

Will my clinical audit work?

Use this simple tool to evaluate proposed audit topics

Many clinical audit projects fail or achieve limited success because they are poorly planned and/or badly thought through. The Clinical Audit Support Centre believe that clinical audit projects must be meaningful and have a clear aim from the outset. Our experience tells us that projects which are rushed and badly planned have minimal impact. For over a decade we have been advising those who have a project in mind to test its viability and validity using the simple score-grid created by our ex-managers at Leicestershire Primary Care Audit Group, Roz Sorrie and Louise Hazelwood. The grid first appeared in Leicestershire MAAGs *Audit for Teams* document in 1993 and was included in the *Evidence-Based Audit in General Practice* book authored by Fraser R., Lakhani M., and Baker R. (1998).

Question	Yes	DK	No
Does the audit address a problem that is relevant to patient care?	2	1	0
Is the topic a priority for the individual, team and/or organisation?	2	1	0
Can data be collected in an appropriate timeframe?	2	1	0
Is there confidence that the audit data will be reliable and accurate?	2	1	0
Could changes be implemented if sub-optimal care is identified?	2	1	0

How to use the grid:

Using the scoring grid is simple. When you have a clinical audit topic in mind simply ask five questions as per the table above and record your answer. In each instance the responses are weighted so you score: 2 points for 'yes', 1 point for 'don't know' and 0 points for 'no'. Experience tells us that scores of less than 7 will result in clinical audits of limited value and therefore one must seriously question if these projects should be carried out. Clearly the highest score achievable is 10 and audits that score 9 or 10 should result in valuable projects. Note that you can attain a score of 7 or 8 with one 'no' answer. 'No' answers raise concerns that the project may not be a success so proceed with caution.

LOCAL

Local arrangements

Most local clinical audit teams ask those wanting to carry out an audit to complete a registration form. This may include an internal scoring system or be used by local audit experts and committees to assess the planned audit.

NHS

CG support team

In 2005 the Clinical Governance Support Team created their *Audit Project Assessment Tool* and published this in their *Practical Handbook for Clinical Audit*. This scores potential projects out of 25.

HQIP

HQIP guidance

HQIP have created their *Quality Impact Analysis* scoring system for reviewing audit projects. This is contained in their *Clinical Audit Programme Guidance*. This uses 15 weighted questions to score potential projects.