

Quality Matters

**The monthly newsletter of the
Hunter New England Health
Clinical Governance Unit**

FROM THE DIRECTOR

This month's newsletter highlights the annual Quality Awards program, which is designed to identify and celebrate achievements in enhancing quality and patient safety in Hunter New England Health.



Dr Kim Hill
Director
Clinical Governance

Across all areas of health care delivery, we know there are many examples of quality improvement initiatives and the annual awards provide an opportunity to remember what has been achieved and to acknowledge those who were involved. It is also a time when good ideas come to the fore, so that we can all learn from the success of others and perhaps find an application for their ideas in our own areas.

I would also encourage you to put the dates for the annual Quality Scientific Program into your diary now – 18 and 19 September 2007, venue to be advised. Last year's program was particularly well received and we hope that you will find this year's event will be just as interesting and relevant.

ANNUAL QUALITY AWARDS

How are projects and initiatives with measurable outcomes formally recognised and rewarded?

The annual Quality Awards recognise outstanding contributions to patient safety, clinical excellence, innovation and community integration. In 2006 across Hunter New England Health, there were 58 entries for the Hunter New England Health Quality Awards. Five of these entries progressed on to be category finalists at the NSW Health Awards. These projects were: *Hunter New England Area Health Service Odyssey; Introducing an evidence-based wound management model to improve people's care; Mater Pain Project; Indigenous suicide prevention package and Applying evidence-based guidelines to improve performance measures in orthopaedic patients.*

Nominations are now open for:

1. Hunter New England Health Quality Awards
2. NSW Health Awards
3. Australian Council on Healthcare Standards Awards
4. NSW Premier's Awards

The closing date for all Hunter New England Health entries is **Friday 8 June 2007**. This will allow an internal review panel to judge the Hunter New England Health Awards and provide feedback to applicants and recommendations to the Chief Executive for external awards. The review panel will

Date: May 2007

Issue: No. 5

include representatives from Clinical Governance, Communication and Stakeholder Engagement, Organisational Capability and Learning and senior clinical staff and Area Executive Team members.

The 2007 NSW Health Awards and the NSW Premier's Award have new criteria drawn from the new State plan, *A New Direction for NSW* and the five-year health plan's 7 key health priorities:

1. Make prevention everybody's business
2. Improve experiences for people using health services
3. Strengthen primary health and continuing care in the community
4. Build regional and other partnerships for health
5. Make smart choices about the costs and benefits of health services
6. Build a sustainable health workforce
7. Be ready for new risks and opportunities

Unless initiatives involve external collaborations Area Health Services are limited to two entries per category.

The NSW Premier's Awards formally recognise and reward excellence in the New South Wales public sector; acknowledging initiatives that have produced measurable outcomes of proven benefit to the people of NSW.

The 2007 ACHS Awards continue to focus on effective leadership, the importance of consumers, continuous improvement, and measures to evaluate and compare quality of care and performance. Award categories are:

1. Clinical Excellence and Patient Safety
2. Non-Clinical Service Delivery
3. Health Care Performance Indicators

A 2006 ACHS Student Category winner was: "*What's Growing in Your Kidney Dish?*" by Newcastle University medical students M. Lee, N. Nair, C. McCabe, L. Vootakuru. For more information about upcoming awards go to: http://intranet.hne.health.nsw.gov.au/cg/quality_improvement_including_continuous_practice_improvement/quality_awards

Editorial team: Dr Kim Hill, A/Prof Anne Duggan, Ms Trish Blackman, and Ms Alisa Johnson.
Comments and queries welcome at: clinicalgovernance@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au

Quality Matters

Hunter New England Health Quality Exposition and Scientific Program

Hunter New England Health will hold its own annual Quality Exposition and Scientific Program over **two half-days on 18 and 19 September** in the Area's northern sector (venue to be announced).

All staff are invited to attend to share experiences, showcase strategies, hear of the lessons learned and listen to eminent key note speakers that have contributed to and are paving the way to improving the safety and quality of healthcare.

The statewide NSW Health Quality Expo will be held in Sydney, **11 and 12 October** to showcase projects that will be submitted as part of the 2007 NSW Health Awards.

IN PROFILE Stephen O'Mara, Associate Director

Stephen grew up in Sydney, graduating from the University of NSW in 1989. While at university he participated fully in University life, being a member of the Sports Association Management Committee and being elected as the Medical Faculty representative for the Students Union. He won a University Blue for rifle shooting. After graduation Stephen trained as a physician and pathologist at Royal North Shore and Westmead hospitals and on completing training moved to Tamworth as a VMO physician and Haematologist where he has worked for the last five years. This year Stephen joined Clinical Governance part-time allowing him to continue his clinical work. He is married to Dr Helen Goodwin, a paediatrician in Tamworth and together they have four daughters under the age of 10. He reports he used to enjoy competition cycling until recently run over by a car!



NEWS NOTES:

- In health we often hear of examples of successful system change in the aviation industry. Navigation too has had its champions. In the mid-19th century one British mariner in five died at sea; the highest mortality of any occupation at the time. Between 1861 and 1870, 5826 "coffin ships" were wrecked off the British coast with 8105 lives lost. Samuel Plimsoll campaigned for, "Plimsoll lines", maximum load lines for ships. These were introduced with the 1876 Merchant Shipping Act overnight creating a much safer occupation for mariners and a safer system for all.
- Medication errors second edit.** by Michael Cohen from the Institute for Safe Medication Practices is a comprehensive review of how to improve medication safety. For a view of the table of contents go to: <https://www.ismp.org/products/medErrsEd2/tableOfContents.pdf>

- Dr Kim Hill was recently invited to speak on Clinical Governance at the Department of Defence Tactical Fighter System Programs Office regional workshop at the Williamstown RAAF Base.
- The Impact of Inequality. How to make sick societies healthier** by Richard Wilkinson is a comprehensive review of the effect of inequality on health outcomes in western society and is reviewed by the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) at: <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/354/12/1329>

Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Update: Closed head injuries

It is not news to health professionals that falls are a patient safety risk. There have been 11 reported deaths in Hunter New England Health from June 2003 to February 2006 in association with closed head injuries, most occurring in the elderly.

Root Cause Analysis (RCA) of these incidents identifies that the main causal factor is failure to recognise the risk of a subdural hematoma and therefore the need for close neurological observation after the head injury. Other contributory factors are:

- Closed head injuries are not always easily recognisable - diagnosis can be difficult when the initial Glasgow Coma Scale score is normal initially.
- Concurrent anti-coagulation increases cerebral haemorrhage risk.
- Diagnosis complicated by the presence of other patient factors such as dementia and intoxication
- Where the fall itself is not the reason for admission eg. a cardiac cause for collapse, a head injury may be overlooked.


Patients should have a CT and early neurosurgical advice if they deteriorate after a closed head injury. The NSW Institute of Trauma and Injury Management has developed the guidelines "Initial Management of Closed Head Injury In Adults" available at:

<http://www.itim.nsw.gov.au/index.cfm?objectid=110E2D59-1321-1C29-707B5191A4995109>

In some cases, death may be unpreventable but early recognition and appropriate management of the patient may result in the patient and family being better prepared for impending death.

Safety alerts and notices:

 Safety Alert  Safety Notice  Safety Information

Number	Type	Issues covered	Date of issue
008/07		Electronic Fetal Heart Rate Monitoring	18 May 07
002/07		Communication Systems	9 May 07
001/07		Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tubes	3 May 07

For more information click on the hyperlink: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/register.html>