REVIEW ARTICLE

Does Audit Improve the Quality of Care?
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ABSTRACT
BACKGROUND: The quality of health care and quality assurance are concepts which have been established for many years. Audit nowadays is adopted as a means of developing high quality care.
AIM: This study aims to identify the perspectives of audit in practice and its relationship to quality assessment and assurance, quality improvement, and clinical effectiveness.
METHODS: There were used the databases Medline and Cinahl to identify studies related to clinical audit. These databases were searched up to May 2009.
DISCUSSION: Audit is used as a tool to assure and assess the quality of patient health care. It is also an educational tool as it creates a lot of opportunities for professionals to think about practice and to learn from the experience of others.
CONCLUSIONS: Although that audit is a powerful and useful tool to improve and evaluate the quality of health care, on the other hand there are many barriers that make its use difficult in everyday practice.

Key Words: Clinical audit, quality of care, quality assessment, quality assurance, clinical effectiveness.