

Status of clinical audit implementation in Europe

Radiotherapy

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Introduction

- **In radiotherapy most countries have implemented or are moving towards implementing clinical audit**
- **Some confusion exists between clinical audit and quality control and regulatory inspection**

Legal framework

- **It is unclear from some of the responses as to whether there is a clear legal framework for clinical audit**
- **In some countries the regulatory body is also responsible for clinical audit**
- **In others a separate independent body has been established**

Are clinical audits carried out in your country adequately consistent?

Country	Yes	No
Belgium		X
Bulgaria		X
Croatia		X
Czech Rep.		X
Estonia		X
Finland	X	
France		X* (currently being implemented)
Germany	X	
Greece		X
Hungary		X
Italy		X
Latvia		X
Lithuania		X
Luxembourg		X
Norway	X* (RT only)	
Poland		X
Romania		X
Slovakia		X
Slovenia		X* (Technical check only)
Spain		X
Sweden		X* (Clinical audit is part of the wider quality assurance programme)
Switzerland	X* (for teaching hospitals only)	
Turkey		X
U K	X* (peer review and internal audit)	
TOTAL	5	19

Based on the experience, actions or plans in your country judge the need for harmonisation

Country	Practical methods	Frequency	Duration	Reports	Borderline between clinical audits and Certification of QS	Accreditation	Regulatory inspection
Belgium	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bulgaria	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Croatia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Czech Rep.	X	X	X	X			X
Estonia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Finland			X	X			X
France							
Germany	X						
Greece	X	X		X	X	X	X
Hungary	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Italy	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Latvia	X	X	X		X	X	X
Lithuania	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Luxembourg	X	X	X	X			
Norway							X
Poland	X				X	X	X
Romania	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Slovakia	X	X			X	X	X
Slovenia	X	X	X	X			
Spain	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sweden				X	X	X	X
Switzerland							
Turkey							
UK	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
TOTAL	18	16	15	16	15	15	18

Legal framework

- **The confusion between clinical audit and regulatory inspection highlights a lack of clarity on the focus of clinical audit.**
- **One of the general conclusions of the panel discussion in Tampere May 2003 was a lack of fundamental understanding of the objectives and expected benefits of clinical audit.**

Clinical Audit – perceived benefits and major problems

- **Perceived benefits well recognised and consistent throughout the responses**
 - Safer treatment
 - Better patient care
 - More efficient use of resources
- **Problems identified in 2003 including lack of understanding of the meaning of clinical audit are still highlighted**

Clinical Audit – perceived benefits and major problems

Below is a direct quote from a country where clinical audit has not yet been implemented:

- **„Not well understanding what a clinical audit is. Not clearly stated procedures and outcomes / benefits**
- **Bureaucratic procedures and cooperation between ministries and organisations (Clinical audit is a low priority – if any)**
- **Medical environment not feeling comfortable to be audited“**

Clinical Audit – perceived benefits and major problems

Below is a direct quote from a country where clinical audit has been implemented:

- **„The radiotherapy practices have for the last ten years not had serious accidents. The RT has improved the quality of the output. In a period of doubling of the number of patients and the number of hospital giving RT, the system of quality assurance including clinical audits, has been the most important tool for the success of the increased health service with high quality.“**

Clinical Audit – perceived benefits and major problems

Below is a direct quote from a country of its expectations from clinical audit:

- „Team building effect
- Allows you to know the strong/weak points of the institution
- Changes (improvements) are made in a positive approach from the owner of the process (**no pressure from a legal authority**)
- Transparency of procedures
- Higher degree of standardization“

Procedures for clinical audit

- From the Tampere 2003 panel discussion the lack of recommended procedures and criteria validated at EU level was one of the general conclusions
- This project is addressing that point as is the IAEA QUATRO initiative in radiotherapy