

Technical Note: Linked MBS and PBS data

Version: January 2017

The 45 and Up Study receives Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) data from the Department of Human Services (formerly known as Medicare) (DHS) that are linked to active 45 and Up Study participants by use of an **identification number** that was assigned by DHS at recruitment.

MBS and PBS records are currently provided to the Sax Institute every year, with the current datasets covering the period 2004 to 2015. Each extract contains data linked to “active” participants at the time of application for the extract. “Active” participants include all consenting participants who have not withdrawn from the study. Therefore “active” participants for linkage purposes also include those who have died.

The number of active participants for which MBS and PBS data is held has increased with each extract. With the latest update, we now have MBS data for 99.9% of active participants, and PBS data for 96.0%.

Data management by the 45 and Up Study Co-ordinating Centre

Each extract from the DHS contains several years of past data. The 45 and Up Study Co-ordinating Centre conducts some limited processing of the extracts to remove records duplicated across overlapping time periods. Potentially duplicated records are records with the same DHS identifier with the same date of service (MBS) or date of supply (PBS) and the same item number. When duplicates are found in different extracts, the records from the most recent extract are selected.

Review and Modifications to MBS and PBS data in the 2015 update

- 97% of the new MBS dataset were records for the 2015 calendar year. Of the records for previous years, 98% were additional records for 2014.
- 85% of the new PBS dataset were records for the 2015 calendar year. Of the records for previous years, 98% were additional records for 2014.
- On review of duplicate records, 0.01% of MBS records and 0.001% of PBS records in the previous datasets were replaced.

Data notes (also refer to data dictionary)

- In April 2012, under co-payment prescription data collection began. These records can be identified as those with a **Gross Price** and **Net Benefit** of \$0. For more information, see <http://www.pbs.gov.au/info/statistics/under-co-payment/under-co-payment-data>.
- RPBS records are not currently included in the extracts.
- Codes and descriptions for **MBS Bill Type** changed in the DHS system in 2013, therefore an additional variable was introduced for bill types from 2013 onwards.
- The **MBS Provider Specialty** codes from the 2013 extract have different descriptions to those from other extracts.
- There have been some issues with **PBS Scrambled Provider Number** over the years. In 2015, DHS resupplied as much data as possible from previous years. Where it was not possible to resupply the data, the scrambled provider number has been set to missing.

If further information is required, please contact the 45 and Up Study by email on 45andUp.research@saxinstitute.org.au or telephone the Infoline on 1300 45 11 45.