

A6 Improving quality through effective use of technology

Leader: S. Yunkap Kwankam

Rationale

Infrastructure and technology, together with human resources are the main components of every health system's capital, defined as the existing stock of productive assets. Technology provides the material platform on which the delivery of care rests and constitutes the basis for provision of all health interventions. It also represents a large investment for the health sector, and involve significant financial resources of both a capital and a recurrent character.

However, the role and importance of health care technology management (HTM) to provision of quality health services are understood only in a qualitative, but not quantitative, manner. Further work is needed to identify the causal pathway between HTM activities and health outcomes. This pathway is yet uncharted, and there is currently a dearth of models (deterministic or statistical) - let alone evidence - linking HTM to health outcomes.

This link is one aspect of the work WHO's Department of Health Service Provision (OSD), is undertaking on developing the evidence base on the impact of health care technology on improvement of health system performance. The work will contribute to better understanding of the conceptual link and impact of technology resources and quality health care technology management on quality and efficiency of health care.

To arrive at this understanding, it is important not only to identify technology inputs to provision of health interventions, but also to formulate a concept of quality in technology management that is consistent with the overall concept of quality in health care, and to identify how quality in HTM contributes to improved quality of health care. Once understood, an important mechanism for its dissemination and application is to propose a methodology and toolkit for measuring quality in health care technology management and its impact on quality of care.

Objective: The goal of the session is to contribute to further development of the above work by submitting the concepts and methodology to peer review so as to inform further efforts. The activity is intended to:

- increase awareness of the need for quality in health care technology management as an important contributor to patient outcomes
- obtain feedback on, and inputs to, WHO's work in modelling the link between quality technology management and quality of care
- identify ways of instituting collaborative mechanisms for carrying forward the work
- Discuss the role of implementation of guidelines and standards as a key link between health care technology management and health outcomes.

Leadership:

S. Yunkap Kwankam, Department of Health Service Provision, WHO,

Speakers:

1. Andrei Issakov, WHO, Geneva
2. Peter Heiman, WHO, Cape Town, South Africa
3. Tom Judd, Kaiser Permanente, Atlanta, GA, USA

Agenda

1. Welcome and brief introduction of subject and speakers A framework for assessing the impact of health care technology on patient outcomes
2. Assessing quality gaps due to lack of technology resources: the essential health care technology package (EHTP)
3. Bridging quality gaps which derive from poor technology management
4. Discussion and conclusion