ANZCA and FPM CPD Program

Clinical audit guideline

Purpose

This guideline assists CPD participants complete the *Clinical audit* activity.

Activity description

The objective of clinical audit is to collect data on patient care and outcomes, reflect on results and consider practice changes if areas for improvement are identified.

Clinical audit may be part of a *quality assurance* process, where data are compared against an accepted benchmark, standard or other comparator. The process may be repeated by re-audit, in a cycle of *quality improvement*, often to evaluate the impact of practice changes.

Clinical audit may involve one CPD participant or a group in single or multiple disciplines.

Related documents

1. [Clinical audit CPD verification form](#)

How to complete this activity

Steps

Time period	Steps	Complete
Develop clinical audit plan	<u>Decide on a topic</u> that is relevant to your scope of clinical practice (e.g., in anaesthesia, pain medicine or perioperative care). This might include a 'problem description' or a statement of the rationale for the audit topic.	
	<u>Determine the aim</u> of your practice audit. For example, is the audit being conducted to identify practice improvement opportunities (a gap analysis) or as part of a broader quality improvement initiative (to establish a baseline or measure the impact of a change)?	
	<u>Investigate best practice</u> for this area – identify research evidence or an authoritative opinion.	
	<u>Determine the standard or target</u> for best practice, if available. If no standard is defined, what would you judge would be an acceptable target (or, conversely, what result would indicate the need for improvement)? The Medical Council of New Zealand calls the latter a 'generated standard'.[1]	
	<u>Select the indicators</u> that demonstrate performance. Consider process and outcome measures, where available.	
	<u>Identify the data</u> to be collected, including selection criteria.	
	Determine the <u>process and timeframe</u> for data collection.	

Ethics approval	Ethics approval is not a mandatory requirement for satisfactory completion of this CPD activity.	
	However, CPD participants must comply with local regulations on ethics approval within their jurisdiction and workplaces. This applies even if the participant does not intend to publish the results of the audit outside their department or group.	
Collect data and summarise them with the chosen comparator	Data collection as per your plan.	
	Summarise results, with the relevant benchmark, standard or comparator listed against the results for each domain (to facilitate comparisons in the next step).	
Reflect on your results	What are the key findings?	
	How do these compare to the benchmark, standard or other comparator, where available, or else to what you a priori judged as an acceptable target (your generated standard)?	
	What are the limitations of these conclusions?	
	What are the implications of these results for your practice? What improvements could be made? What could be the next steps? (e.g., How could the audit results be used to inform development of a quality improvement project to address identified gaps in practice?)	

Clinical audit examples

Generic examples of clinical audits include:

- Comparison of procedures, processes or outcomes of health or patient care in anaesthesia, perioperative medicine, pain medicine or diving and hyperbaric medicine, with best practice standards in that domain.
- Audit of the outcomes of a department or group of specialists, compared with the state, national or international benchmarks.
- Audit of own clinical performance in an area of practice compared with those of peers (department, practice or other group of colleagues).

The Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCoA) has developed a publication titled "Raising the Standards: RCoA quality improvement compendium", which provides examples of achievable audits focused mainly on measurement against defined process standards.[2]

ANZCA gratefully acknowledges the RCoA's willingness to make this document available for our participants. Ready-to-use audit topics and samples relevant to clinical care are presented as a series of chapters (which include perioperative care, pain medicine, intensive care medicine).

The Medical Council of New Zealand website outlines their expectations on audit with some examples relevant to clinical practice.[1]

The college also offers some clinical audit templates, developed by fellows from across Australia and New Zealand. These are available Press 'register' and a link to the samples will appear on your landing page in Learn@ANZCA. If you would like to contribute to development of an audit template on a new topic, please contact the CPD team. We welcome your ideas.

ANZCA and FPM CPD portfolio recording

Participants record this activity under

> Category 1 Practice evaluation – Measuring outcomes: *Clinical audit* with the *Clinical audit CPD verification form* uploaded as evidence.

Optional related activities

1. Report of audit findings

This is a written report or presentation of audit results including the key findings and their implications for your practice. Discussion with a peer allows your colleague to enhance your reflection on audit results by providing another perspective. This assists you close the 'audit loop' by developing recommendations for necessary change (e.g., if audited performance falls short of your comparator).

Time spent on reporting clinical audit findings is recorded by the audit presenter as Category 1 Practice evaluation – measuring outcomes: *Report of audit findings*.

If audit results are discussed with a colleague, this is recorded by them as Category 2 Knowledge and skills: *Review of ANZCA and FPM fellows*.

2. Critical Reflection on the audit process

- What went well/not so well?
- What would you do differently in a future audit?

Time spent on this activity can be recorded under the Category 1 Practice evaluation – reviewing performance: *Critical reflection activity.*

References

1. Medical Council of New Zealand website. Audit of medical practice. At https://www.mcnz.org.nz/registration/maintain-or-renew-registration/recertification-and-professional-development/audit-of-medical-practice/.
2. Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCoA). Raising the Standards: RCoA quality improvement compendium. 2020. At https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/safety-standards-quality/quality-improvement/raising-standards-rcoa-quality-improvement-compendium.
3. Backhouse, A., & Ogunlayi, F. (2020). Quality improvement into practice. *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)*, *368*, m865. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m865
4. Limb, C., Fowler, A., Gundogan, B., Koshy, K., & Agha, R. (2017). How to conduct a clinical audit and quality improvement project. *International journal of surgery. Oncology*, *2*(6), e24. https://doi.org/10.1097/IJ9.0000000000000024.

Change control register

Version	Author/s	Reviewed by	Approved by	Approval date	Sections modified
1	Advancing CPD 2013 Working Group	CPD team	CPD Committee	2013	Created
2		CPD team DPA education		2023	- Updated branding and formatting - Incorporated change control register