

THIN Updates

Welcome to the third issue of EPIC LINK. Enhancements made to THIN data are highlighted in this issue.

The mechanism for calculating Death Date in the patient records has been revised to include searching the AHD files for "death administration" codes which are now being used by GPs to record death. This is likely to generate a more accurate date of death than has been available in the past.

The data validation and integrity checks have been expanded to include extraction of all medical and therapy codes ever recorded in THIN Data. This exercise has revealed 126 medical codes and 5 drug codes that are found in the THIN data but can not be found in the current dictionaries. These were believed to occur due to data corruptions and will not, therefore, have valid interpretations.

Identifying test results have been simplified with the creation of new AHD codes for each test type. This will eliminate the need to include Read codes for tests in this type of search. These enhancements are available now and will be incorporated into future updates.

THIN Validation studies

In order to understand the utility of THIN data in Healthcare research and to assess the credibility and quality of THIN Data; EPIC has put together a programme of academic research. The programme incorporates studies in a variety of topics carried out by eminent academics from around the world. Ten studies have been approved by MREC, two are under review and four are awaiting submission.

Still to come: Comments

The top 10,000 most frequently occurring comments in the medical records have now been anonymised. This equates to over 70% of all comments in the medical records. An identifier will be linked to each comment resulting in one unique file for all comments being provided as an ancillary file.

Searching THIN Data for drug codes will be simplified in the future with the addition of a BNF code for each prescription record into the Therapy file. This will require re-arranging the data fields in the Therapy file and using a currently redundant field.

Open all hours

EPIC offers free advice and support to researchers who are using or considering using THIN Data. We provide information for proposed studies including estimating potential population size, advice on study design and assistance with preparation of code lists. We also strive to resolve any technical data queries connected with ongoing studies. In order that all researchers can take advantage of this service we have

Three abstracts have now been published.

Richard Hubbard et al; The risk of fits, diagnoses of epilepsy and death after first prescription for Bupropion: An analysis of THIN. ISPE 2004

Michelle Page, Hassy Dattani. (2004). Feasibility Study and Methodology to Establish a System to

extended our working hours to accommodate researchers in the US.

This means we can now respond to enquires via email or telephone up to 9pm GMT Monday to Thursday. If you require this new service please contact Louise Pinder on louise.pinder@epic-uk.org or Telephone: +44208 390 1407

THIN Data Statistics

268 practices contributing
260 practices sent data to EPIC
159 practices are pathology linked
229 processed practices
3.5 million patients
1.7 million active registered patients
20 million patient years
2.9% of UK population actively registered in THIN
7 years of computerised data per patient on average
190 practices have been computerised for over 10 years
141 practices also contributed to EPICGPRD

Improve Recording of Quality Indicators in Primary Care Data. DURG Annual Scientific Meeting 2004 "Moving from policy to reality-How was it for you

Anonymous; New medical research database launched, Pharmacoconomics & outcomes news Nov 2003, 436, 3

Future Developments

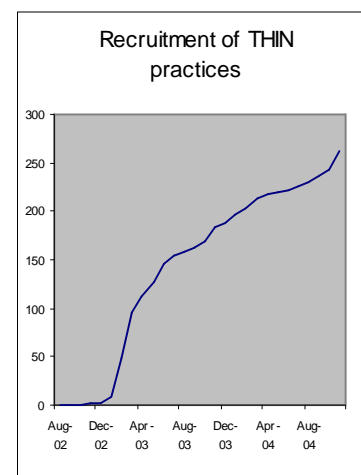
The facility to provide a socio-economic status for each patient by linking the patients postcode to the Townsend score without compromising patient confidentiality, is currently under development.

SAS Programming

We are now able to offer expert advice on loading datasets and programming the THIN data with SAS. We can also provide quality checking programs for use with loading the THIN Data into SAS.

Happy Birthday THIN

The Health Improvement Network Data Collection Scheme is two years old this November. The graph below shows the number of practices that have joined since 2002.



Other News & Updates

Hot off the press...

Alison Bourke MSc MRPS, Hassy Dattani BSc MRPS, Dr Michael Robinson ; Feasibility Study and Methodology to create a Quality Evaluated Database of Primary Care Data. Informatics in Primary Care, 12:3 November 2004