

# Redesigning, monitoring and evaluation of health services

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The use of medicines is the most common and the most important therapeutic intervention carried out in the INS. As the patient medications represent one of the single large expense categories for INS Trust's and foundation trusts', this is the area where efficiency savings are need to be made, finding cost reduction opportunities, without compromising patient care or alnico quality. Significant quality improvements for patients and reduced costs can be achieved if medicines are managed across the whole health economy.

The evidence suggests there is the potential to make significant efficiency savings and improvements by optimizing the medicines management services and making better use of hospital pharmacy staff. As the medicines becomes more powerful (and potentially dangerous), and the pharmacists are experts in medicines, professional practice guidelines recommended that pharmacists need to be integrated into the clinical team, closer to the patient centered care.

There is evidence that through the implementation of clinical pharmacy programs that includes standards and guidelines for best practices and the identification of medication targets of opportunity to reduce costs (from product procurement to medication administration and all areas between), the clinical pharmacy service contributes to help organizations meet the twin challenges of providing high quality care to patients and the public while also saving money and resources. The objective of clinical pharmacy practice is to optimize patient outcomes, making the most effective, efficient and economical use of medicines.

Hospital pharmacists have shown clearly their benefit in patient care by intervening to improve the cost-effective use of medicines. But despite the growing evidence supporting the pharmacist's contribution to patient care, many hospital services have not taken full advantage of this vital resource. Monitoring, Evaluation and Research of Health Services In this era of cost containment, hospital administrators are likely to fund only those represent a cost-effective use of public money and staff time invested.

To demonstrate the impact on a hospital budget and to Justify a position or service, search, monitoring, evaluation and documentation of improvement and generation of a cost-savings report is essential. Pharmacy Practice Research Pharmacy leaders are constantly under pressure to Justify both existing and expanded clinical pharmacy services. The research and the published evidence of the value of clinical pharmacy services are important resources that pharmacy leaders can use to Justify pharmacist led programs that improve clinical outcomes while also improving net revenue by reducing overall expenses or augmenting gross revenue.

The King's Fund defines pharmacy practice research as " research which attempts to inform and understand pharmacy and the way in which it is practiced, in order to support the objectives of pharmacy practice and to ensure that pharmacists' knowledge and skills are used to best effect in solving the problems of the health service and meeting the health needs of the population". Health Service Evaluation The decisions about resource allocation to health care services will increasingly be based on Service Evaluation.

Health Service Evaluation is " A set of procedures to Judge a services merit by providing a systematic assessment of its aims, objectives, activities, outputs, outcomes and costs. " (INS Executive, 1997) Service Evaluation is a key component of any strategy to develop resources to improve health. It can ensure that resources are being used on the most cost- effective interventions, thereby maximizing the available resources to achieve the most benefit.

Evaluation can also indicate where changes may need to be made to a service, in order to improve its effectiveness. For this reason, evaluation is usually considered at the planning stage of any activity aimed at improving health. Service Evaluation can demonstrate which services are effective and efficient, how to achieve maximum effects for minimum costs. A well-designed evaluation will provide valuable evidence both of successful outcomes and of good project management, or will indicate the opposite.

Demonstrating acceptable outcomes and/or management action will make it easier to obtain additional resources from the funders to develop or change the service. Findings will also demonstrate to potential new funders or partners that the service is a good investment. Monitoring, Service Evaluation and Research are important aspects of Pharmacy and essential in providing evidence that pharmacy delivers services that are effective, high quality and value for money.