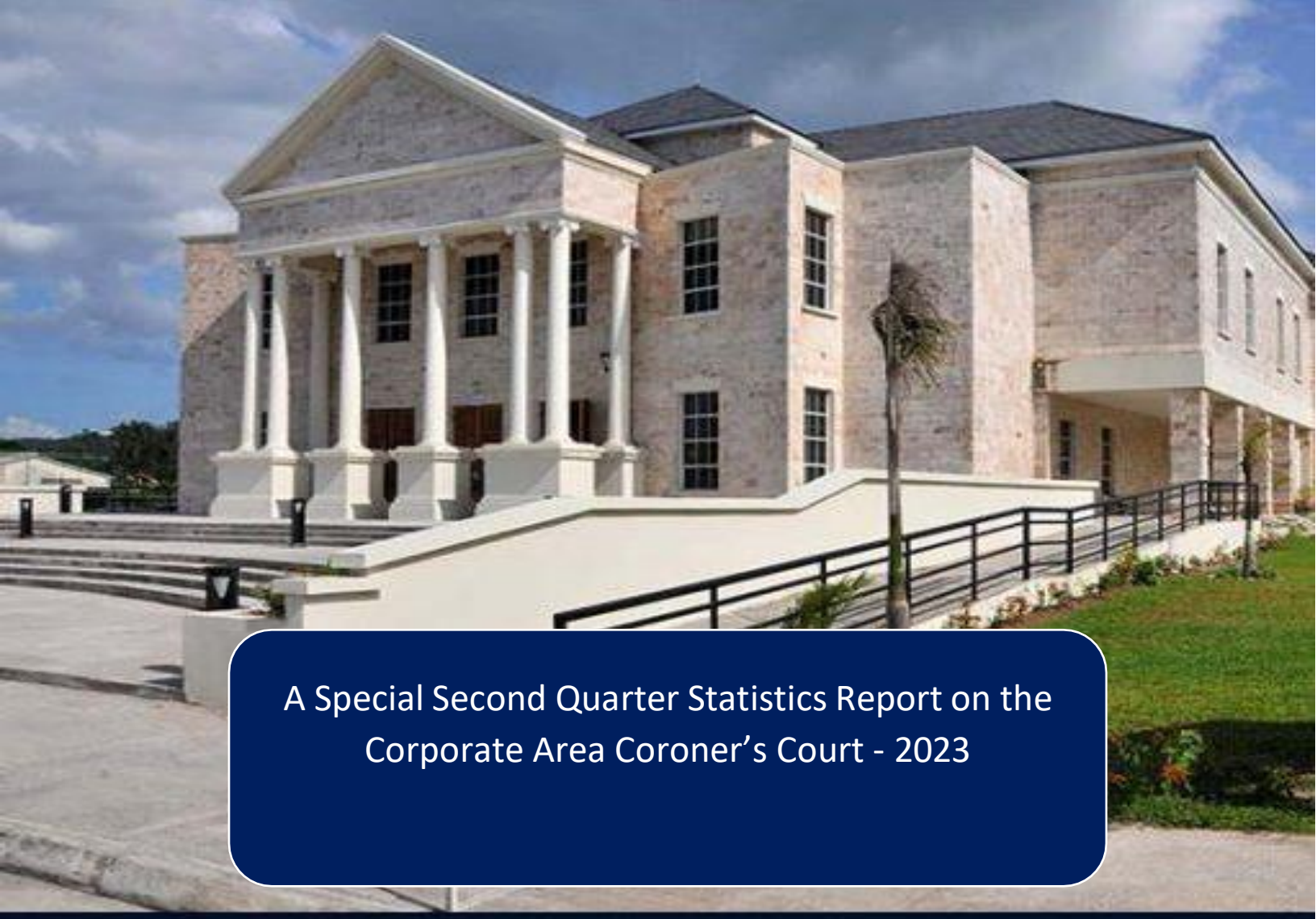

A Special Second Quarter Statistics Report on the Corporate Area Coroner's Court - 2023

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Executive Summary

This second quarter statistics report on case activity and performance of the Corporate Area Coroner's Court is another instalment in contributing to building a data driven framework to statistical reporting which is crucial to successful strategic planning and policy making in the Jamaican judiciary. Among the key quantitative targets set out by the Jamaican judiciary are the attainment of a net case backlog rate of under 5% and an aggregate case clearance rate of 130%, both being highly correlated. The Corporate Area Coroner's Court is statistically one of the most productive courts in the Jamaican judiciary, maintaining consistently some of the highest case disposal and case clearance rates and ranking among the court's with the lowest net case backlog rate. This court has already achieved the target set out in the judiciary's strategic plan of attaining a net case backlog rate of less than 5%. It has built up an impressive statistical profile which is borne out in this report which sees it registering an enviable case disposal rate of 99.03% for the second quarter of 2023, up from 84.73% (an increase of 14.3 percentage points) when compared to the corresponding period in 2022. The Corporate Area Coroner's Court also received a case clearance rate of 118.45% during the quarter, an increase of 16.92 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2022. Impressively, during the second quarter of 2023, cases that were resolved took an average of 17 days to be disposed while it took only about 4 days on average after a case is filed for it to be heard.

The Corporate Area Coroner's Court is currently among courts in the Jamaican court system which have already attained a sustainable equilibrium point characterized by low backlog rates, consistently high case disposal and clearance rates and modest times to disposition.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to detail the vital statistics on case activity in the Corporate Area Coroners Court in the second quarter of 2023. The report includes a range of productivity and time lag measures of the courts as well as related resource allocation and usage and other miscellaneous measurements. Ultimately, these measures seek to tell the story of the case flow in the Coroners Courts, particularly with respect to the disposals, case delay factors and other important elements of case progression management and outcomes. The Coroners Court operates in all parishes across the island, however this report is focused on the Corporate Area Coroners Court. The Coroners Court is the arm of the courts that rules on the cause of death of individuals under various circumstances

The Corporate Area Coroner's Court

This subsection on the Corporate Area Coroner's Court will detail information on the case activity in this court for the second quarter ended June 30, 2023, as well as the associated measurements of productivity in the disposal of cases, time lag measures outlining the average times between important events on the case flow continuum, as well as other supplementary measurements and information.

Table 1.0: Summary of time interval between date death reported and date case opened for the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	120
Mean	848.11
Std. Error of Mean	115.159
Median	330.00
Mode	124[a]
Std. Deviation	1261.501
Skewness	2.700
Std. Error of Skewness	.221
Range	7387
Minimum	11
Maximum	7398

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The table above provides a descriptive summary of the time taken between the date deaths were reported and the date that the cases for investigation of causes of death were opened in court at the Corporate Area Coroners Court for the second quarter ended June 30, 2023. It is seen that from a sample of 120 observations, the average time taken between the date deaths were reported and the date that the associated cases were opened in Corporate Area Coroner's Court

was roughly 848 days or 2.36 years. The modal time taken was 124 days or 4.1 months and the median was 330 days or approximately 11 months. The standard deviation stands at a high of 1261 days or 3.5 years, strongly suggesting that the distribution of the times between reporting of death and the date cases open in the court varies widely around the mean. The relatively high positive skewness further suggests that decisively more of the scores fall below the overall average, a result that is not surprising considering that the modal and median values are significantly below the overall mean. The maximum time shown between date deaths reported and date case opened is approximately 21 years, while the lowest is 11 days.

Table 2.0: Case Activity Summary for the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

Approximate Number of new cases filed	Approximate Number of active cases	Number of disposed cases (from those filed in the quarter)	Estimated Case disposal rate (%)
103	1	102	99.03

The above table provides a summary of the cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroner's Court in the second quarter ended June 30, 2023. It is shown that 103 new cases were filed during the quarter, 27.18% less than the corresponding quarter in 2022. These results yield an impressive, estimated case disposal rate of 99.03%. These disposal rate satisfies the international standard on this measure and suggests that for every 100 new cases filed over the period, 99 were resolved. The case clearance rate will be examined later in this report.

Table 3.0: Sampling distribution of Source of cases filed in the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Police	74	71.84
Family	29	28.16
Total	**103**	**100**

A sample of 103 cases filed at the Corporate Area Coroner's Court shows that 74 cases or 71.84% were filed by the police, while 29 or 28.16% were filed by the family of deceased.

Table 4.0: Sampling distribution of deaths reported at various Police and brought before the court during the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

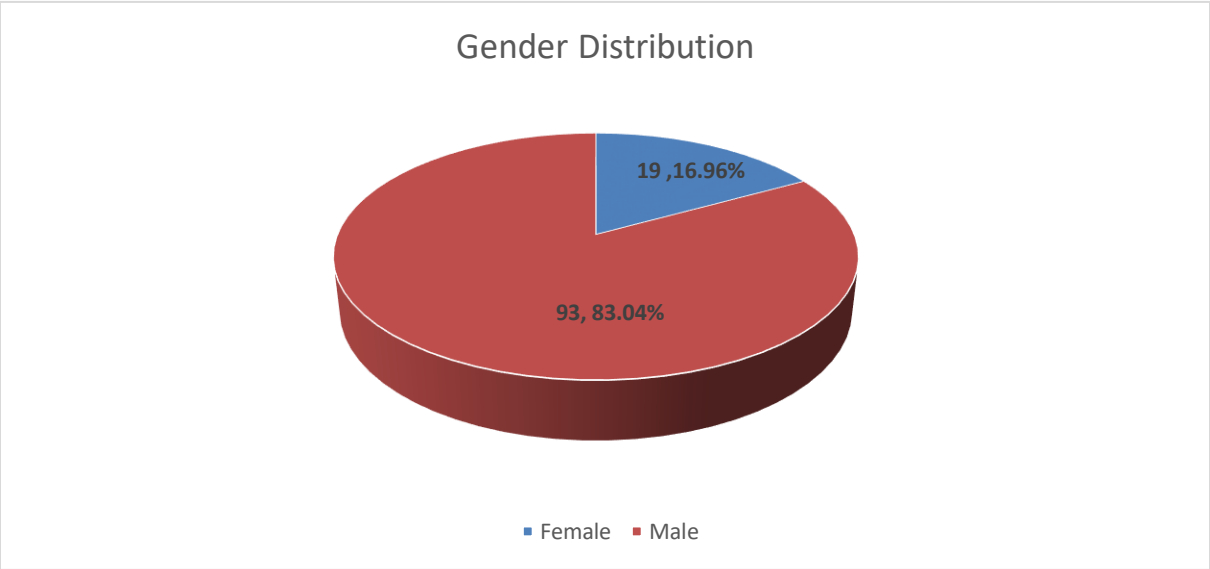
Police Station	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Half Way Tree police Station	26	23.85
Major Investigations Division	17	15.60
Denham Town Police Station	11	10.09
Elleston Road Police Station	10	9.17
Hunts Bay Police Station	8	7.34
Sub-Total	**72**	**66**

Sample of observations (N)= 109

The data shows a sample of cases reported at the different police stations in the Corporate Area which were subsequently brought to the court. Of that number, the Half- Way-Tree Police Station accounted for the highest proportion with 26 cases or 23.85% while the Major Investigation Division with 17 or 15.60% ranks next, followed by the Denham Town Police Station with 11 or 10.09% and the Elletson Road Police Station with 10 cases or 9.17% of the sample. The top five

police stations accounting for matters filed at the Corporate Area Coroner's Court was rounded off by the Hunts Bay Police Station with 8 or 7.34% of the sample.

Chart 1.0: Distribution of gender of the deceased for new cases filed



The above chart summarizes gender distribution, using a sample of 112 deceased persons involved in the cases filed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2023. It is shown that 93 or 83.04% of the deceased were male, while the remaining 19 or 16.96% were female. In the corresponding period in 2022, 70% of the deceased were male and 30% female.

Table 5.0: Descriptive statistics on the age distribution of the deceased in cases filed in the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

Descriptive statistics (age in years)

Number of observations	112
Mean	53.71
Std. Error of Mean	2.112
Median	52.00
Mode	47[a]
Std. Deviation	22.348
Skewness	.273
Std. Error of Skewness	.228
Range	80
Minimum	19
Maximum	99

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

A sample of 112 ages of the deceased involved in the cases filed revealed that the average age is roughly 53 years while the median is 52 years, and the most common modal value is 47 years. The standard deviation stands at a moderate value of 22 years, indicating some amount of variation of the scores around the mean, while the skewness is low positive value, indicating a large cluster of the scores around the mean. The smallest age in the data set is 19 years, while the oldest was 99 years.

Table 6.0a: Sampling distribution of the causes of death reported for cases filed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

Cause of Death	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Multiple gunshot wounds to head, torso	17	14.17
Haemorrhage and shock, Gunshot wound to the left posterior chest	5	4.17
Hanging	4	3.33
Haemorrhage and shock, multiple blunt trauma	3	2.50
Hypovolemic Shock, Injuries to night lung, Right pulmonary artery and thoracic aorta, Multiple gunshot wounds	2	1.67
Sub- Total	**31**	**26**

Sample size (N)= 120

The above table is computed using a sample of 120 observations of the causes of death associated with cases. It is shown that among the most common causes of death reported are death caused by multiple gunshot wounds to head, neck, chest, torso with 17 or 14.17% of the sample and haemorrhage and shock, gunshot wound to the left posterior chest with 5 or 4.17%. Death due to hanging ranked next with 4 or 3.33%, followed by haemorrhage and shock, multiple blunt trauma with 3 or 2.50%.

Table 6.0b: Sampling distribution of the causes of death as officially determined by the coroner for matters disposed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

cause of death determined by coroner	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Death due to gunshot wounds	58	43.28
Death due to natural causes	57	42.54
Death due to motor vehicle accident	5	3.73
Death due to hanging	4	2.99
Death due to multiple sharp force injuries	2	1.49
Death due to fallen from home	1	0.75
Death due to gastric ulcer	1	0.75
Death due to misadventure	1	0.75
Death due to poison	1	0.75
Death due to stab wounds	1	0.75
Death due to undetermined cause	1	0.75
Death due to fall and cancer	1	0.75
Verdict: accountable death by drowning	1	0.75
Total	**134**	**100.0**

The above table is computed using a sample of 134 observations of the causes of death as officially determined by the Coroner. It is shown that among the most common causes of death reported are deaths due to gunshot wounds with 58 or 43.28% of the sample and deaths due

to natural causes with 42.54% of the sample. Deaths due to motor vehicle accident with 3.73% and deaths due to hanging with 2.99% rank next. It is important to note that there may often be variances between the causes of death as reported and the causes of death as determined by the Coroner.

Table 7.0: Sampling distribution of the summary of outcomes of Form D applications made during the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

Outcomes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Section 14	58	51.79
Other	54	48.21
Total	**112**	**100.00**

During the processing of a case at the Coroner's Court, a Form D application is made which the judge reviews an order to determine the direction of the case thereafter. The above table provides a summary of the outcomes of these applications over the period under examination. It is seen that the dominant outcome from Form D applications were decisions in accordance with Section 14, which means that the matter was accepted for an Inquest to be carried out by the Coroner. Section 14 accounts for 58 or 69.16% of the outcomes, while the generic category 'other outcomes' accounted for the remaining 54 or 48.21%. These results are typical to the trends observed in the Coroner's Courts Island wide. The data was computed using a sample of 112 cases.

Table 8.0: Sampling distribution of the type of hearings in the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

Type of Hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Chambers	121	100
Total	**121**	**100**

A sample of 121 hearings at the Corporate Area Coroners Court during the second quarter ended June 30, 2023, reveals that all were chamber hearings.

Table 9.0: Sampling distribution of the methods of disposition for matters completed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

Methods of disposition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Section 14	67	49.63
Section 10	65	48.15
Inquest	2	1.48
Open Court Verdict	1	0.74
Total	**135**	**100**

The methods of disposition for a sample of 135 matters which were disposed during the quarter ended June 30, 2022, revealed that 67 or 49.63% of matters were disposed by way of an Inquest, under the provisions of Section 14 of the Coroner's Court Act. Matters disposed by way of inquest under the provision of Section 10 of the Coroner's Court Act followed this with 65 or 48.15% of the sample and matters disposed by inquest and open court verdict with 1.48% and 0.74% respectively of the sample ranked next.

Table 10.0: Descriptive Statistics on the time to disposition for matters completed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	134
Mean	17.16
Std. Error of Mean	7.289
Median	3.00
Mode	3
Std. Deviation	84.377
Skewness	8.462
Std. Error of Skewness	.209
Range	866
Minimum	1
Maximum	867

The above data shows that the average time taken to dispose of matters during the quarter is approximately 17 days. This was derived from a sample of 134 matters resolved during the period. The data also revealed that the median time taken to dispose of the matters was 3 days and the modal time was also 3 days. The standard deviation of 84.38, however, suggests that there is a wide variation in the individual scores and the high positive skewness indicates that a larger proportion of the scores fell below the overall mean. The minimum time taken was a day, with the maximum time taken being 867 days or 29 months. The average time taken between the date the file was received and the date of first hearing was an impressive 3.70 days.

Table 11.0: Summary of the incidence of hearings during inquest for matters disposed during the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	136
Mean	1.18
Std. Error of Mean	.128
Median	1.00
Mode	1
Std. Deviation	1.497
Skewness	9.583
Std. Error of Skewness	.208
Range	16
Minimum	1
Maximum	17

The frequency with which cases are heard potentially slows down the rate of case clearance and the average time taken to dispose of cases and is therefore a vital statistical indicator of both the probability of case disposition and roadblocks to case progression. In the above table, it is seen that the average number of hearings in inquest from a sample of 136 cases disposed over the quarter was roughly 1.2, while the median and modal values were both 1. The lowest number

of hearings was 1 and the highest was 17. The standard deviation suggests that there is some variation in the scores, while the high positive skewness suggests that proportionately more of the scores were below the overall average. A lower incidence of hearings is desirable to further reduce the average time to disposition.

Table 12.0: Case clearance rate summary for the second quarter ended June 30, 2023

Approximate number of new cases filed	Approximate number of disposed cases	Estimated Gross Case clearance rate (%)
103	122	118.45

Courts that consistently maintain an average case clearance rate of between 90%-110% long enough will at a minimum have its disposals keeping up with the number of new cases filed but may also likely make considerable strides in reducing its case backlog rate to an acceptable level of under 5% of active cases. The Corporate Area Coroner's Court with an impressive case clearance rate of 118.45% for the second quarter ended June 30, 2023 currently has a net case backlog rate of under 5%. There were 103 new cases filed during the quarter and 122 cases were disposed (regardless of date of origin), leading to the stated clearance rate. It suggests that for every 10 new cases filed, between eleven and twelve cases were disposed of during the quarter.

Conclusion

The Coroner's Court is firmly established as one of the most productive courts in the Jamaican court system. This court consistently maintains one of the fastest rates of disposal of new cases as reflected by their consistently high case disposal rate and also sustains a case clearance rate consistently over 100%. Unsurprisingly, the court's net case backlog rate is under the desired maximum rate of 5%, thus it has achieved its key quantitative targets which have been set out in the judiciary's current strategic plan. Among other impressive statistical output highlighted in this report is that the average time taken between the filing of a case and first hearing at the Corporate Area Coroner's Court is 3.70 days while the average time to disposition for cases resolved during the quarter was 17 days. Such impressive statistics are highly correlated with the court's consistently robust case clearance and case disposal rates as well as the low case congestion and backlog rates.

Glossary of Terms

Sampling Distribution: A sampling distribution of a given population is the distribution of frequencies of a range of outcomes that could possibly occur for a statistic of a population. A population is the entire pool from which a statistical sample is drawn.

Clearance rate: The ratio on incoming to outgoing cases or of new cases filed to cases disposed, regardless of when the disposed cases originated. For example, in a given Term 100 new cases were filed and 110 were disposed (including cases originating before that Term) the clearance rate is 110/100 or 110%.

Note: The clearance rate could therefore exceed 100% but the disposal rate has a maximum value of 100%.

A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. The inferred international benchmark for case clearance rates is an average of 90%-110 annualized. This is a critical foundation to backlog prevention in the court system. [I]

Disposal rate: As distinct from clearance rate, the disposal rate is the proportion of new cases filed which have been disposed in a particular period. For example, if 100 new cases are filed in a particular Term and 80 of those cases were disposed in said Term, then the disposal rate is 80%.

Note: A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system.[ii]

Trial/hearing date certainty: This is the proportion of dates set for trial or hearing which proceed without adjournment. For example, if 100 trial dates are set in a particular Term and 40 are adjourned, then the trial certainty rate would be 60%. The international standard for this measure is between 92% and 100%.

Courtroom utilization rate: The proportion of courtrooms in full use on a daily basis or the proportion of hours utilized in a courtroom on a daily basis. The international standard for this rate is 100%.

Case congestion rate: The ratio of pending cases to cases disposed in a given period. It is an indication of how fatigued a court is, given the existing state of resources and degree of efficiency. A case congestion rate of 150% for example, is an indication that given the resources currently at a court's disposal and its degree of efficiency, it is carrying 1.5 times its capacity.

Case File Integrity Rate: Measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence, any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time, impairs the case file integrity rate. The international benchmark for the case file integrity is 100%

Standard deviation: This is a measure of how widely spread the scores in a data set are **around** the average value of that data set. The higher the standard deviation, the higher the variation of the raw scores in the data set, from the average score. A low standard deviation is an indication that the scores in a data set are clustered around the average.

Outlier: An outlier is a value that is too small or too large, relative to the majority of scores/trend in a data set.

Skewness: This is measure of the distribution of scores in a data set. It gives an idea of where the larger proportion of the scores in a data set can be found. Generally, if skewness is positive as revealed by a positive value for this measure, this suggests that a greater proportion of the scores in the data set are at the lower end. If the skewness is negative as revealed by a negative value for this measure,

it generally suggests that a greater proportion of the scores are at the higher end. If the skewness measure is approximately 0, then there is roughly equal distribution of scores on both the higher and lower ends of the average figure.

Range: This is a measure of the spread of values in a data set, calculated as the highest minus the lowest value. A larger range score may indicate a higher spread of values in a data set.

Case backlog: A case that is in the court system for more than two years without disposition.

Source:

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http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf

[i] *Source:*
http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf
A weighted average can be more accurate than a simple average in which all numbers in a data set are assigned an identical weight.

Continuance and Adjournment: In a general sense, any delay in the progression of a hearing in which

a future date/time is set or anticipated for continuation is a form of adjournment. However, in order to make a strict distinction between matters which are adjourned for procedural factors and those which are generally avoidable, court statistics utilizes the terms 'continuance' and 'adjournment'. Here, 'continuance' is used strictly to describe situations in which future dates are set due to procedural reasons and 'adjournments' is used to describe the circumstances in which future dates of appearance are set due to generally avoidable reasons. For example, adjournments for another stage of hearing, say from a plea and case management hearing to a trial hearing or from the last date of trial to a sentencing date are classified as 'continuance' but delays for say, missing or incomplete files, due to outstanding medical reports or attorney absenteeism are classified as 'adjournments'. Adjournments as defined in this document have an adverse effect on hearing date certainty rates but continuances do not.

Weighted Average: Weighted average is a calculation that takes into account the varying degrees of significance of the groups or numbers in a data set. In calculating a weighted average for a particular variable, the individual scores or averages for each group are multiplied by the weight or number of observations in each of those groups, and summed. The outcome is then divided by the summation of the number of observations in all groups combined. For example, if we wish to calculate the weighted average clearance rate for the parish courts, the product of the clearance rate and number of cases for each court are computed, added, and then divided by the total number of cases across all the parish courts. This means that a court with a larger caseload has a greater impact on the case clearance rate than a smaller court.