



PIMS Project Newsletter

Performance Indicators and Medication Safety

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NSW Therapeutic Advisory Group

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PIMS Project Overview

The NSW Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) has contracted NSW TAG to manage this project. The aim of the PIMS project is to develop a suite of tools designed to promote medication safety and QUM in Australian hospitals. It consists of two phases that are running concurrently over 12 months.

Phase I – where are we at?

Seventeen hospitals are currently field testing the Australian adaptations of the ISMP medication safety self assessment tools. Participants include hospitals from the public and private sectors, metropolitan and rural facilities and general and specialist hospitals. Four of the participants are interstate hospitals to ensure that the final versions of the ISMP tools will have national application.

An interactive training session was held on Monday March 6 at the offices of the Clinical Excellence Commission in Sydney's CBD. The objectives of the training session were to provide an overview of the PIMS project, to outline the processes involved in the field testing and to answer participants' questions. Project Officer, Helen Stark, made a field visit to those hospitals unable to attend the Sydney session.

One of the important aspects of the ISMP field testing process is to ensure that hospitals recruit multidisciplinary teams to complete the two self assessments. At minimum, the team should consist of appropriate representatives from medical, pharmacy and nursing professions as well as the Project Coordinator who is responsible for convening the team and for liaison with NSW TAG.

To date the feedback from participating hospitals has been very positive with project coordinators reporting useful feedback and active participation from their respective hospitals. The next step will be for NSW TAG to collect the formal evaluation documents and to collate and analyse the responses. This process is expected to begin in mid April.

Phase II – where are we at?

Development of the indicator set is still in its preliminary stages. Following the completion of the literature review a subcommittee of the main steering committee has been guiding the selection of candidate indicators. Two meetings have been held so far. The goal is to choose indicators that will help drive change towards promoting best practice in medicines use. The final indicator set will be useful for doctors, pharmacists, nurses and hospital administrators working in a variety of clinical settings. The project team plans to consult with a range of clinical groups to ensure the proposed indicators are acceptable to end users prior to the field testing stage.

PIMS Q&A – What is the purpose of the ISMP tools and the performance indicators?

The ISMP tools help practitioners and managers review the background structures and processes that are necessary for safe medication use in their hospital. The tool is very comprehensive and ideally all questions should be considered on an annual basis. The tool can help diagnose areas where a hospital may have systemic problems in medication management and help hospital managers to systematically develop their annual medication management plan.

Performance indicators are intended to help hospitals, departments or clinicians quantify the impact and outcome of their structures and processes for QUM. Indicators can be selected to measure the specific area of interest at a particular time. Numeric scores provide a flag to potential problem areas and help guide activity to see where system improvements can be made.