



Quality improvement and audits in clinical practice

Editorial

Peter Cockcroft Editor-in-chief

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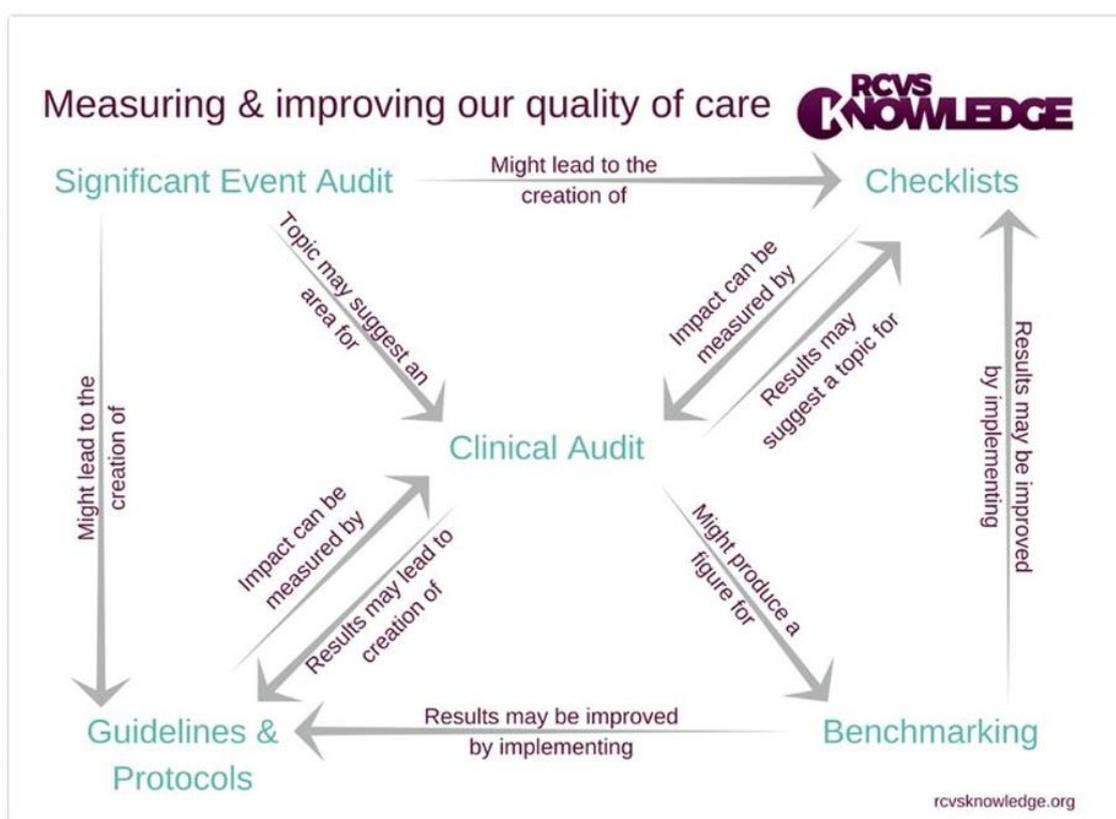


Veterinary Evidence champions the use of evidence to enhance the quality of care provided to animals, and I am pleased to announce that the Journal will now include quality improvement case studies.

Audits have an important role in quality improvement (QI) and can result in transformational change which can improve clinical practice, business organisation and business management. Clinical audits are a quality improvement process that seeks to improve patient care and outcomes through systematic review of care against explicit criteria and the implementation of change (Nice 2002). There are dedicated [quality improvement tools, resources and training modules](#) developed by RCVS Knowledge which cover the audit process with regards to clinical and non-clinical, practice guidelines and protocols and significant events. While Waine and Brennan (2015) published a useful review article on clinical veterinary audits, there are very few published quality improvement/audit case studies within veterinary journals. This is because research is about establishing best practice and audits are about embedding best practice into patient care and business management as part of practice quality improvement.

Figure 1 demonstrates the role and value of QI in promoting and enabling the practice of evidence-based veterinary medicine. The relationship between audits and processes of quality improvement are indicated. Audits usually measure the value of key performance indicators (e.g. mortality rates) and the quality of processes (treatment regimens) and identifies whether there is a need to implement change. It is an ongoing cyclical procedure which ensures best current evidence-based practices are used and outcomes optimised. It provides a mechanism for identifying learning needs and implementing evidence-based clinical and business practice.

Figure 1: The relationships between audits and processes of quality improvement (RCVS Knowledge)



Given the important role quality improvement can play in EBVM, *Veterinary Evidence* is keen to support its use and would like to publish practice-based audit and quality improvement case studies.

The journal now has an [Audit Submission Template](#) for authors to use and audit/quality improvement case study submissions are welcome. Please [contact Veterinary Evidence](#) for further details if required.

REFERENCES

1. Waine K, Brennan M. Clinical audit in veterinary practice: theory v reality. *In Practice* 2015;**37**:545-549.
2. NICE (2002) Principles of Best Practice in Clinical Audit. National Institute of Clinical Excellence, London

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