



The College of Emergency Medicine

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Clinical Audit Programme

Introduction

Ten clinical standards for the specialty of Emergency Medicine were first developed in 2002, and presented to the National Conference in Brighton that year. In 2004 the Audit Commission conducted the first national clinical audit of UK Emergency Departments. Since then the College audit programme has grown and developed with the help of the Healthcare Commission. The College now runs this programme independently.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the College's clinical audit programme is to improve the quality of care delivered to the 20 million patients who present to the 200+ Emergency Departments in the United Kingdom every year.

Strategy

- The College, through the Standards and Audit Subcommittee of its Clinical Effectiveness Committee, has developed a suite of Clinical Standards, which are evidence-based where possible.
- Audit tools are developed so that all departments are audited in exactly the same way, and valid comparisons can therefore be made.
- An annual audit programme is in place, where the quality of care is audited against the agreed standards.
- The results are distributed to the Care Quality Commission, Chief Executives and Consultants in participating departments, Primary Care Trusts, Strategic Health Authorities and Trust audit departments.
- The results can be used to compare the performance of individual Emergency Departments with the national average, and consider the reasons for any variation. Whilst there are many potential explanations for outlying results, in some cases it will be appropriate to introduce change and/or additional resources.

Implementation & Impact

- Over the last 6 years participation has risen to 88%, and there has been a progressive and sustained improvement in a number of key clinical indicators.
- We recognise that there is still a long way to go, and the College remains committed to improving standards of care.
- Best practice is shared across the specialty. Non-participating and poorly performing departments are contacted and offered assistance, advice and support on how to improve patient care.
- The College of Emergency Medicine seeks to advise and support its members by providing the tools to assess, monitor and improve standards of care. However it is not the role of the College to enforce compliance, or to act in regulatory capacity. All results are shared freely with the Care Quality Commission and participating Trusts.

March 2012

Excellence in Emergency Care