

Session 2

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Measuring health output and productivity in the UK: an essential element of public accountability

- First estimates of health output for the UK were published in 1998
- Further progress on improving the methodology and the quality of the estimates was made as a result of the setting up of the Atkinson Review of the *Measurement of Government Output and Productivity for the National Accounts* and, later, the implementation of its recommendations
- Progress in this work has been presented in two ONS productivity articles on health (December 2004, February 2006). These aimed to explore public service productivity within the context of the UK National Accounts, drawing on a wide range of information to paint a detailed picture of public service output and productivity than had been available in the National Accounts
- A key shortcoming of the results presented in the first health article was that they took no account of whether the quality of the outputs produced had changed over time. Research articles by the Department of Health and the University of York/National Institute for Economic and Social Research (both published in December 2005) proposed methods which would allow some aspects of quality change to be reflected in measures of government output and productivity. The latest health productivity article has incorporated these research findings into the existing ONS work. In addition, the article included, for the first time, measures covering the whole of the UK (rather than England as before).
- The conference paper will report on the work carried out to improve existing measures of public service output and productivity, as an essential element of public accountability.
- The presentation will summarise the challenges that lie ahead in moving towards a more comprehensive UK measure of output and productivity in the UK health services.