

Engaging stakeholders in identifying priority evidence–practice gaps and strategies for improvement in primary health care (ESP project)

Aim

To engage stakeholders in using clinical audit data to identify priority evidence–practice gaps across key areas of primary health care, to identify barriers preventing these gaps from being addressed, and to develop strategies to mitigate practice gaps in each area of care.

Overview

Background: The ESP project is closely linked to the Audit and Best Practice for Chronic Disease (ABCD) Data Analysis Project (see ABCD project description).

Project description: The project disseminated continuous quality improvement (CQI) data collected as part of the ABCD Partnership and engaged stakeholders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care delivery in interpreting the data. Stakeholders included service providers, managers, policymakers and researchers. Across all key areas of care, iterative phases of reporting and online feedback were used:

- + To identify priority areas for improvement (Phase 1).
- + To identify barriers to addressing the identified priority evidence–practice gaps, and strategies that could be introduced or strengthened to enable improvement (Phase 2).
- + To check and confirm findings (Review).

A concurrent developmental evaluation (led by CRE-IQI PhD student Alison Laycock) has increased our understanding of stakeholders' engagement in the interactive dissemination process and their use of CQI data and ESP project findings.

Outputs to date

Extensive input from 700+ stakeholders across the different areas of care meant the project provided a capacity-building element in the use of aggregated CQI data. Findings from the ESP project have been used:

- + To inform the CQI and Maternal Care Project being led by Dr Melanie Gibson-Helm.
- + To provide evidence for a successful NH&MRC Early Career Fellowship grant awarded to Nikki Percival to study community linkages with health services.

Research outputs include six publications in peer-reviewed journals, presentations and posters at 18 national and international conferences, and six technical reports.

Key messages

The project identified a set of priority gaps in care, barriers to addressing these and strategies for each area of care. Evidence–practice gaps across areas of care included:

- + follow-up of abnormal clinical findings and laboratory results
- + the recording of risk factors and of brief interventions
- + emotional wellbeing assessment and support
- + systems to strengthen links between communities and health services.

Commonly identified barriers to improvement included:

- + workforce recruitment and retention issues
- + the training and development of health staff
- + the development and effective use of clinical information systems
- + systems to support patient-centred care
- + effective use of data to inform decision making
- + management training and support for CQI
- + links between community and health services.

<i>Project team</i>	Ross Bailie (Team Leader) ¹ , Jodie Bailie ¹ , Veronica Matthews ¹ , Alison Laycock ^{1,2}
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<i>Project status</i>	Completed
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<i>Dates</i>	2013 – 2016
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