



Quality and safety in health care in Iceland

Quality and safety in health care are closely related. Delivering safe care of high quality is the professional, legal and ethical duty of health care professionals and managerial of health care services. Various methods are used in order to enhance the quality and safety of health care.

National Strategy for Quality in Health Care was released in 2007 by The Directorate of Health and The Ministry of Health

- *With strong emphasis on:*
 - *Patient safety*
 - *National quality indicators in the health care system*
 - *Electronically journal system at the national level*

The Directorate of Health is responsible to inspect and enhance the quality and safety of health care according to the law <http://www.landlaeknir.is/?PageID=945>.

Based on Icelandic **laws and regulations and on internationally methods and guidelines**, the Directorate of Health uses various methods in order to enhance the quality and safety of health care.

Advisory board on Patient Safety was established 2006 for consultation regarding matters of patient safety. Prioritized issues were: reporting of adverse events, staffing, improvement actions, guidelines and safety matters.

Monitoring of human resources management– Due to financial restraints cut-down of staffing is evident. This will be monitored, by the Directorate of Health.

Incident reporting – registration and regular reporting (according to law) and reaction to incidents – the development of guidelines

Monitoring - a shared responsibility

- Monitoring health care services
- Monitoring the professional conduct of health care professionals
- The philosophy of monitoring quality is based on the principle that the most effective way to enhance the quality of health care is to build on collaboration and consensus in order to obtain the best outcome and to provide consultancy regarding quality matters
- Enhancing a learning culture instead of a shame and blame culture
- Motivating improvement

Clinical guidelines and standards in order to enhance safety

- Development of various clinical guidelines and implementation
- Quality standards, e.g.
 - Staffing in nursing homes, suicidal prevention, operations outside hospitals, check-list concerning OR (WHO)
- Elderly services – setting standards for nursing homes, monitoring quality of care through RAI (resident assessment instrument)
- Waiting lists – surveillance of certain services

Quality indicators

- Development, both nationally and internationally
 - Regulation in 2008
 - Collaboration with the Nordic countries (NMR), Sykepleiernes Samarbeid i Norden (SSN), OECD countries, Eurohealth Consumer Index
 - RAI (resident assessment instrument) quality indicators
 - Quality indicators regarding medication

Research regarding patient safety

- Research regarding the incidence of adverse events and medical errors in Icelandic hospitals 2010 - 2011
- Various safety culture studies using a questionnaire from *Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)* and *The Safety Attitudes Questionnaire (SAQ)*
- Other studies, such as
 - Studies regarding medication and incidents concerning drug administration
 - Studies regarding work environment
 - Studies regarding patient identification

Patient and consumer involvement

- Health care users are encouraged to play an active role in their health care (Act on the Rights of Patients (74/1997))
- Raising awareness among the public- *Speak up* - involving patients and health care users in their own health care and safety as research has shown that patients who play an active role in decision making concerning health care are more likely to have better outcomes (JCAHO, 2002)

Clean Care – Safer Care – participation 2007 in a project launched by WHO

Suggestions for the future

- Assess and enhance development of safety culture
- Enhance incident reporting
- Improve patient identification
- Improve communication and collaboration
- Decrease the risk connected to nosocomial infections
- Enhance professionalism
- Enhance empowerment and healthy work environment
- Enhance internal monitoring of health care organisations
- Enhance the development and use of quality indicators to improve quality and enhance safety of health care.

Monitoring -

- **Internal quality control of the health care service providers**
- **Monitoring by the Directorate of Health**
- **Monitoring by the Ministry of Health and health care consumers**
- **Quality and safety in health care is the shared responsibility of government, health care organisations, health care professionals and health care users**

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