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CLINICAL AUDIT

Objectives and Coverage of Clinical Audits

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The concept of audit

- Independent review or assessment of
- institution to be audited
 - professional instruction (for the outcome)

No power to enforce any actions or requirements
but

- independent assessment
- report the findings and recommendation to the audited institution
(however ...)



Objectives of clinical audit (1)

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Evaluation of data, documents, resources to check performance against standards of good practice.

The general purpose of multidisciplinary clinical audit can be summarized as

- to improve the quality of patients' care
- to improve the effective use of resources
- to enhance the provision and organization of clinical services
- to further professional education and training



Objectives of clinical audit (2)

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Aims and objectives

- Define aims, standards, scope, expected outcomes.
- Develop standards or criteria of good practice.
(measurable statement about performance describing the quality to be achieved)



Objectives of clinical audit (3)

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The quality of indicators specifies the quality of measurement against the standard

Continuous improvement through an audit cycle therefore

- regularly / sure-handedness
- ensure complete audit cycle
- re-audit is integral to the process
- find weak points, areas of improvement such as safety and efficacy



Objectives of clinical audit (4)

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Specific purpose for RADIOLOGICAL procedures

- radiation protection
- appropriate justification
- optimization procedures
- ensure compliance with

Council Directive 97/43 EURATOM



Clinical audit coverage (1)

- General coverage
- Structure
 - facilities
 - equipment
 - human resources
 - organization
 - process
 - outcome



Clinical audit coverage (2)

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Scope and depth, partial and comprehensive audits

- scope
 - whole RADIOLOGICAL processes (comprehensive audit)
 - limited to specific critical parts (partial audit)
- depth
 - generic to all RADIOLOGICAL processes
 - individual examinations or treatments



Clinical audit coverage (3a)

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- ### Coverage of RADIOLOGICAL procedures
- structure
 - the mission of the unit for RADIOLOGICAL practices
 - lines of authorities and radiation safety responsibilities
 - staffing levels, professional development
 - adequacy and quality of premises and equipment



Clinical audit coverage (3b)

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- ## Coverage of RADIOLOGICAL procedures
- process
 - justification on referral practices
 - quality of examination and treatment guidelines
 - quality assurance / control programs
 - dose in comparison with reference levels
 - procedures of dose delivery to patients
 - emergency procedures
 - Reliability of information transfers systems



Clinical audit coverage (3c)

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Coverage of RADIOLOGICAL procedures

- outcome
 - methods for the follow-up
 - examinations or treatment
 - short term
 - long term



Internal and external audits (1)

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Internal / external audits -> equal importance

first internal audits

- optimal approach to get well started
- to provide motivation for audits
- get orientation to the possible problem areas
- make the staff familiar with general audit technology
- useful preparatory phase for external audits
- maintain open attitude to derive max. benefit



Internal and external audits (2)

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Internal / external audits -> equal importance

then external audits

- more universal and broader perspectives
- removing possible inability of internal experts to recognize the weaknesses and items for improvement their practices
- may better judge the consistency of procedures
- recognition of substantial variations of procedures
- systematic approach improvement



Confidentiality of audits

- critical issue
- respect confidentiality of
 - patients' data
 - interviews and discussion with staff
 - completed audit checklist
 - other performance data
 - auditors should sign confidentiality statement

**It should be assumed that any clinical audit report
might become a formal public document!**



Standards of good practice (1)

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- standards of good practice based on
- results of research
 - consensus statements
 - recommendations by learned societies
 - legal requirements
 - local agreement
- (if there is no other more universal reference)



Standards of good practice (2)

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standards of good practice

- **Level 1**: most generic criteria – applies to all types of RADIOLOGICAL practices
- **Level 2**: criteria generic to a given field, independent of the purpose of the examination or chosen modality
- **Level 3**: specific criteria – for a given examination or treatment



Standards of good practice (3)

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minimal approach

- based on professional knowledge and experience of the auditors



Quality indicators and classification of audit findings (1)

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- Quality indicators
- Measurable criteria
 - relative threshold criteria of good practice
 - make it easier to decide on necessary changes of the practice
 - help clarifying objectives of the audit
 - define if a problem exists, its extent, success of intervention



Quality indicators and classification of audit findings (2)

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- Quality indicators should be
- reliable
 - accurate
 - sensitive to changes
 - specific in terms of quality
 - able to influence decisions
 - easily understood



Classification of the deviations from good practice

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minimal approach applied by the IAEA

1. no significant deviations
2. significant deviations but resolvable with unit's internal resources
3. significant deviations which may require unit's external input in order to be resolved

Helpful to clarify the severity of the recommendations and for rules for further consequences – e.g. German system of clinical audit (ZAeS, 2007/8)