Summary points

Since devolution in 1998, it has become more difficult to collect comparable data across the four UK countries, particularly on NHS expenditure and waiting times

NHS activity and health outcomes seem more dependent on how healthcare resources are deployed than higher levels of resources

The most striking difference between the countries in 2002 was the shorter waiting times in England, which introduced enforced targets for waiting

quality and outcomes framework, to generate data that will enable evaluation of the same policy throughout the UK.¹⁵ But, without careful design, differences in other policies in each country will be reflected in differences in the data collected, which will nullify attempts at effective scrutiny and learning.

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If at first you don't succeed ... sue

In times past if you failed an exam at medical school you had a "long dark tea time of the soul." You asked yourself why you spent all that time in the college bar, the snooker hall, or in classical civilisation lectures. You vowed not to leave it all to the last minute for the repeats. But these days—in the United States at least—if you don't succeed you can always sue.

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