



NEWSLETTER

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Why the Recognising and Responding to Clinical Deterioration Program?

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Ensuring that patients who deteriorate receive appropriate and timely care is a key safety and quality challenge. Increased awareness of this problem has resulted in a significant number of initiatives being undertaken throughout Australia and internationally to enhance the recognition of patients who suffer deterioration while in hospital and to improve the response provided by health-care staff.

This program is the Commission's response to the problem of ensuring that patients who deteriorate are recognised and responded to appropriately. The initiatives included have been identified as areas where the Commission can use its position as a national leader in safety and quality in Australia to advance this area of work.

Nightmare in a hospital ward

Hospital hell killed our Vanessa

Thin red line
Human error or systemic failures – what killed Chris Hammett?

The main initiatives in this program are the development of:

1. A **consensus statement** setting out the essential elements for recognising and responding to patients who deteriorate
2. **Guidelines applying the essential elements in specific settings**, namely paediatrics and smaller facilities with no intensive care or limited medical cover
3. **Guidelines for implementing programs** to improve the recognition of and response to clinical deterioration
4. An **evidence-based adult general observation chart** that supports recognition of deterioration and prompts action.

Multi-centre point prevalence study of deteriorating patients

The Commission is working with researchers in Melbourne, led by Professor Tracey Bucknall from Cabrini Health and Deakin University, on a multi-centre prospective study to assess the prevalence of undetected medical emergencies and activation triggers of medical emergency teams (MET).

The study is being undertaken at ten sites in Victoria. It involves assessment of the vital signs of all acute inpatients (other than those in psychiatric wards or intensive care) in these hospitals on one day, with follow up of MET activation calls, unplanned ICU admissions; cardiac arrest and unexpected deaths within 24 hours of the observation period.

The specific aims of the study are to:

- Determine the prevalence of patients at risk of a medical emergency in acute care settings by assessing the prevalence of cases where patients fulfil commonly used criteria for MET activation.

- Assess the frequency of failed and delayed MET activation by relating the number of cases where MET criteria are reached to the number of actual MET activations.
- Determine whether the presence of MET criteria is associated with an increased 30 or 60 day mortality, unplanned admissions and cardiac arrests.

This study will be the first to report such data and will assess the true frequency of failed MET activation and have implications for maximal MET load.

As well as establishing prevalence according to the MET criteria, the researchers are also planning to look at the prevalence of earlier signs of deterioration.

Data collection was undertaken at 7 sites in early July with collection at a further 3 sites scheduled for later in the month. Preliminary results will be published by the Commission in late 2008.

How we work with our stakeholders

The Commission interacts with stakeholders in the healthcare system to form strategic partnerships that will add value to its work. In particular, the Commission seeks to involve healthcare providers to ensure that work undertaken and tools developed are practical and useful in day to day healthcare delivery.

To effectively implement the Recognising and responding to clinical deterioration program, the Commission has established an Advisory Committee to provide guidance and expert advice on program initiatives. Membership of the Committee includes a mix of researchers, clinicians, policy makers and consumers.

The program also consults with states and territories through the Commission's Inter Jurisdictional Committee, and where appropriate, the program works with three other Commission Committees - the Private Hospital Sector Committee, comprising nominees from key

private health care bodies in Australia; the Information Strategy Committee which provides input and advice in relation to the Information Strategy; and the Primary Care Committee which provides primary care advice and liaison with the primary care sector.

More recently, the Commission has established a list server based on a mailing list compiled over the last eight months of researchers and clinicians with an interest in the area of identifying and managing deteriorating patients.

The list server is intended to support discussion and exchange of ideas concerning identification and management of patients who deteriorate, as well as provide a platform for program communication activities and a channel to seek feedback on program work.

If you would like to be added to the list server please email Alex Sonsie at alexandra.sonsie@safetyandquality.gov.au.

"...the Commission intends to build on this work and draw on international programs and evidence in the development of a nationally agreed Statement.."

Let us know your thoughts....

Call for submissions on a draft national consensus statement

The Commission is consulting on the development of a draft consensus statement on the essential elements required for effectively recognising and responding to clinical deterioration.

There has already been considerable work done describing the systems that are needed to effectively care for patients who deteriorate, and evaluate their effectiveness. As part of the Recognising and responding to clinical deterioration program, the Commission intends to build on this work and draw on international programs and evidence in the development of a nationally agreed statement.

The aim of this initiative is to develop a national, evidence-based consensus statement about the:

- importance of providing safe and high quality care to patients who deteriorate in acute care facilities
- systems and processes that are required to recognise these patients, and respond to them appropriately

- organisational systems that are required to ensure that patients who deteriorate are recognised and responded to.

The Commission wishes to consult stakeholders about the draft statement and it is now being circulated for comment and review to consumers, clinicians, policy makers and other experts.

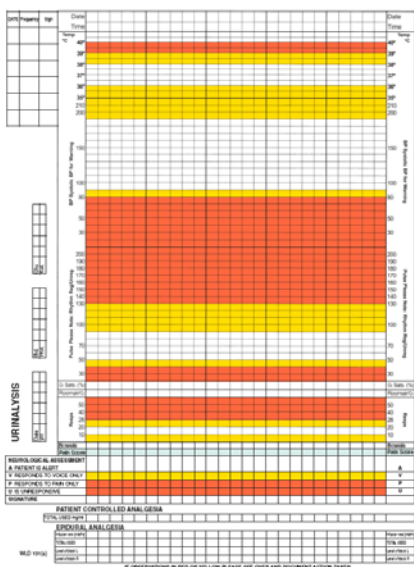
A consultation paper has been prepared that provides background information regarding the development of a national consensus statement, discussion of how the statement might be used, and the draft statement. The paper also includes a summary of the issues and questions on which the Commission is seeking feedback.

Further information and the consultation paper containing the draft consensus statement is available from the Recognising and responding to clinical deterioration program page on the Commission's website (www.safetyandquality.gov.au).

Responses are welcome until **25 September 2009**.

Human factors research regarding observation charts

Another initiative the Commission is conducting as part of the Recognising and responding to clinical deterioration program, is the development of an evidence-based general adult observation chart.



The chart will be designed according to human factors and other relevant principles to support accurate recording of information, identification of deterioration and prompt action based on observed physiological abnormalities.

One of the factors that can contribute both to poor recording of

observations and failure to interpret them correctly is the way in which observation charts are designed and used. However, there has been little research done about issues such as the best way to design charts or present information in observation charts to improve recognition of deterioration and prompt action.

As part of this initiative, the Commission is working in partnership with Queensland Health and the University of Queensland to undertake a research project to provide new knowledge about the design

and use of observation charts that will assist staff to better identify clinical deterioration.

This project will have a national focus and will:

- Compare existing patient observation charts to identify which charts are best in terms of recording vital signs, detecting deterioration and responding appropriately to deterioration.
- Examine performance in using the different charts under different situations.
- Create and evaluate a new chart that takes into account the best features of existing charts.
- Recommend the best patient observation chart for clinical use based on empirical evidence.

In May 2009, the Commission invited recipients of its national program mailing list to contribute sample observation charts for analysis as part of this work.

Over 45 charts were received and these are being analysed by the research team. The outcomes of the research will be made available on the Commission's website during 2009.

"...there has been little research done about the best way to design charts or present information in observation charts to improve recognition of deterioration and prompt action."

How can you get involved?

Following analysis of this collection of charts, a selection will be made available to interested health professionals via an online survey.

The aim of the survey is to gain design insights and other practical information from those that actually use observation charts on a daily basis. Participants will be asked to complete an online questionnaire for each chart which will include ratings on the various dimensions of interest as well as open-ended questions to allow for general comment.

Details of the online survey will be made available shortly via the program's list server and on the Commission's website.



Compass & Deteriorating Patient Open Day



compass

An Open Day will be held in Canberra on the 6th November 2009. This includes a full day of information on the ACT's deteriorating patient program, including undertaking the COMPASS education course.

The cost will be \$25 which will cover catering for the day. For more information or to register please contact the program manager on 02 6244 3885 or via email on compass@act.gov.au.

Previous Commission workshops

Since commencing the program, the Commission has held two workshops for researchers and practitioners to discuss developments and share information in the area of identifying and managing deteriorating patients.

On 14 November 2008, 110 people from across Australia attended a workshop to discuss the main activities in Australia to improve observation charts and the identification of deterioration.

The workshop was held to kick-off the initiative to develop an evidence-based observation chart and participants were very supportive of the work being undertaken by the Commission. A large amount of useful information was obtained from the workshop to help guide the development of the initiative.

The Commission facilitated the first meeting of the Paediatric Interest Group on 19 March 2009. This group was established to provide a forum for researchers and clinicians with an interest in issues regarding the identification and management of deteriorating paediatric patients.

Over 40 participants attended, and the day was positively received.

If you would like to register your interest in being involved in future communications and meetings of this group, please email Alex Sonsie at alexandra.sonsie@safetyandquality.gov.au.

Summary reports for both workshops, along with the presentations from each event are available on the Commission's website.

National deteriorating patient workshop 10 Nov



The NSW Clinical Excellence Commission and the

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care will co-aspice a national workshop on 10 November 2009, on the identification and management of deteriorating patients.

The workshop will showcase current approaches and practical solutions to the challenge of implementing systems and tools that identify patients who deteriorate in hospital and effectively manage their care.

The workshop will be an opportunity to bring together researchers and practitioners to learn and share information about evidence-based solutions in this area so that safer and better quality care is provided to patients.

Details of the workshop will be made available in the coming months on the Commission's website and in future editions of the program newsletter.



7th Australasian Conference on Safety & Quality in Health Care

The Commission will be co-sponsoring the 7th Australasian Conference on Safety and Quality in Health Care that will be held in Sydney on September 7-9, 2009.

The conference will include three sessions on the deteriorating patient. A workshop will be conducted on sustainable systems for recognising and responding to clinical deterioration, and there will also be two paper sessions with various presenters on this topic.

The draft program for the conference is available on the Australasian Association for Quality in Health Care website <http://www.aaqhc.org.au/>.

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