

# Centre Projects

## **EXAMINATIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCREDITATION AND CLINICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

**Funding Source:** The Australian Research Council Partners: Australian Council on Healthcare Standards; Affinity Health, Ramsay Health Care, Australian Health Insurance Association

**Investigators:** Jeffrey Braithwaite, Johanna Westbrook, Rick Iedema, Bill Runciman, Sally Redman, Marjorie Pawsey, Christine Jorm, ACHS staff

**Duration:** 2002 - 2007

### **Description:**

Although there have been several decades of accreditation development both in Australia and internationally, the relationship between accreditation and clinical and organisational performance remains largely unexamined. The research project consists of four separate studies to examine the association between accreditation and performance, as well as exploring the reliability and validity of the accreditation process. The research is examining the overall question, "What are the relationships between accreditation and clinical and organisational performance?"

### **Study 1: Examination of the relationship between accreditation and clinical and organisational performance**

This study will examine the relationships between the ACHS Evaluation and Quality Improvement Program (EQulP) outcome and organisational and clinical performance data. From the organisations participating in an EQulP organisation-wide survey in 2006, a random sample of 21 organisations stratified for size, location and sector was selected. The research team piloted the methods and tools for this study in November 2005 at a health service in Sydney. Data collection for this study will occur throughout 2006.

# Centre Projects

The organisational data to be collected necessitates undertaking a cultural assessment of each health service. That is, the research team will undertake observations of and interviews with staff, and document analysis to explore communication, decision making, work processes and consumer participation. Staff will also be asked to complete a web based survey on aspects of the culture of the organisation with a focus on safety and quality. The research team will utilise the ACHS information on clinical indicators for each study participant.

These data will be used to assess clinical performance by comparing indicator rates for each participant across time and with national averages.

Associated with this study is a doctoral student examining consumer participation in health services.

## **Study 2: Comparison of health services participating and not participating in accreditation**

This study will compare health services participating in an accreditation program with those not participating in a program. The accreditation program is the ACHS EQUiP. The same methods and tools for study one will be used for study two. That is, each health service in this study will be visited to conduct a cultural assessment and clinical performance data will also be collected.

The major difficulty in implementing this study has been the very small number of health services in Australia that are not involved in an accreditation program and that could be matched to the services in the sample in study one. The research team is currently negotiating with three services to arrange visits by the research team for the first half of 2006.

## **Study 3: Exploration of inter-rater and intra-rater reliability of accreditation survey teams**

This study is examining the intra- and inter- related reliability of surveyors and surveying teams. There are two parts to this study. Firstly, during 2005 the research team conducted focus groups with the ACHS survey workforce. The focus groups utilised open ended questioning to examine two primary issues: Do, and if so how do, surveyors achieve consistency from survey to survey? and, are different surveying teams reliable? That is, if the team surveying an organisation was changed, in whole or part, would the same survey outcome be reached?

## Centre Projects

The second part of this study is an examination of survey teams *in situ*. Two survey teams will be matched and then simultaneously undertake the periodic review of a health service. Three health services have agreed to participate in this study at their periodic reviews in the second half of 2006.

Associated with this study is a doctoral student examining the reliability of surveyors and surveying teams.

**Study 4: An examination of the influence of accreditation surveyors on their individual organisations**

This study will examine the influence of surveyors within their own organisations and is being conducted by doctoral students under the direction of the research team. One study is using ethnography to examine a surveyor, or surveyors, in their employing organisations. The other study is utilising interviews and a survey to examine surveyors' ideas and displays of leadership within their organisations and analysis their organisational accreditation outcomes.