

RESOURCE BULLETIN

15 AUGUST 2007

Summary of this bulletin

The Victorian Quality Council has recently released a two-part report which takes a new look at improving quality and safety by examining how hospitals can take an evidence-informed approach to improving communication with consumers and carers.

The report and accompanying guide will be of interest to:

- Health professional responsible for quality improvement in hospitals
- Clinicians interested in evidence-based health care
- Advocates for consumers and carers.

Communicating with consumers and carers. (DHS Victoria. 2007)

Part 1: Pilot for evidence-based selection of communication strategies to improve communication between consumers/carers and health services

The importance to safety and quality improvement in hospitals of good communication with consumers and carers is evidenced by the fact that it is a contributing factor to many sentinel events and features in many complaints. The Victorian Quality Council (VQC), in collaboration with the Cochrane Consumers and Communication Review Group and three metropolitan health services, has undertaken a project reviewing how existing evidence about effective communication strategies can be used to address issues of improving quality and safety of patient care. Part 1 tells the story at each pilot site: Northern Health—Broadmeadows Health Service, Royal Women's Hospital and Southern Health—Dandenong Hospital, and provides lessons from the pilot.

Part 2: A guide for an evidence-informed approach to improving communication and participation in health care

Part 2 is a guide that outlines actions and resources developed and/or utilised during the pilot. It contains six stages. 1) *Identifying the problem*: includes a pro forma for collecting data, and an issue assessment tool to assist with choice of a particular issue. 2) *Setting up a quality improvement process*: involves identifying aim, measures, the project team and people affected by the problem. 3) *Mapping the communication issue*: contains a framework for understanding and mapping the communication issue that will be the focus of quality improvement. 4) *Search for studies*: includes information about search strategies and databases to find evidence on effective interventions for communication or participation. 5) *Selecting, appraising, summarising studies*: provides a template for data extraction and information about study design. 6) *Translating and applying the evidence for informed decision making*: suggests steps to follow in translating evidence into practice.

Gain access to the report via Cochrane C&CRG or VQC websites:

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/cochrane>
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/activities/consumers.htm>

Forwarding of bulletins is encouraged.

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Bulletins are available on the CC&CRG website, select *Health Knowledge Network*:

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/cochrane>

This bulletin is provided by the Cochrane Consumers and Communication Review Group with funding from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and the Department of Human Services, Victoria, Consumer Participation and Information, Quality and Safety Branch.