

Maintainance of Certification and Medicare Outcomes

Cohort Definition

Xilin Chen

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This document describes how the ABS maintance of certification and medicare outcomes cohort was defined. The data will be used for further statistical analyses.

1. Data Sources

- ABS certification data (recovered at September 2019 from ABS)
- Medicare claim data
 - Year: 2007-2018
 - Procedures: commonly performed general surgery procedures (162 procedures in total)

ABS and Medicare claim data are linked using physician NPIs.

2. Data Process

ABS

1. Inclusion and Exclusion

Inclusion:

- Surgeons with NPI
- Passed initial certification exam

Exclusion:

- Fellowship or non-US trained surgeons (n = 14523).
 - Fellowship and Med school information is from ABS, AMA and Fellowship Council data.

Below is the re-certification status for all qualified ABS surgeons. Very few surgeons have recorded failed re-certification status. A large portion of surgeons doesn't have re-certification records at all, i.e. NA.

ReCeverPassed	n suregon	percentage
0	154	0.5%
1	16532	53.2%
NA	14380	46.3%

2. Define never recertified surgeon group (Define NA group)

2.1. At least have 10 years after the initial certification year The ABS require diplomats certified subsequently to pass a secure, multiple-choice comprehensive recertification examination in surgery every 10 years.

4522 surgeons who had no recertification record but had initial board certification more than 10 years ago. We include this group as failed recertification group.

2.2 Grandfathered out of the recertification process We excluded surgeons who had their initial certification before 1976. It is bases on the recertification was introduced at 1976 “the American Board of Surgery (ABS) introduced time-limited certification in 1976, requiring diplomats certified subsequently to pass...”. If the surgeon was initially certified before 1976, she/he was not required for recertification at the initial certification time.

242 surgeons graduated before 1976 and are excluded in the analyses cohort.

Recert_status	n suregon	percentage
failed	154	1%
NA_failed	4280	20%
passed	16532	79%

3. Data linkage

Link ABS with Medicare by NPI. Below is the number of surgeons by each recertification category after linked with Medicare outcomes.

Recert_status	n suregon	percentage
failed	104	1%
NA_failed	3213	18%
passed	14525	81%

3124 (15%) surgeons from ABS didn't have recorded ABS records.