

Royal College of Physicians Clinical Effectiveness Forum

Two meetings have been held since the last report. At the autumn meeting last year, an update on audit was given with an overview of Health Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP). There was a discussion around the fact that they were commissioned by the DoH to manage national audit 4 years ago and this funding had now come to an end. However, HQIP has been formally confirmed as the contract holder for the audit programme for the next 5 years and would be working in partnership to improve QI aspects of their work.

HQIP are a charity led by a consortium of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, Royal College of Nursing and National Voices (formerly the Long-Term Conditions Alliance) to host the Department of Health National Audit Programme. They work in national audit, National Joint Registry, the Confidential Inquiry Programme and Quality Improvement support. Additionally a National Audit and Governance Group had been formed which will meet every 3-4 months. This will be led by the HQIP medical director who will be appointed in the near future.

It is their intention to improve the promotion of both local and national clinical audit. Quality within social care was included in the contract as is accreditation of clinical services and quality improvement. It was advised that there may be a move towards sampling audits in some areas as this was considered a valid snapshot of standards without having to go through full data collection which is a workload burden, especially at local trust level. There was general agreement that the burden of full data collection was a regular complaint of Trusts, and that this could be eased somewhat by using the same data for commissioning and CQC.

At the spring meeting earlier this year, there was an update on the Government's Transparency Agenda. It was advised that the Government were coming around to a more sensible approach on published audit data being interpretable, explained and usable. However there is still pressure from pharmaceutical companies, researchers and commercial organisations for the provision of large amounts of raw data which can then be subject to interpretation should guidance or explanatory notes not be available. Most raw data is now stored on gov.uk. HQIP are planning a pilot study to evaluate this. Research questions are currently being submitted to them covering requests for data that pharmaceutical organisations are interested in and pilot responses will be provided over the next six months. Evaluation and audit of this data will be undertaken twice during the process.

It was noted that HQIP manage audit data on behalf of the public and clinical leads are limited in how they can use the data they collect without additional data sharing agreements.

There is interest in the UKHCDO triennial audit and an update has been requested at one of the future meetings. There is particular interest in the involvement of patient/parent representatives.

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