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## AHRQ: Most Frequent Procedures Performed in U.S. Hospitals

When hospitalized, patients may undergo procedures for surgery, treatments (e.g., blood transfusions), or for diagnostic purposes (e.g., biopsy). The *principal procedure* is the procedure performed for definitive treatment. Hospitalizations usually involve multiple procedures, which together constitute the *all-listed* procedures performed during a hospital stay. Data on inpatient hospital procedures can help hospital administrators, health practitioners, researchers and others understand how hospital care, including care related to diagnosis and treatment, is currently provided and what changes or consistencies in care delivery have occurred over time.

The present Statistical Brief provides the most current national data published on the most common all-listed procedures performed during hospital stays in the U.S., overall and by patient age. Changes between 1997 and 2011 in the number of stays and in the rate of hospitalizations with these procedures also are presented.

### Highlights

- Procedures were performed in 63 percent of hospital stays in 2011. The hospitalization rate for stays with procedures remained stable since 1997 at 780 per 10,000 population.
- Between 1997 and 2011, the hospitalization rate for stays with hemodialysis increased 68 percent.
- The hospitalization rates for stays with a blood transfusion increased 129 percent for adults aged 18-44 years and 45-64 years, 111 percent for adults aged 65-84 years, and 97 percent for adults aged 85 years and older.
- The hospitalization rate for stays with Cesarean section increased 39 percent between 1997 and 2011.
- Between 1997 and 2011, the most rapidly growing procedure was indwelling catheter—the rate of hospitalization for stays with this procedure more than tripled.
- Adults aged 65-84 years accounted for more than half of the total number of stays with knee arthroplasty in 2011; their hospitalization rate increased 59 percent since 1997.

All-listed Clinical Classifications Software (CCS) procedures	Number of stays with the procedure in thousands		Number of stays with the procedure per 10,000 population		Change in rate, %
	1997	2011	1997	2011	1997-2011
<b>All stays (with and without procedures)</b>	34,679	38,591	1,272	1,239	-3
<b>All stays with any procedure</b>	21,257	24,312	780	780	0
Procedures with the most rapid growth in stays per population*					
Indwelling catheter	60	236	2	8	241
Prophylactic vaccinations and inoculations	567	1,860	21	60	187
Blood transfusion**	1,097	2,929	40	94	134
Spinal fusion	202	489	7	16	112
Abdominal paracentesis	117	277	4	9	107
Arthroplasty knee	329	718	12	23	91
Incision and drainage, skin and subcutaneous tissue	118	257	4	8	90
Enteral and parenteral nutrition	277	586	10	19	85
Arterio- or venogram (not heart and head)	143	279	5	9	70
Hemodialysis	473	909	17	29	68
* Includes procedures performed during at least 100,000 hospital stays in either 1997 or 2011					
** The number of stays with blood transfusion does not reflect the number of units of blood transfused.					
Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), Center for Delivery, Organization, and Markets, Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP), Nationwide Inpatient Sample (NIS), 1997 and 2011					

## **New AHRQ Toolkit to Improve Handling of Medical Tests**

Approximately 40 percent of primary care office visits involve some type of diagnostic medical test, such as a urine sample or blood test, provided on site or at a laboratory. Often patients are burdened with the responsibility of tracking tests and deciphering results. A new AHRQ toolkit helps medical practices improve their processes for tracking, reporting and following up with patients after medical laboratory tests.

“Improving Your Office Testing Process: Toolkit for Rapid-Cycle Patient Safety and Quality Improvement” offers step-by-step instructions on how to identify areas where improvement is needed and address those areas. Practical tools include:

- Assessing Your Testing Process Survey
- Patient Engagement Survey to assess patients’ understanding of their tests and what to do after getting test results
- Sample Patient Handouts, in English and Spanish that provide information about what to do after having a test or getting test results.

[Click here for the toolkit.](#)

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