

Would a risk based approach to improvement recommendations improve patient safety in the ED?

Belinda Mitchell Scott¹, Susan Hollowood², Carolyn Downing²

1 Northern Health, 185 Cooper Street Epping, 3076, Belinda.Scott@nh.org.au

2 Northern Health, 185 Cooper Street Epping, 3076, Susan.Hollowood@nh.org.au

3 Northern Health, 185 Cooper Street Epping, 3076,

Objective:

To describe in detail the methods used to implement a robust clinical incident review process in the Emergency Department.

Background:

The project was undertaken in an outer metropolitan hospital with a single site Emergency Department (ED). The outer metropolitan health service has been undergoing transformation since the appointment of a new executive team. In July 2014, the organisation implemented a revised incident management procedure which included a risk based approach to the development of improvement recommendations. Concurrently, the ED experienced a series of serious adverse events and was chosen to undertake the pilot of the revised incident management procedure.

Method:

The implementation of the revised incident procedure comprised of three parts, 1) clear accountability, 2) broad team involvement and 3) Safety Steps risk based improvement recommendations. The implementation of the incident procedure was a joint project between the Emergency Services Program Director and Quality Coordinator. Each having key responsibilities for the implementation, the Program Director to lead the meetings, provide direction and alignment to other projects being undertaken in the ED. The Quality Coordinator was responsible for ensuring that the review teams understood the process, a broad range of clinicians were involved and that feedback to all staff was undertaken.

Results:

There has been improvement in the number of serious adverse events following the implementation of the incident procedure and risk based improvement recommendations. Serious adverse events have decreased from 8 in six months to 2 in six months. 53 clinicians have been involved in incident reviews. 36 recommendations have been implemented.

Conclusion:

Culture has an essential role to play in patient safety in the ED. A key component of culture is partnership between the clinical program and the quality unit. It is possible to involve a large group of clinicians in incident reviews in a busy ED environment. A risk based approach to the implementation of recommendations has led to improved patient safety in the ED.