

2. Method

Quality & validation

The data from all questionnaires received were electronically scanned into a preset database. Prior to any analysis taking place, the data were cleaned to ensure that there were no duplicate records and that erroneous data had not been entered during the scanning procedure. Where data from paired questionnaires did not match, e.g. date of outcome, then the local reporter was contacted to confirm the correct details. Following this, any fields that contained spurious data that could not be validated were removed.

All information that might identify a patient, hospital or clinician was removed from the questionnaires and the photocopied extracts of the casenotes, before any clinician, including the NCEPOD clinical co-ordinators, advisors or expert group, saw them.