

Main points

Introduction

[Table 1](#) shows the annual totals for 1996 to 2020 along with the numbers for the quarters in which the deaths were registered.

Information about the three bases on which figures for MRSA deaths have been produced is given in a note which is available in the [Death Certificates and Coding the Causes of Death](#) section of this website.

Deaths for which MRSA was the underlying cause

- In 2020, there were no deaths for which MRSA was the underlying cause. This is the first year covered by this publication where no deaths with MRSA as the underlying cause have been recorded.
- Registrations of deaths for which MRSA was the underlying cause tended to increase, year by year (with a couple of exceptions), up to 2007, when there were 56 such deaths, then fell in most of the years thereafter to 4 in 2013. The following six years' figures were in the range from 1 (in 2016 and 2019) to 6 (in 2014 and 2015), well below the level seen from 2000 to 2008 (between 35 and 56 each year).

Deaths to which MRSA contributed, without being the underlying cause

- There were 4 deaths in 2020 for which MRSA was a contributory factor, compared with 14 in 2019 (a decrease of 10). In 2020, MRSA was a contributory factor in fewer deaths than in all of the previous 24 years for which these figures are available. The next lowest annual totals were 11 such deaths in 2017 and 14 in 2019.
- The number of deaths for which MRSA was a contributory factor rose in every year up to 2005, when there were 174 such deaths. From 2007 the annual totals fell quite sharply to 43 in 2011, followed by a more gradual decline to 25 in 2015. Since then there had been between 11 and 30 such deaths each year.

Quarterly numbers of deaths for which MRSA was mentioned on the death certificate (either as the underlying cause or as a contributory factor)

- On a quarterly basis, the number of deaths for which MRSA was mentioned (either as the underlying cause of death or as a contributory factor) was highest at 81 in the first quarter of 2007. For the four-year period, 2013 to 2016, there were an average of about 8 such deaths per quarter, and the scale of the fluctuations around this is such that they could well be the result of “random”

statistical quarter-to-quarter variability. Over the three years 2017 to 2019 the average was around 5 deaths per quarter.

- The highest quarterly figures since the middle of 2012 were 14 in the second quarter of 2015 and 12 in the first quarters of 2013 and 2018. There have been three quarters with no deaths - the third quarter of 2017 and the second and third quarters of 2020. The next lowest figures were 1 death in the fourth quarter of 2017 and 2 in the first and fourth quarters of 2020. Information on statistics based on small numbers can be found in the [Fluctuations in and possible unreliability of death statistics](#) page on this website.

MRSA deaths by NHS Board and by place of death

- [Table 2](#) contains breakdowns by NHS Board of residence and Table 3 shows the place of death, where MRSA was the underlying cause of death.
- [Tables 4 and 5](#) contain similar breakdowns to Tables 2 and 3 respectively, for all deaths where MRSA was mentioned on the death certificate (either as the underlying cause or as a contributory factor).