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.

References

2. Wills, 2014. Who do discharged patients call if they have medication queries? Clin Pharm, 6, pp. 103-104.

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.

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.

  Response rate before & after adding outcome questions

  78%  
  68%

  Proportion of respondents who answered outcome questions

  61%

  Responses to outcome questions received over the first 2.5 years

  86%

  Enquirers’ assessment of the overall impact of MI advice on patient care & safety. These figures are comparable with data from the original national study (1).

Patient Helpline

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

  49% response rate  
  29% of callers providing feedback over 18 months

  100% of respondents stated that they found the advice they received helpful & that they followed it

  98% of respondents stated that calling the helpline improved their experience of the hospital

  19% Proportion of calls during which a medication error was identified & corrected

  Sources of advice if no helpline