those patients who completed their surgical episode by 31st March 2024. This means that data received for March 2024 was less complete than that from previous months, as some patients would not have completed their surgical episode by the end of the month. Furthermore, Year 10 of the audit was extended by a few weeks and ran from 1 April 2023 to 23 April 2024. For those who had surgery between 1st and 23rd April 2024, no HES data was supplied to NELA.

To account for this, the NELA project team used direct data supplied by NHSE for the period 1st April 2023 to 29th February 2024, but extrapolated the national-level data for the period 1st March 2024 to 23rd April 2024. The extrapolation was based on the average number of cases at each hospital site between 1 April 2023 and 29 February 2024.