

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I am writing to comment on the article entitled 'Audit of Surgical Emergency at Lahore General Hospital' by Sadaf Khalid, published in vol 27(1) of the Ayub Medical College Journal. I am sure Dr. Khalid understands the purpose of an audit, as she describes it very well in her introduction.

To summarise briefly: an audit is a systematic review and evaluation of current practice against evidence based standards, with a view to improve care to patients and outcomes. It is a quality improving process. It is a tool to find out if healthcare is being provided in line with standards and, if not, how we can improve.

The audit process is as follows:

Choose a topic (reason to audit)

Objectives/standards (what you are trying to achieve?)

Method/data collection (are you achieving it?)

Data analysis (if not, why are you not achieving it?)

Implementation of changes (doing something to make it better)

Re-evaluate/ review (have you made things better?)

The purpose of the clinical audit is not merely to collect and analyze data, but to ensure that data is collected and analyzed in terms of pre-defined standards. A clinical audit is therefore purely contextual. The difference between research and audit is that research is about determining best practice, whereas audit is about measuring if best practice is being followed.

I was not sure what Dr. Khalid was trying to achieve and to what standards she compared her findings. In particular, I was surprised that there were no recommendations or changes made after analyzing this data. Perhaps a more contextual analysis, together with specific recommendations, would be more beneficial in this regard.

Best Wishes,

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