



# Clinical Audit in Nursing Education: Towards Better Care of Future Generations

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# Introduction

- ① in an environment undergoing **rapidly changing requirements** for health services, there is an urgent need for future practitioners to **be knowledgeable, skilful and self-motivated** in ensuring the quality and safety of their practice.
- ① This presentation **describes the clinical audit programme** which can be undertaken by **nursing students** in the **final year** of the nursing program including the **clinical audit handbook**, and **evaluation questionnaires** administered to students and supervisors.

# WHAT IS CLINICAL AUDIT?

- ① “Clinical audit is 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**.
- ② Aspects of the **structure, processes and outcomes** of care are selected and systematically evaluated against **explicit criteria**.

# Clinical Audit

## Audit Today

- Nursing and Midwifery Council  
“Clinical audit is the business of **every registered practitioner.**”

# Types of clinical audits

- ◎ **Standards based audits**

To see if standards are met or are being improved

- ◎ **Adverse / critical incident**

Screening of such incidents

Monitoring of such incidents

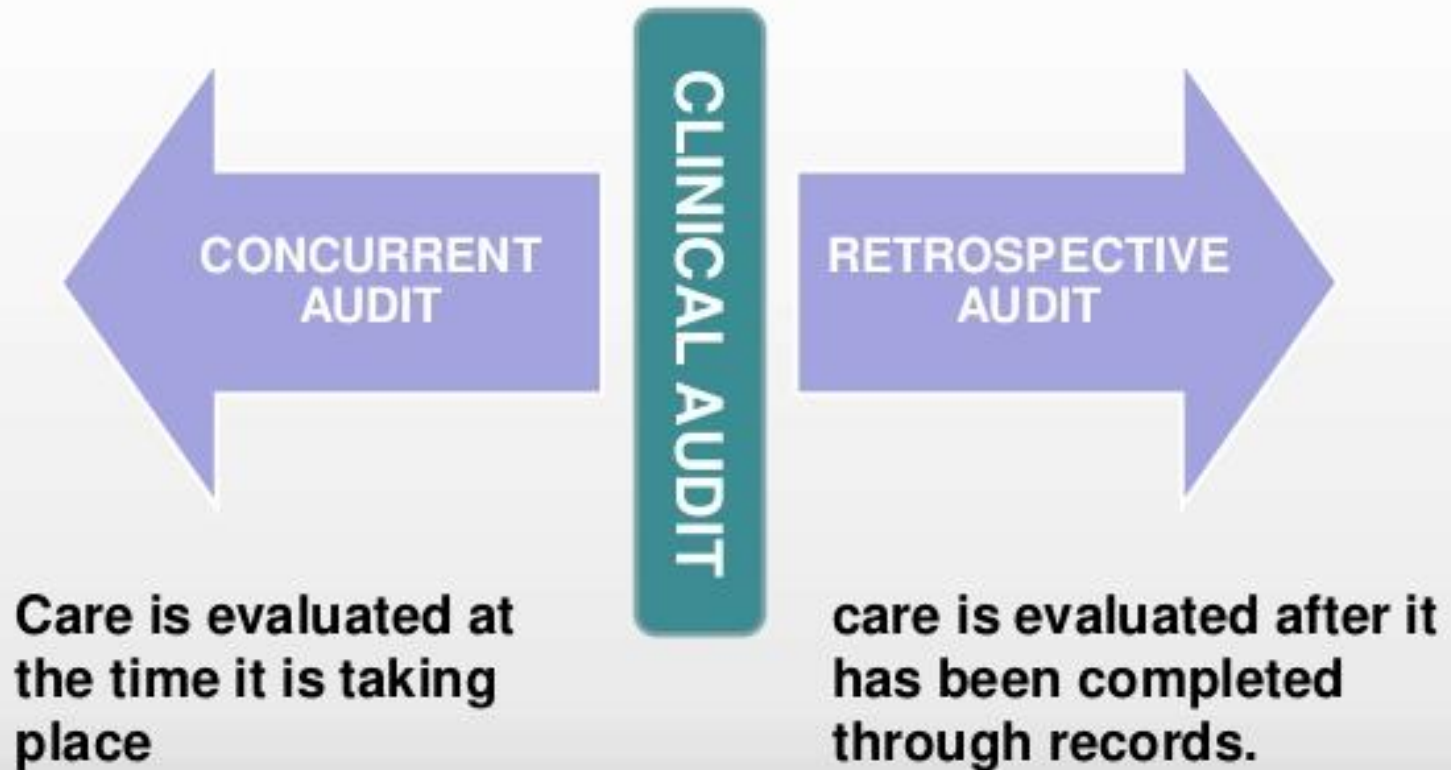
- ◎ **Peer review**

Was the quality of care optimal. Case reviews and discussions (often multidisciplinary)

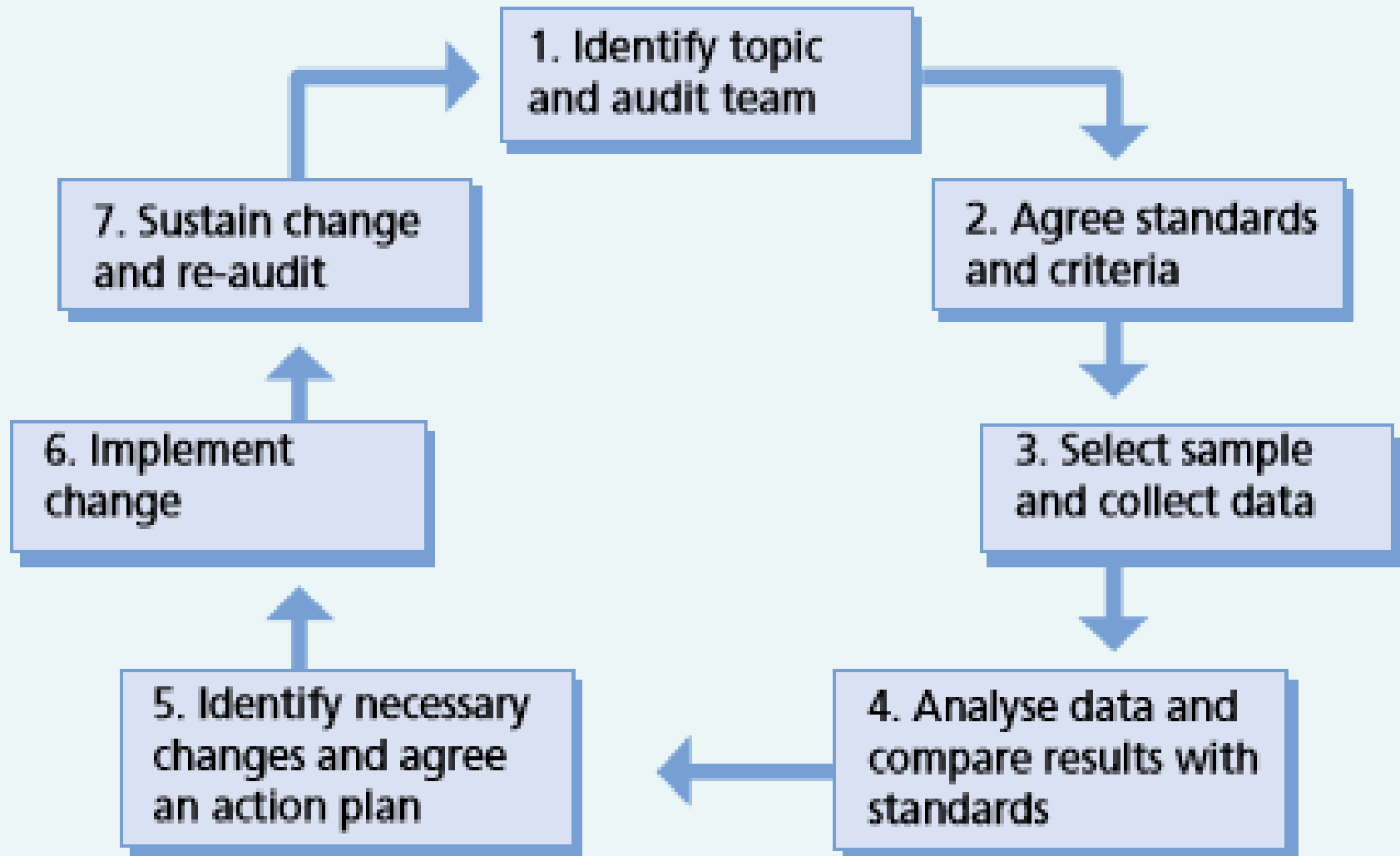
- ◎ **Patient surveys**

Patients point of view of the quality of care

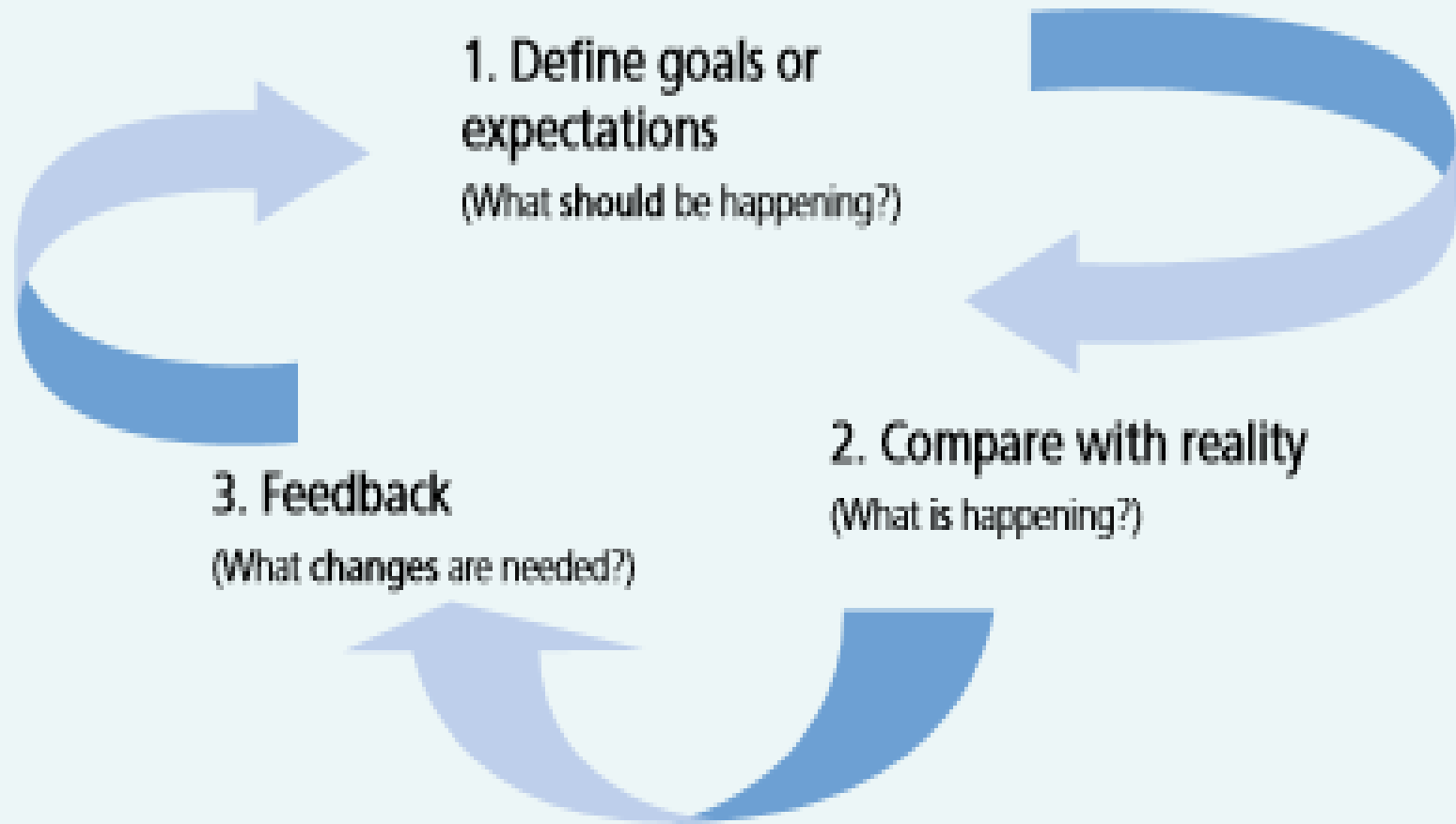
# TYPES OF CLINICAL AUDIT



**Figure 2. The stages of audit**



**Figure 1. The audit cycle**



(Adapted from NCHSPCS 1992)

**Table 3. An audit plan matched against the stages of audit and key audit questions**

| Audit plan  | Stages of audit | Key questions             |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Identify a topic<br>Form an audit team<br>Inform the Clinical Audit Department  | 1               | What should be happening? |
| Set clear aims and objectives<br>Set time frame for completion<br>Agree and develop a standard<br>Undertake a literature search (if necessary)<br>Agree criteria                                    | 2               |                           |
| Select sample<br>Design proforma/database for data collection<br>Pilot audit tools<br>Design database focused on audit objectives<br>Collect data   | 3               | What is happening?        |
| Analyse data<br>Compare results with standards  | 4               |                           |
| Identify necessary changes<br>Formulate conclusions/recommendations<br>Prepare presentation<br>Present findings to the audit team<br>Formulate an action plan to implement change<br>Write a report | 5               | What changes are needed?  |
| Implement change  | 6               |                           |
| Sustain change<br>Re-audit  | 7               |                           |

# Quality improvement using Plan-Do-Study-Act



What are we trying to accomplish?

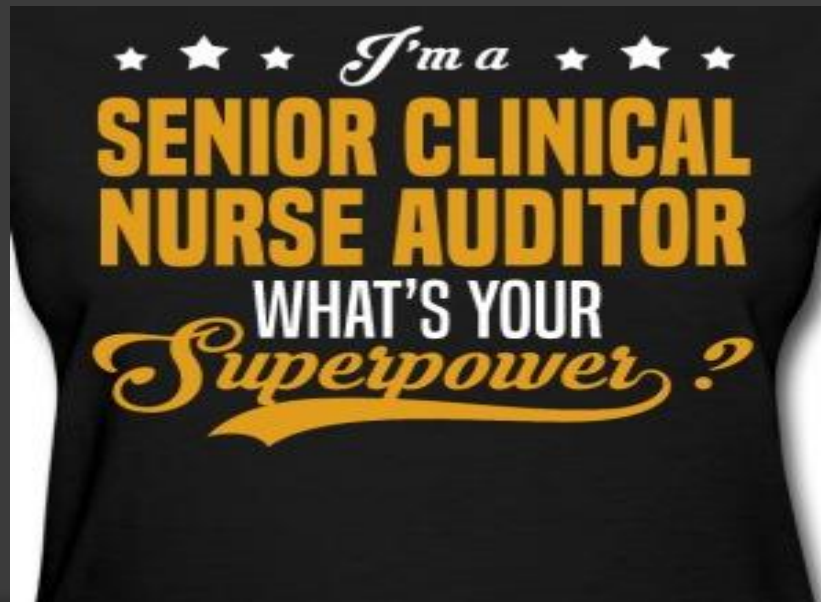
How will we know that a change is an improvement?

What change can we make that will result in improvement?



# Introducing nursing students to clinical audit

- The clinical audit in itself is a useful process to complete, as this will be a skill that nursing **students will require further in their careers.**



# Introducing nursing students to clinical audit

## Practice points

- To maintain and improve the quality and safety of health services, health professionals need training in clinical audit.
- Health professional undergraduate courses are able to provide practical training in clinical audit.
- Such training needs to be situated in the clinical environment and engage the learner as an active and collaborative member of the clinical community.
- Conducting a clinical audit during undergraduate education has multiple advantages for both the student and the clinical community.

# Aims of the clinical audit during undergraduate education

- The clinical audit is designed to help students to achieve the following goals (Mak & Murray 2011)
- (1) **Graduates will be knowledgeable**
- (2) **Graduates will be skilful**  
The ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with patients, patients' families, colleagues and others with whom nurses must

# Aims of the Clinical Audit

- ◎ **(3) Graduates will be dutiful**
- ◎ The ability to identify factors that place individuals at risk of disease
- ◎ The ability to retrieve (from electronic databases and other resources), manage, and utilize biomedical information for solving problems and making decisions that are relevant to the care of individuals and populations.

# Aims of the Clinical Audit

- ◎ **(4) Graduates will be ethical**

- ◎ - An understanding of, and **respect** for, the roles of other health care professionals, and of the need to **collaborate** with others in caring for individual patients and in promoting the health of defined populations.

# Clinical audit programme

- ⦿ The culmination of teaching/learning in regard to these issues in the clinical audit programme **undertaken by all students in the final year** of the course, and examines the educational worth of this approach.

# The clinical audit programme

- Students learn **evidence based nursing and quality improvement**, including the nature and characteristics of clinical audits.
- The clinical audit programme is undertaken by all students concurrently with their clinical rotations **through Year 4.**

# Why through Year 4

- ⦿ They are
- ⦿ more **comfortable** in the clinical environment,
- ⦿ more **experienced** in the clinical world,
- ⦿ more **knowledgeable** and therefore more able to target meaningful possibilities for improvement in this environment for both their own learning as well as tangible benefit for the chosen health service.



# The clinical audit programme

- ◎ Students wishing to undertake larger audits may do so by **working in a group** of up to three or use data that have already been entered into a database.
- ◎ Students choosing the first option must **collect and analyse** their own sub-set of data while working collaboratively on other the components of the audit.

# The clinical audit handbook

- Students are provided with **a clinical audit handbook** (Mak & Murray 2011) which provides
- a comprehensive guide to topic selection,
- audit approval,
- consultation with stakeholders,
- planning, selection of standards and sample,
- developing the audit tool,
- testing the method and the tool,
- conducting the audit,
- analysing data,
- reviewing results,
- developing solutions

# The clinical audit handbook

- ◉ disseminating results,
- ◉ ethical, confidentiality, privacy and legal issues,
- ◉ advice on extra resources,
- ◉ the role of supervisors,
- ◉ writing the clinical audit proposal and the final report
- ◉ Assessment rubrics for both **formative and summative assessments** are provided to students in the clinical audit handbook



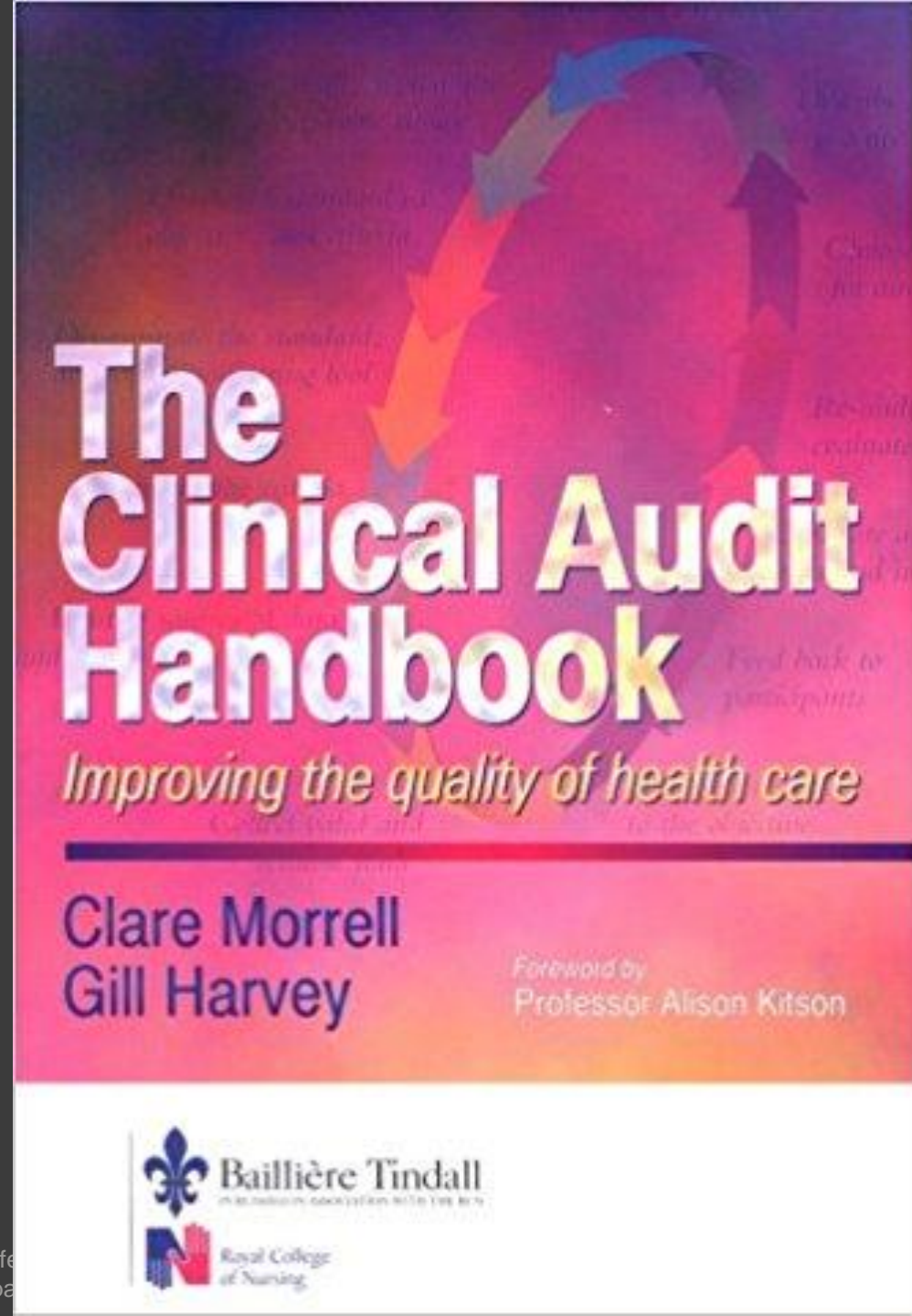
*Clinical Governance Support Team*

## A Practical Handbook for Clinical Audit

Guidance published by the  
Clinical Governance Support Team

Graham Copeland, *Clinical Audit Development Director*

- The handbook contains a two page appendix 'What supervisor needs to **know** about the clinical audit' which **students are required to give** to their supervisor.



# The clinical audit programme

- School of nursing provides support in the forms of **lectures, web-based resources on the School portal, question-and-answer sessions, and a panel discussion** with health service personnel, including representatives of Clinical Quality and Safety Committees from participating health services.
- **Formal peer support** is provided in the form of assessment of the audit proposal of one other student, and a web-based discussion forum on the portal.

# The clinical audit programme

- After analysing the data and generating the results, **students work with stakeholders to form an action plan** that addresses possible improvements, including what needs to be done, who needs to do it, and a timeframe for completion.
- Subsequently, they **disseminate** audit results and **recommendations** to all stakeholders, and note their reflections about working with colleagues, change management, professional challenges and the like for inclusion in their report.

# The clinical audit programme

- ◎ Students have **32 weeks** to complete their clinical audit and are advised to spend an average of **3h per week** on the audit.
- ◎ The final report includes a section for **students to reflect** on what they learned by undertaking the audit.

# The student evaluation questionnaire

- included **24 statements** seeking feedback on the usefulness of the handbook and other resources,
- Response to the statements was required on a **fivepoint Likert scale** where one (1) indicated strong disagreement and five (5) indicated strong agreement

## Responses

*The information provided in the handbook, lectures and other resources enabled me to . . .*

- identify potential clinical audit topics
- select my clinical audit topic
- find useful examples of published clinical audits
- write aim(s) and objectives for my clinical audit
- select appropriate standards for my clinical audit
- select an appropriate sample for my clinical audit
- develop a case definition for my clinical audit
- develop an effective data collection tool for my clinical audit
- develop the data dictionary for my clinical audit
- find useful resources for my clinical audit
- obtain clinical quality and safety committee approval for my clinical audit
- comply with privacy and informed consent requirements for my clinical audit
- write my clinical audit proposal
- understand formative assessment requirements for my clinical audit (proposal)
- enhance my clinical audit using feedback I received on my proposal
- use my data collection tool to collect the data for my clinical audit
- analyse the data I collected for my clinical audit
- interpret the results of my data analysis for my clinical audit
- present my results to all relevant stakeholders prior to writing my report
- obtain feedback from stakeholders prior to writing my report
- incorporate feedback from stakeholders into my clinical audit report
- produce a clinical audit report following the guidelines for publication
- understand summative assessment requirements for my clinical audit (report)
- manage my time effectively for my clinical audit

*Completing the clinical audit programme . . .*

- developed my knowledge of scientific method
- enabled me to engage in learning experiences relevant to medical practice
- developed my skills in life-long learning
- developed my written communication skills
- developed my information literacy skills
- developed my abilities to advocate for/facilitate access to health care for members of the underserved and marginalised populations
- enhanced my respect for the roles of other health professionals
- developed my understanding of the threats to medical professionalism posed by conflicts of interest
- enabled me to recognise limitations in my knowledge and skills
- developed my capacity to deal with uncertainties inherent in medical practice
- enabled me to achieve additional learning objectives, please specify

# The supervisor evaluation questionnaire

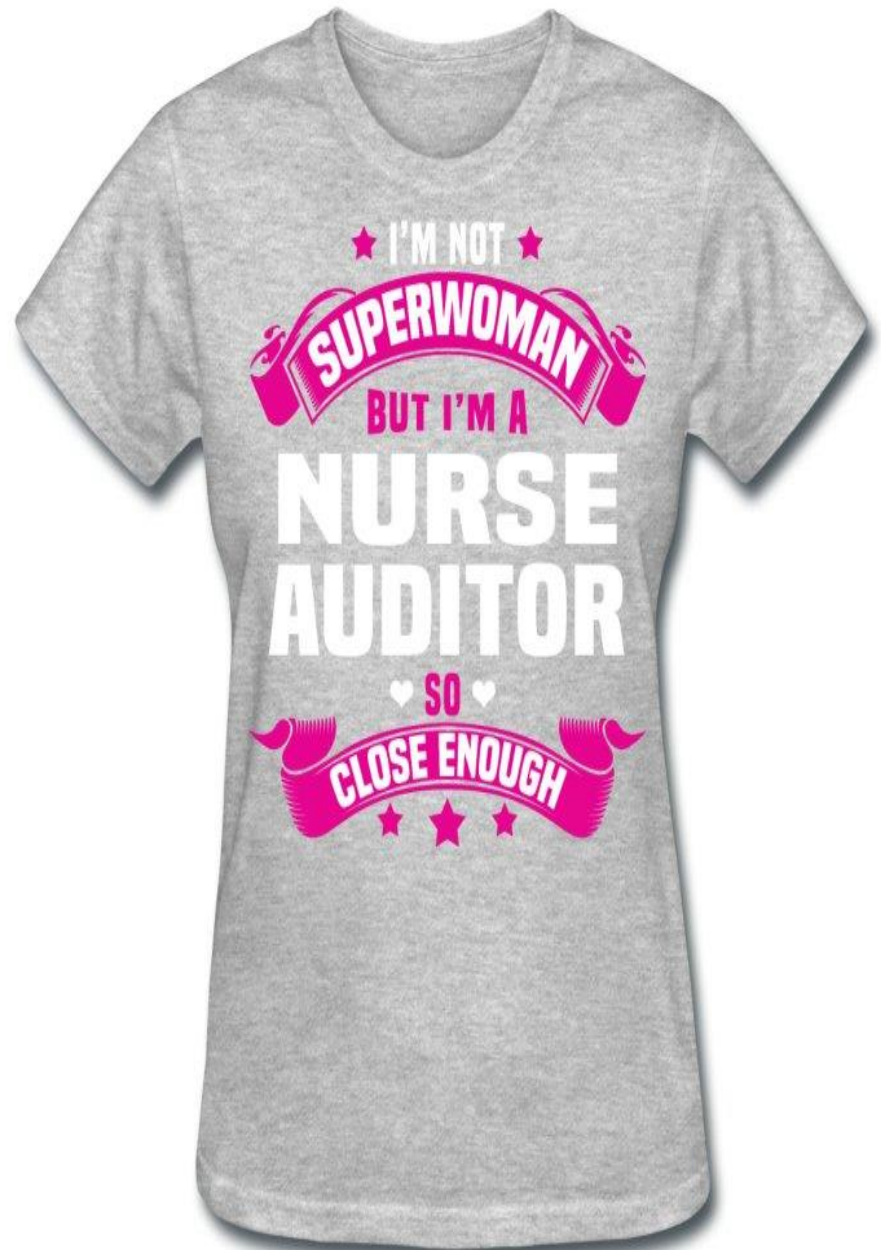
- ⦿ **comprised 15 statements** seeking feedback on the number of students undertaking audits in the supervisor's workplace,  
students' **preparedness** for the programme,  
students' **behaviour** during the audit,  
the level of **support and preparation** provided for supervisors,  
**usefulness of the audit** to the students and to the health service,  
readiness of the supervisor to **supervise again**,
- ⦿ Responses to the statements were required as a '**Yes**' or '**No**' with a request to comment further.

**Table 2.** Supervisors' responses,  $n = 23$ .

| Responses  | Yes (%) | No (%) |
|--|---------|--------|
| The medical student(s) seemed knowledgeable and well prepared to conduct a clinical audit  | 87      | 13     |
| The medical student behaved in a professional manner while conducting the clinical audit   | 96      | 4      |
| This clinical audit programme was useful to me and my organisation in improving patient care   | 91      | 9      |
| This clinical audit programme prepares students to conduct clinical audits on their own practice as required by most specialist colleges | 91      | 9      |
| I would attend a professional development workshop on the clinical audit programme if offered  | 61      | 39     |
| I would like Notre Dame medical students to undertake clinical audits in future years  | 91      | 9      |
| I was informed at the beginning of the academic year that the Notre Dame medical students are required to undertake a clinical audit     | 78      | 22     |
| I was provided with a copy of <i>What your supervisor needs to know about the MED400 clinical audit</i>                                  | 78      | 22     |

# Conclusion

- Clinical audit exists to **improve the quality of patient care and clinical practice**. Given the necessary **time and resources**, nursing students can confidently audit their practice.
- The career advancement opportunities made available to them because of the **inclusion of a clinical audit in their resume**.



# Thank you

Clinical Audit for Improvement Birmingham  
Conference 2017 Call for Abstracts Thursday 19th  
October 2017, The Studio Birmingham

The deadline for submission of abstracts is  
Friday 28th April 2017

 **HQIP** Healthcare Quality  
Improvement Partnership

**Clinical Audit  
Awareness Week**

**22-30 November 2016**

**#CAAW**