HR/CSC Cell Size Suppression Policy uses the CMS guideline below

CMS Cell Size Suppression Policy

Current Version Date:
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As outlined for researchers in the data use agreement (DUA), the CMS cell size suppression policy sets minimum thresholds for the display of CMS data. The policy stipulates that no cell (e.g. admissions, discharges, patients, services, etc.) containing a value of 1 to 10 can be reported directly. A value of *zero* does not violate the minimum cell size policy. In addition, no cell can be reported that allows a value of 1 to 10 to be derived from other reported cells or information. For example, the use of percentages or other mathematical formulas that, in combination with other reported information, result in the display of a cell containing a value of 1 to 10 are prohibited. The cell suppression policy also applies to the reporting of excluded cases.

CMS standards for minimum cell sizes aim to protect the confidentiality of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries by avoiding the release of information that can be used to identify individual beneficiaries. The policy applies to any output in tables and texts describing any of the following: beneficiaries, procedures, and diagnoses. The CMS policy applies to the use of CMS research identifiable files (RIF) and limited data sets (LDS). Any documents (manuscript, table, chart, study, report, etc.) created using CMS data must adhere to the minimum cell sizes set forth in this policy.

How to avoid violating the CMS cell size suppression policy

There are several options that researchers can employ to comply with the minimum cell size requirements outlined in the CMS cell size suppression policy. Common strategies to avoid displaying a cell of 1 to 10 include collapsing cells, coarsening data, and cell suppression.

Resources:

https://www.resdac.org/resconnect/articles/26

ResDAC Assistance Desk
Email: resdac@umn.edu
Phone: 1-888-973-7322
Web: http://www.resdac.org

CMS Privacy office
Email: Privacy@cms.hhs.gov
Phone: 410-786-5357