



CANADIAN INCIDENT ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Section 3.14 – Useful Questions in Designing Data Collection

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The principal goal of measurement in monitoring recommended actions is improvement.⁸⁰ Measurement for improvement emphasizes a practical approach with “just enough” data in small sequential samples.⁷³ Small samples taken frequently can be more informative than large samples taken less often (and are also easier to incorporate into staff work). Measures need to be clearly defined and the strategies for collecting these data need to be developed with the staff that will collect them. Collecting data on a process before changes are introduced is helpful in demonstrating whether the changes are improvements and whether the improvements are sustained over time. For example, the team that is monitoring recommendations on falls prevention might agree to review 10 patient charts on each of two units each week and record how many charts indicate whether a falls risk assessment has been completed. The sampling strategy and timeframe for measurement must be clearly stated. It is important to set realistic performance thresholds (e.g. a target for 100 per cent compliance should not be set unless it can be met).

Measurement may take the form of voluntary reporting, intervention tracking, direct observation of performance, chart review, computerized tracking and surveys. Regardless, it is important that measures be carefully defined, that data collection be designed to be practical and that staff are provided with information on why measurement is important and how it can be incorporated into their work. See *Figure 3.14* for key questions in designing a strategy to collect data.

Measurement sometimes looks like “just more work” and measurement that is not well designed, incomplete or hastily done will not be informative. But good measurement helps to assure that improvements are made to ensure safer care environments, and can translate into better outcomes for patients and more effective working environments.

Figure 3.14: USEFUL QUESTIONS IN DESIGNING DATA COLLECTION

1. Have I defined the data so that I get exactly what I want?
2. How accurate is it and does it matter?
3. How can the data help me?
4. Can I rely on it being consistent?
5. What will I do with the data?
6. Does my collection strategy work?
7. How will I display the data I collect?