

# FOCUS on Clinical Audit in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Emma Hardman  
& Carol Joughin  
from the College Research Unit

Royal College of Psychiatrists  
London

© 1998 The Royal College of Psychiatrists

The Royal College of Psychiatrists is a registered charity (no. 228636).

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

The views presented in this book do not necessarily reflect those of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and the publishers are not responsible for any error of omission or fact.

**British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 1 901242 23 4

Distributed in North America by American Psychiatric Press, Inc.

ISBN 0 88048 593 0

# Contents

---

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Preface</b>  | <b>iv</b>  |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>   | <b>v</b>   |
| <b>Introduction</b>   | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Clinical audit: what it is and what it isn't</b>                   | <b>3</b>   |
| <b>Undertaking a clinical audit project:<br/>a step-by-step guide</b> | <b>7</b>   |
| How to use the step-by-step guide                                     | 7          |
| The clinical audit cycle  | 7          |
| Stage 1 Select topic  | 9          |
| Stage 2 Review literature   | 11         |
| Stage 3 Set standards   | 12         |
| Stage 4 Design audit  | 16         |
| Stage 5 Collect data  | 21         |
| Stage 6 Analyse data  | 22         |
| Stage 7 Feed back findings  | 24         |
| Stage 8 Change practice   | 25         |
| Stage 9 Set/review standards  | 26         |
| Stage 10 Re-audit   | 27         |
| <b>Examples of clinical audit projects</b>                            | <b>29</b>  |
| Introduction  | 29         |
| Section A Access to services  | 30         |
| Section B Responsiveness of services                                  | 40         |
| Section C Attrition rates   | 51         |
| Section D Therapy process   | 58         |
| Section E Documentation   | 73         |
| Section F Adverse occurrences   | 78         |
| Section G Outcomes of therapy   | 82         |
| Section H User/provider satisfaction                                  | 96         |
| Section I Detailed service provision<br>clinical audits               | 112        |
| <b>Clinical audit resources</b>                                       | <b>119</b> |
| Glossary of terms   | 119        |
| Organisations   | 122        |
| Clinical audit forms  | 125        |
| <b>References and suggested further reading</b>                       | <b>133</b> |

# Preface

---

## THE POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CLINICAL AUDIT

The new National Health Service (NHS) will have “quality at its heart” according to the latest White Paper (London: Stationery Office, Cm 3807, December 1997), which argues that too much attention has been paid to financial efficiency over recent years to the neglect of service quality. In an attempt to redress this imbalance, trust boards are to be held accountable for the quality of the clinical services provided, in addition to meeting their financial targets. This new statutory duty is to be fulfilled by a process termed ‘clinical governance’ which places responsibilities on individuals and organisations to develop systems which ensure the delivery of high-quality care to patients. Clinical audit is an integral part of this process.

The recent consultative document *A First Class Service: Quality in the New NHS* (London: Department of Health, 1998) indicates that there will be developments and expectations placed on clinicians to demonstrate their role in quality improvement. From 1999 trusts will require full participation by all hospital doctors in audit programmes, including speciality and sub-speciality national external audit. Trusts will also require that an evidence-based approach is supported and applied in everyday practice. Two new external bodies, the Commission for Health Improvement and the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, will support and reinforce the local duty for quality in the NHS.

It is likely that the level of confidentiality that has been assumed in the management of clinical audit results will change as a result of government policy. Recent major shortfalls in the quality of clinical management and a general increase in public awareness and requirement for openness would suggest that the current position over confidentiality of clinical audit will no longer be viewed as tenable.

Clinical audit is not currently common practice in child and adolescent mental health services. Government policy now requires clinicians to develop ‘effective’ clinical audit which calls for a systematic approach to the process. It is hoped that this book will provide a clear guide which explains how this can be achieved.

# Acknowledgements

---

The FOCUS project is funded by a generous grant from the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. FOCUS is greatly indebted to the following individuals for their help in the development of this book: Ms Maria Harrington, Ms Claire Palmer, Ms Victoria Thomas, Ms Sam Coombs, Mr Ross Scrivener, Mr Christopher Squire, Dr Linda Dowdney, Professor Peter Hill, and Professor Philip Graham. We would also like to thank all of those, listed below, who contributed examples for inclusion in this book.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Dr P. Bruggen** Formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Hill End Adolescent Unit, St Albans, Herts (retired).

**Dr V. Chandra** Formerly Senior Registrar (Audit Project Lead), Lifespan Health Care Children Services, Cambridge.

**Mr M. Cross** Community Psychiatric Nurse, Lime Trees Child, Adolescent and Family Unit, 31 Shipton Road, York YO3 6RE.

**Mr R. Down** Clinical Psychologist, Swansea Child and Family Clinic "Trehafod", Waunarlwydd Road, Sketty, Swansea SA2 0GB.

**Dr F. Dunne** Formerly Registrar in Psychiatry, Marion Family Centre, Darlington.

**Mr A. Evans** Head Occupational Therapist, Child and Family Psychiatry Department, Westcotes House, Westcotes Drive, Leicester LE3 0QU.

**Ms T. Foxton** Sister, Linton House, High Royds Hospital, Menston, Ilkley, West Yorkshire LS29 6AG.

**Dr J. Green** Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant, Department of Child and Family Psychiatry, Booth Hall Children's Hospital, Charlestown Road, Blackley, Manchester M9 7AA.

**Ms D. Gregory** Project Co-Ordinator, Norfolk Social Services Office (Southern District), 74 Pople Street, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0LP.

**Ms P. Harkness** Community Nurse, The Woodlands Unit, Department of Child Adolescent and Family Psychiatry, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, North Tees General Hospital, Hardwick, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 8PE.

**Mrs R. Harris** Consultant Clinical Psychologist, The Tavistock Clinic, 120 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5BA.

**Ms V. Lake** Community Nurse, The Woodlands Unit, Department of Child Adolescent and Family Psychiatry, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, North Tees General Hospital, Hardwick, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 8PE.

**Mrs S. McGeorge** Nursing Practice and Development Manager, Northgate Hospital, Northgate Street, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 1BU.

**Dr P. Misch** Consultant and Lecturer in Child and Adolescent Forensic Psychiatry, The Institute of Psychiatry, De Crespigny Park, Denmark Hill, London SE5 8AF.

**Ms S. Pettle** Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Riverside Mental Health Trust, 1-3 Wolverton Gardens, London W6 7DQ.

**Ms V. Pirie** Nurse Therapist, Marion Family Centre, Darlington Memorial Hospital, Hollyhurst Road, Darlington DL3 6HX.

**Dr G. Richardson** Consultant Psychiatrist, Lime Trees Child, Adolescent and Family Unit, 31 Shipton Road, York YO3 6RE.

**Dr J. Roberts** Consultant Psychiatrist, Hornsey Rise Child and Family Consultation Service, Hornsey Rise Health Centre, Hornsey Rise, London N19 3YU.

**Dr A. Santhouse** Registrar, Belgrave Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS.

**Mr A. Saunders** Senior Manager, Leigh House Adolescent Psychiatric Unit, Cuckoo Bushes Lane, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hants SO53 1JY.

**Ms S. Smith** Clinical Effectiveness and Audit Coordinator, Lifespan Health Care Children Services, Fulbourn, Cambridge CB1 5EE.

**Dr Q. Spender** Senior Lecturer in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Department of General Psychiatry, St George's Hospital Medical School, Cranmer Terrace, Tooting, London SW17 0RE.

**Dr F. Subotsky** Consultant Psychiatrist, Belgrave Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS.

**Dr A. Thompson** Consultant Psychiatrist, Child, Adolescent and Family Services, Moore House, 10–11 Lindum Terrace, Lincoln LN2 5RS.

**Dr I. Wilkinson** Consultant Clinical Psychologist, The Roseberry Centre, St Luke's Hospital, Marton Road, Middlesbrough TS4 3AF.