

National Clinical Audit in 2020: CASC Charter for Improvement

By looking at feedback from our annual clinical audit surveys over the last ten years, we wish to make the following 5 recommendations in terms of how we believe the national clinical audit programme could be significantly improved. We challenge HQIP, all NCA providers and NHS England to act on these recommendations mainly drawn directly from detailed feedback from the clinical audit and quality improvement community.



1

REDUCE THE BURDEN OF NCAs

Every year that we undertake our survey we receive many comments stating that the national audit programme is too burdensome. Some respondents talk of 'drowning in data'. Acute Trusts must take part in many national audits that often ask questions that don't relate to best practice standards. HQIP state in their principles for procuring NCAs that they aim for 'minimal data burden'. Our view is that many NCAs could be reduced in size and save valuable clinical time.



2

SPEED UP REPORTING OF RESULTS & REPORTS

In 2018 and 2019 the main feedback on NCAs from our survey has been that it often takes too long for results and reports to be published. Common and repeated free-text comments identify the need for 'quicker reporting', 'speedier reports', etc. High quality audit provides participants with current information and data. Some NCAs report on data that is 2-3 years old! That is simply not good enough.



3

DELIVER A MORE EQUITABLE PROGRAMME

Our respondents talk of an NCA 'bias towards Acute Trusts'. This is unfair and does not represent how care in the NHS and wider healthcare is delivered. Hospitals undertake many NCAs. Mental health, community and primary care are grossly under-represented. There are no NCAs for 400,000+ care home residents!



4

IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY FOR NCAs

Have you wondered how much taxpayers money is spent on NCAs or how each NCA supplier spends their income? Do you know about the [National Quality Board's NCAPOP sub-group](#)? There needs to be much more transparency when it comes to NCAs. How is money being spent, who are making what key decisions?



5

CONDUCT AN INDEPENDENT SURVEY OF NCAs

We estimate that since the call for the reinvigoration of national audit, well over £100 million has been spent on NCAs. Yet, only 12.7% of respondents feel that national audit has been reinvigorated. We need an urgent and independent survey of NCA users to gain feedback. To our knowledge the likes of HQIP and N-QI-CAN have conducted no such survey. It makes entire sense to give those expected to mandatorily carry out NCAs the right to report positive and negative feedback. This would show the benefits of NCAs and identify what improvements are needed. Why is there an apparent reluctance to measure those measuring others?

