

UNC Cancer Survivorship Cohort Cell Suppression Policy

The cell size suppression policy stipulates that no cell (e.g. admissions, discharges, patients, services, etc.) containing a value of 1 to 10 can be reported directly. A value of zero does not violate the minimum cell size policy. In addition, no cell can be reported that allows a value of 1 to 10 to be derived from other reported cells or information. For example, the use of percentages or other mathematical formulas that, in combination with other reported information, result in the display of a cell containing a value of 1 to 10 are prohibited. The cell suppression policy also applies to the reporting of excluded cases.

Standards for minimum cell sizes aim to protect the confidentiality of participants by avoiding the release of information that can be used to identify individuals. The policy applies to any output in tables and texts describing any of the following: beneficiaries, procedures, and diagnoses. The policy applies to the use of research identifiable files and limited data sets. Any documents (manuscript, table, chart, study, report, etc.) created using data must adhere to the minimum cell sizes set forth in this policy. Common strategies to avoid displaying a cell of 1 to 10 include collapsing cells, coarsening data, and cell suppression.