

RESEARCH FORUM SERIES

Core Curriculum Module H

Quality Improvement: Beginning the Journey

Jo Ann Kairys, MPH

Christine Stroebel, MPH

Mark Fulcomer, PhD

Center for Healthy Families and Cultural Diversity

I. Background

Clinical Quality Improvement (CQI) methods have been applied successfully in multiple health care settings. Primary care/health services researchers should be familiar with CQI tools and techniques in order to understand the principles and concepts of continuous, measurable improvements in health outcomes, cost, satisfaction, and functional health status.

II. Aim

The Aim of this 3-part, 9-hour module for the NRSA Research Fellows is to study practical methods that can be used immediately by teams to improve and analyze the quality and value of health care settings and health care services.

III. Learning Objectives

Session 1:

- Describe a model for linking the improvement and measurement of processes and outcomes
- Plan an improvement project with team members
- Identify a specific AIM for the improvement project

Session 2:

- List beneficial team behaviors
- Use a flowchart to describe a process
- State two concepts related to statistical process control and variation

Session 3:

- Give a context to Quality Improvement work
- Give an example of best practices in health care delivery
- Describe the application of Clinical Quality Improvement to your team's process

IV. Teaching Method(s)

Combination of presentation and overview with groups of three teams of Fellows working on specific types of improvement projects: (1) administrative processes; (2) diabetes care; (3) fellowship processes. There were three 1.5 hour seminars and additional individual meetings with Fellows (total time 9 hours).

V. Content Outline

Sessions 1, 2, 3 (see attached powerpoint slides and handouts)

VI. Application to Actual Research Projects by Fellows

This module has resulted in several follow-up activities. For example, Sajidah Husain, MD, MPH, NRSA Fellow, incorporated quality improvement methods into a study of childhood asthma. Beatrix Roemheld-Hamm, MD, PhD, faculty member in the Department of Family Medicine at the UMDNJ-RWJMS, is working with Jo Ann Kairys, MPH, and Christine Stroebel, MPH to implement a quality improvement project in one of the Department's family practice centers in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

VII. References/Internet Resources

Textbook used for the module:

Nelson, EC, Batalden, PB, Ryer, JC. Clinical Improvement Action Guide. Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, 1998.

Articles:

Fiscella K, Franks P, Gold MR, Clancy, CM. Inequality in quality. Addressing socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic disparities in health care. JAMA 2000;283:2579-2584.

Nelson, EC, et al: Improving health care, Part 1: The Clinical Value Compass. Jt. Comm J Qual Improv 22:243-258, 1996.

Nelson, EC, et al: Improving health care, Part 2: A clinical improvement worksheet and users' manual. Jt. Comm J Qual Improv 22:531-547, 1996.

Mohr JJ, et al: Improving health care, Part 3: Clinical benchmarking for best patient care. Jt. Comm J Qual Improv 22:599-616, 1996.

Batalden PB, et al. Improving health care, Part 4: Concepts for improving any clinical process. Jt. Comm J Qual Improv 22:651-659, 1996.

Casarett D, Karlawish JHT, Sugarman J. Determining when quality improvement initiatives should be considered research. Proposed criteria and potential implications. JAMA 2000;283:2275-2280.