

178: STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN IN HOSPITAL

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Objective:

The purpose of the project was to assess the performance of the paediatric units of the Midland Regional Hospital in accordance with the Charter of the European Association for Children in hospital (EACH).

Methods:

In Ireland the National Children's Strategy in 2000 emphasised the importance of timely access to hospital services provided in appropriate settings. The European children's charter is an important contribution to the drawing up of standards and guidelines for the care of children in hospital. A team of stakeholders working in the Midland Health Board met in January 2003 and a steering group was established. The team is made up of paediatric nurses, a paediatric consultant, a health promoting hospital co-ordinator, the director from Children in Hospital Ireland and members from the clinical audit team and the quality facilitator.

The project has been broke into phases.

Phase 1: Baseline Assessment

Phase 2: Quality improvement

Phase 3: Re-Audit. The projects main objective at phase 1 was to develop a tool to measure the standards on the paediatric wards in the three acute hospitals within the Midland Health Board. It was decided that the ten articles set out in the European charter would be the criteria assessed.

Results:

The tool for measuring the articles was developed in the form of a template with each member of the project team focusing on specific articles. The template was divided into six section's (1) Standards (2) Evidence of performance (3) Comments (4) Action needed (5) Person responsible (6) Completion date. The tool to measure the standards was piloted in the paediatric ward in one of the acute hospitals. The clinical audit facilitator from the clinical audit team piloted the tool with the clinical nurse manager who was in charge of the paediatric ward on that day. The pilot test was expected to clarify if the measurement tool is accessible and understandable. Changes were made to the tool in terms of the evidence required to measure whether the objective was being met, based on pilot findings and all Paediatric Units in the Midland Health Board were surveyed in 2003.

Conclusion:

The Midland Health Board seeks to promote and continuously improve the quality of healthcare. This project wishes to implement guidelines and standards for children in hospital its in its first phase. The objectives of the first phase of the project have been met. A tool has now been devised that can assess the performance of healthcare organisations in relation to the EACH charter. It is a tool that can be incorporated into the Accreditation Assessment Tool presently being used by the Irish Health Services Accreditation agency.