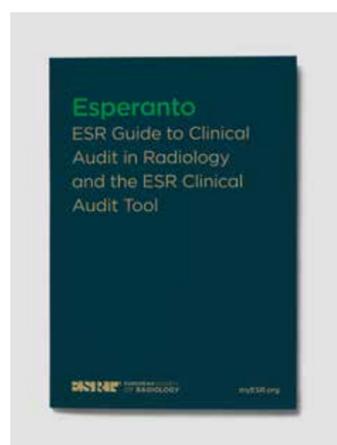


BY KATHARINA MIEDZINSKA



Clinical audit: An important tool for improving quality and outcome of patient care

With the aim of further promoting knowledge and understanding of clinical audit and its application in the departmental radiology setting, a panel of experts will discuss the topic in a session today, taking various different perspectives, including the implementation of clinical audit programmes and updates on current guidelines and recommendations.



Cover of *Esperanto, the ESR's Guide to Clinical Audit* (Copyright: ESR Audit and Standards Subcommittee, ESR Office)

Recent decades have witnessed a large and rapid expansion of medical imaging technologies, so that today, radiology has a growing number of imaging modalities in its arsenal, with differing physical principles of varying complexity, which play an increasingly important role in diagnosing diseases, predicting outcome, and monitoring treatments. These developments and their importance for healthcare systems worldwide have been accompanied by growing interest in quality assurance (QA) processes and quality improvement, driven by a number of factors, most notably the assurance and improvement of patient care, experience, and outcome.

The improvement and evaluation of the quality of care provided to patients are of crucial importance in daily clinical practice and healthcare organisations are accountable for continually improving the quality of their services. To this end, various tools have been developed, ranging from incident analysis to health technology assessment and clinical audit.

A clinical audit consists of measuring a clinical outcome or a process against well-defined standards established using the principles of evidence-based medicine. It is based on a structured review of radiological practices, procedures, and results, carried out in order to promote standards of good medical radiological practices, improve the quality and outcomes of patient care, and identify the changes needed to reach these goals. If conducted correctly and professionally, clinical audits are a powerful tool for improving patient care on various levels.

Today's session aims to raise awareness about the necessity of clinical audits and further promote knowledge and understanding of clinical audit and its application in the departmental radiology setting.

"There is a pressing need for all clinical radiology departments across Europe to engage themselves in the process of clinical audit. On the one hand, of course, because clinical audit has tremendous potential benefits to patient care and can highlight system deficiencies that need to be addressed. But also because the Basic Safety Standards Directive (BSSD) came into European law last year, including a wide range of important radiation protection guidelines and targets," said Dr. David Howlett, Consultant Radiologist at Eastbourne Hospital, UK, and Chair of the ESR Audit and Standards Subcommittee.

The BSSD specifically alludes to the need for clinical audit processes to support BSSD transposition, which is legally required and mandatory. "Compliance with BSSD standards will be the focus of inspection by the relevant national radiation protection competent authorities, meaning this topic is of immediate importance for all European clinical radiology departments," he added.

In 2017, the ESR produced a Guide to Clinical Audit to support radiology departments in developing

audit programmes. *Esperanto*, as the guide is called, covers the fundamentals of clinical audit function and practice and clarifies the requirements around the BSSD, among other useful information. During his presentation, Howlett plans to provide an update on the latest version of the guide. "An updated version of *Esperanto* is planned for launch at ECR 2019 or even sooner. It contains updated advice and details on inspection as well as an expanded selection of clinical audit templates, including regulatory ones that relate to radiation protection and non-regulatory templates relating to service provision and clinical practice," he noted.

Also in this session, Mr. Steve Ebdon-Jackson from the UK's Public Health England Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE), Oxfordshire, will outline the activities of the Heads of the European Radiation Protection Competent Authorities Working Group on Medical Applications (HERCA WGMA) relating to clinical audit. "The aim of the presentation is to provide a clear understanding of the importance of the differences between inspections and audits in regard to various aspects, such as their specific purpose, outcome, scope and persons carrying out the task," said Ebdon-Jackson. "There are many differences between an audit and an inspection, and even if audits include regulatory matters as a subset, they do not replace the inspection of regulatory compliance by the regulatory body or competent authority."

Following Ebdon-Jackson, Dr. Taina Autti, from the department of radiology at the Helsinki University Central Hospital, Finland, will discuss Finnish clinical audit rounds performed between 2002 and 2016 as well as the resulting recommendations issued by the Finnish advisory committee for clinical audit and their effectiveness. Further-

more, Mrs. Marie-Louise Ryan, from the School of Medicine and Medical Science at the University College Dublin, Ireland, plans to outline the radiographic perspective regarding the implementation of a clinical audit programmes. Last but not least, Mr. Steven Lee, from the department of Healthcare Transformation Services at Siemens, Guildford, UK, will provide an insight into audit in industry. His talk will cover the evolution of different industrial

management paradigms concerned with quality improvement from the middle of the last century, the growing emphasis on the 'people dimension' of quality improvement, and the significance of using an agreed and systematic process such as the 'Plan, Do, Study Act (PDSA)' system for effecting quality improvement.

	Inspection	Audit
Basis	legislation and regulation	standards and good practice
Outcome	requirements and enforcement	recommendations and suggestions
Organisation	legal mandate	peer review systems
Teams	inspectors and advisors	professionals
Scope	constrained	comprehensive

Table 1: Important differences between audit and inspection (Provided by Mr. Steve Ebdon-Jackson)

ESR Audit and Standards Session

Wednesday, February 27, 16:00–17:30, Room X
Audit across Europe: directive and perspective

- » Chairperson's introduction
D.C. Howlett; Eastbourne/UK
- » Clinical audit and inspection: HERCA update
S. Ebdon-Jackson; Didcot/UK
- » Implementing a clinical audit programme: the Finland experience
T. Autti; Helsinki/FI
- » Implementing a clinical audit programme: the radiographic perspective
M.-L. Ryan; Dublin/IE
- » Quality improvement and change management: audit in industry
S. Lee; Guildford/UK
- » Panel discussion: What are the benefits of good clinical audit?

This session is part of the EuroSafe Imaging campaign.

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- Everyday challenges

Details at
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Type of session: MyT3