



CPD handbook appendix 10

Clinical audit – guidelines

Description

A clinical audit is a quality improvement process that seeks to improve patient care and outcomes through systematic review of care against explicit criteria. Its objectives are to measure the outcomes of patients against accepted standards, and to recommend changes if the standards are not met. The process may be repeated in a cycle of quality improvement. A clinical audit may involve one specialist or a group of doctors in single or multiple disciplines.

Ethics approval is not a mandatory requirement for satisfactory completion of this CPD activity. However, CPD participants are strongly recommended to be aware of local regulations regarding conducting audits and ethics committee requirements within that jurisdiction. This applies even if the CPD participant does not intend to publish the results of the audit outside their department or practice.

Examples

A comparison of procedures, processes or outcomes of health or patient care in anaesthesia, perioperative medicine or pain medicine, with best practice standards in that domain.

An audit of the outcomes of a department or group of anaesthetists, compared with the state, national or international benchmarks.

An audit of own clinical performance in an area of practice compared with those of peers (department or group of colleagues).

Approach

Any clinical audit can be conducted using the following steps:

1. Decide on a topic or domain that entails anaesthesia/pain or perioperative management.
2. Look into best practice for the topic or domain – research evidence or authoritative opinion (links below).
3. Consider the indicators that may demonstrate performance.
4. For this audit identify the:
 - a. Proposed standard or target for best practice.
 - b. Selection criteria.
 - c. Data to be collected.
 - d. Process for collection of data and timeframe.

Audit examples

The Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCoA) has developed a publication titled “Raising the Standard: a compendium of audit recipes for continuous quality improvement in anaesthesia”, which provides examples of achievable audits focused mainly on measurement against defined process standards. **ANZCA graciously acknowledges the RCoA willingness to make this document available for our participants.** The RCoA audit recipes may be found by following this link: [Audit Recipe Book](#). The recipe book contains ready-to-use audit topics and samples, you can find material relevant to pain medicine in [section 11](#).

Audit examples (cont.)

ANZCA has also created a number of audit templates, developed by fellows from across Australasia. These may be found on the college's e-learning management system - [Learn@ANZCA](#) via this link: [Clinical Audit samples](#).

For practical information on how a clinician or group carrying out an audit can ensure the right cases are selected for clinical audit, including determination of the sample size, refer also to the Health Quality Improvement Partnerships document available via the link below (p8) [Guide to Ensuring Data Quality in Clinical Audits](#).

1. Collect the data.
2. Compare the data against chosen standards.
3. Summarise audit outcomes and discuss with a colleague who can provide meaningful feedback on the findings.

It is recommended that participants complete the “audit loop” by writing a report on outcomes arising, and recommendations and implemented changes if performance falls short of standards. This could include presenting your findings to peers locally and more widely if possible. Presenting the clinical audit findings can be claimed under the practice evaluation – measuring outcomes ‘*Report of clinical audit findings*’.

Recording this CPD activity

Completion of this activity can be recorded in the CPD portfolio system.

Participants will be asked to provide the following information:

- Total hours
- Summary of audit results.
- Audit topic.
- Standard data was measured against.
- Name and contact details of the colleague with whom you discussed audit results.

If a participant is selected to be involved in the random audit of CPD activities, they must provide evidence of the review.

Please note: The ANZCA and FPM CPD standard recognises two different activities under the practice evaluation category that can be claimed for either completing or reporting on a clinical audit.

- Collecting data, analysis and the approach outlined in these guidelines is ‘*Clinical audit*’.
- Participants who devote time to either presenting or participate in the presentation of the Clinical audit findings claim the ‘*Report of clinical audit findings*’.