The use of outcome data monitoring in the quality assurance of MI services

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Introduction
- In recent years, the effects of Medicines Information (MI) services on patient outcome have become a focus for research.
- Positive effects of an MI enquiry answering service for healthcare professionals (HCPs) have been demonstrated (1) & small scale projects have found similar benefits for patient helplines (2).
- If patient outcome data could be collected continuously through routine MI quality assurance programmes, they might provide a powerful tool for monitoring the quality & value of an individual MI service.

Healthcare Professional Enquiries
- Two key patient outcome questions (with rating scales) for HCP enquiries were validated in a recent national study (1):
  - How did the advice from MI affect your patient’s care or outcome?
  - How did the advice from MI affect the safety of your patient’s drug therapy?
- These questions were added to the standard national user survey. In other regards, the survey remained unchanged.

Patient Helpline
- No validated tool to measure patient outcomes
- A simple survey was devised & distributed by post

Discussion
- Questions regarding patient outcome can be included in regular MI user surveys whilst still achieving good response rates.
- The data obtained can be used to ensure the MI centre in question is working to a high standard & to demonstrate the patient value obtained from the provision of the service.
- HCP enquiry outcome questions are already validated & could be quickly incorporated into the national MI user survey.
- Further work is required to validate patient helpline outcome questions. This should be a high priority for future research.

References