

In pursuit of Quality: Integrating Clinical Audit into everyday Clinical Practice

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Background...

- **In History:**

- i) King Hammurabi in Babylon 1750 BC
- ii) Florence Nightingale at Scutari in 1854
- iii) Ernest Codman in Massachusetts, 1912

- **Definition of Clinical Audit (NICE, 2002):**

"a quality improvement process that seeks to improve patient care and outcomes through systematic review of care against explicit criteria and the implementation of change. Aspects of the structure, processes, and outcomes of care are selected and systematically evaluated against explicit criteria. Where indicated, changes are implemented at an individual, team, or service level and further monitoring is used to confirm improvement in healthcare delivery."

Method...

Evidence-base for this review:

- National Centre for Clinical Audit (NCCA) review of relevant bibliographic databases and manual searches for publications from 1975–1996, relating to evidence from clinical audits carried out by the Royal Colleges in the UK
- Online search by the author for relevant studies and publications since the DoH white paper in 1997, relating to the effectiveness of Clinical Audit and current Principles of best practice
- Anecdotal evidence from colleagues, working in the NHS
- Evidence from the authors experience of Clinical Audit in the UK.

Key points identified...

- **How the audit process works:** identifies problem, defines the standards/criteria, collects data, compares performance with criteria, implements change, completes cycle by re-auditing
- **Why it fails when it fails:** Poor management of the audit process, Lack of commitment to the recommendations that would bring about change
- Clinical Audit has become part of everyday practice in the UK
 - i) It was emphasized in the DoH White Paper in 1997, 'The New NHS'
 - ii) It is now an essential part of training for Doctors
 - iii) It has become a tool for demonstrating fitness to practice for the GMC revalidation process for Doctors
 - iv) It is now routinely used by all practitioners, including nurses, doctors, pharmacists etc

Conclusion...

- Clinical Audit improves the quality of healthcare delivery and it can be integrated into the Nigerian Healthcare delivery system by:
 - i) Empowering a Health Quality regulatory body to set standards/guidelines, train and supervise the Clinical Audit process at a national level
 - ii) Creating the right local environment in the different health systems, which includes adequate training for staff, local management support for the auditors etc
- The different healthcare providers routinely identifying and implementing local audit projects and methods that can result in real improvement in the services they provide

Thanks!