

Further information

Why is this indicator important?

How do unplanned extubation rates in 2018 vary by number of admissions per unit?

Unplanned extubation is the most common adverse event related to airway management in intensive care: it can cause complications such as hypoxaemia (very low blood oxygen), hypercarbia (high blood carbon dioxide) and sometimes, but very rarely, death.

While every effort is made to prevent accidental extubation, some children may have complex clinical conditions that make it more likely.

Clearly, it is best to avoid unplanned extubation if at all possible but there are no established guideline levels: the NHS England service specification notes the threshold is still to be agreed. Kanthimathinathan and colleagues refer to a notional threshold of 1/100 invasive ventilation days, which is equivalent to 10/1000 days.