



Title	Towards Efficient Guidelines – How to Monitor Guideline use in Primary Care Agency: NCCHTA (United Kingdom)
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Aim

To develop a model for using routine data monitoring in evaluating clinical guideline usage in primary healthcare settings.

Conclusions and results

Interviewees recognized some value in guideline-use monitoring, however they were concerned about the practicalities from two perspectives. First, although primary care computing systems were to be found in most general practices, the technology for monitoring was absent in many practices. Training in these skills would be required before monitoring of guideline use could be a practical reality. Second, there were clear signals of a more general lack of interest or awareness in the subject of continuous review of care. This, together with a feeling of being overloaded with new initiatives, meant that implementation of a monitoring framework could be problematic and might need considerable support to make progress.

Recommendations

Effective methods can be developed to monitor guideline use in primary care. However there is a need to address the degree of understanding that many primary healthcare professionals have of the concepts and practical issues in the area of guideline-use monitoring, and of expectations of this within the NHS. In addition, several technical issues are associated with efficient capture of clinical information and its evaluation.

Methods

A monitoring framework was developed following several semistructured interviews with potential users. These data informed a postal survey among a random sample of primary healthcare professionals. Then to test the framework, a further semistructured interview study was used to explore the practical issues related to monitoring guideline use. Case studies were then undertaken to investigate the use of evidence-based review criteria and patient-centered outcome measures as methods to

provide monitoring information. A case study in one general practice used interviews to examine the possible costs associated with guideline-use monitoring.

Further research/reviews required

- To what extent should patient concordance with the guideline recommendations be taken into account in assessing clinician conformance with guideline recommendations?
- What are the costs and benefits to patient care of guideline-use monitoring?
- What are the most efficient methods of developing valid and reliable review criteria that are policy and evidence (guidelines) based?
- Are review criteria more useful than guidelines in improving quality of care?
- What additional benefits to patient care can be offered by monitoring patient-centered health outcomes in addition to process of care, and at what cost?