



ATISN 15735

30 December 2021

Dear ,

ATISN 15735 – Vaginal Mesh

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 01 December relating to vaginal mesh removal. You have requested the following:

The number of people who have had the Transvaginal Mesh Removal procedure in Wales Since 2010

Our Response

Welsh Government does not hold all the information that you are requesting. The information we hold only covers the period to 2017/18.

There is also a possible definitional issue with the request and data we hold, in that the actual figures we have are a combination of a number of different procedure codes and might not reflect the definition of transvaginal mesh removal procedures which the FOI requestor requires.

The table below shows the number of patients who have had a vaginal mesh or tape procedure in each of the financial years 2007/8 to 2017/18 and the number of episodes of care in Wales over the same period:

Financial Year	Mesh Implant		Mesh Removal		Oversewing of Exposed Mesh		Grand Total	
	No. Patients	No. Episodes	No. Patients	No. Episodes	No. Patients	No. Episodes	No. Patients	No. Episodes
2007/08	784	799	62	73	2	2	848	874
2008/09	966	980	49	54	4	6	1019	1040
2009/10	926	937	37	46	1	1	964	984
2010/11	770	777	34	42	0	0	804	819
2011/12	696	705	41	47	0	0	737	752
2012/13	704	712	36	42	0	0	740	754
2013/14	629	636	41	46	0	0	670	682
2014/15	498	504	36	39	0	0	534	543
2015/16	417	422	31	31	1	1	449	454
2016/17	327	328	37	45	0	0	364	373
2017/18 (to date)	142	144	22	26	2	2	166	172
Grand Total	6859	6944	426	491	10	12	7295	7447

The figures have been provided by the NWIS Classification and Terminology service using the OPCS Classification of Interventions and Procedures version 4 codes, held on the Patient Episode Data Base for Wales (PEDW) and include figures for finished consultant episodes (FCE) with end dates in the date range 1st April 2007 to 31st December 2017.

The figures show that over the period 2007 to the end of 2017 there were 6944 finished consultant episodes in which procedures implanting mesh or tape were carried out. During the same timescale there were 503 finished consultant episodes for total or partial mesh or tape removal or over-sewing. Detailed information on the specific procedures is not available as many of the classification codes used over this period did not differentiate between partial or total removal of mesh or tape.

A total of 6,859 patients received mesh implants and a further 436 had mesh removed or had undergone mesh over-sewing. There are more episodes of care than individual patients as a number of the patients will have received more than one episode of care related to vaginal mesh.

The use of mesh and tape implantation has been on a downward trend over the period investigated, falling from a peak of 980 episodes in 2008-9 to 328 in 2016-17 and 144 over the first 9 months of 2017-18. Episodes of mesh removal have also fallen since 2007-8 but have stayed steady over the last 8 years with an average of about 40 episodes a year. The over-sewing of exposed mesh has seen very low numbers with a total of 12 episodes over the ten year period reviewed.

Methodology for Welsh Data on Mesh Implant and Removal:

These figures provide a count of the number of finished consultant episodes in which a specific procedure has been recorded as being undertaken, and the number of patients who have undergone any of these procedures. Any given patient may be responsible for the appearance of more than one incidence of a procedure or procedures - for example if they had an implantation, followed by one or more partial removals and then a total removal.

The figures include all *procedures* carried out for stress incontinence, vaginal or uterine prolapse in which mesh or tape has been inserted, removed or over-sewn only when one of the following applied:

1. The words 'mesh' or 'tape' is included in the OPCS descriptor for the procedure.

2. The codes are present on NHS Digital, Table of Coding Equivalence for any of the procedures in point 1. The NHS Digital, Table of Coding Equivalents provides details of changes in OPCS Classification code(s) that have occurred due to the release of any new version of the classification.
3. There is a specific Clinical Coding Standard with direct instructions on how to record one of the procedures covered by this report.

The Classification Team acknowledges that it is possible that mesh could have been inserted during procedures that are not included in these figures. However, it is not possible to use clinical coded data to identify these procedures.

The figures on these procedures have been divided into three distinct sections:

1. Procedures that include the implantation of mesh or tape
2. Procedures that include removal of mesh or tape (both Partial and total removal)
3. Over-sewing of any exposed mesh or tape in the vagina

The DHCW Classification and terminology team would like to clarify that it is not possible to identify the type of mesh implanted (prosthetic) (biological) using historical clinical coded data. However, the team with the assistance of interested clinicians is in the process of drafting a new Welsh Clinical Coding Standard. In the future, if the type of mesh used has been documented within the medical record the use of this proposed standard should allow easy identification of the type of mesh used. It is hoped that this new standard will be mandated for use by the Clinical Coding Service in NHS Wales on any finish consultant episode (FCE) with an end date on or after 1st April 2018.

For further information, you may wish to contact Digital Health and Care Wales. For your convenience, their contact details are as follows:

Digital Health and Care Wales

Tŷ Glan-yr-Afon,
1 Cowbridge Road East,
Cardiff, CF11 9AD
Email: [Freedom of Information Requests](#)

Next Steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ
or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,