How to achieve patient safety data-driven quality improvement

Identify the existing patient safety data sources in your organisation. Appraise and highlight to staff the pros and cons of each data source and the implications on how to analyse and interpret the findings.





Think about staff in your organisation who already undertake quality improvement projects. How are the topics of their projects selected? Is it data-driven?

Support staff to review patient safety incident data and identify topics for improvement.





Enable staff to have access to a range of data sources (complaints, admission numbers, pharmacy metrics, staffing levels) to explore the underlying causes for the incidents.

Work with staff to develop hypotheses based on the knowledge gained through analysis of data.





Support staff to reduce the risk of similar incidents occurring in future.

Share the knowledge and insight gained from exploration of data widely to spread data-driven QI.



This project is part of the Health Foundation's Advancing Applied Analytics programme. The Health Foundation is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and health care for people in the UK.

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Maintain accountability and a high-profile within your organisation by aligning with corporate committee structure and report at an executive level, for example at your organisation's Quality, Safety and Experience Committee or equivalent.





Engage with your organisation's Business Intelligence/Information Team. Electronic solutions for access to multiple patient safety data sources can significantly aid review and analysis.

Have a clear procedure for registering QI projects and requesting data to prevent delays.

Ensure that the organisation has a governance structure supporting the data-driven QI process.

Focus on helping staff to access data and using their natural curiosity to explore the reasons for patient safety issues. Staff want to improve the quality of the services they provide to patients. Use data to support this.





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