

Summary of comparison of linear mean scoring with top-box scoring for MA CAHPS measures

In 2008, the Medicare CAHPS team conducted an analysis to compare the statistical reliability of linear mean scoring with top-box scoring at the contract level for MA CAHPS measures. Those analyses suggested that the median reliabilities of scores were higher for the linear mean scoring approach.

We replicated this analysis using 2017 MA CAHPS survey data, and the results appear in the table below. The results confirm the earlier analysis. For all but one measure (customer service), linear mean scoring has higher median reliability at the contract level. Although the top-box median reliability for customer service is higher, the difference is very small (-0.001, the smallest difference across all eight measures).

This analysis supports the decision to continue to use linear mean scoring in the case of MA & PDP CAHPS measures.

Median Reliabilities for MA Contracts, 2017 MA CAHPS Survey Data

Measure	Linear Scoring	Top-box Scoring	Difference (Linear minus Top-box)
Care coordination	0.8155	0.7841	0.031
Customer service	0.7638	0.7644	-0.001
Getting care quickly	0.9059	0.7953	0.111
Getting needed care	0.8543	0.8166	0.038
Getting needed prescription drugs	0.7895	0.7703	0.019
Rating of drug plan	0.8937	0.8893	0.004
Rating of health care quality	0.8263	0.8210	0.005
Rating of health plan	0.9215	0.9177	0.004