Two ways to improve clinical audit’s contribution to improving quality of care

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There are two ways that we might improve clinical audit’s contribution to improving quality of care. One is to re-establish a central repository of information on the 50-60 national clinical audits in England. A previous attempt (Directory of Clinical Databases) provided not only information on the data available but also an independent assessment of the quality of the data in the national clinical audit. Unfortunately, after a few successful years the NHS Information Centre decided not to maintain this database, although it is still archived on the web (http://docdat.ic.nhs.uk/). There is a current initiative, funded by NHS England and led by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership, to create a new resource during 2014.

The second approach is along the lines suggested by Smith. I agree that there are many imaginative and enterprising local quality improvement initiatives. A website that highlighted the best and most successful ones would help their dissemination and wider uptake. However, it would be essential that such a resource was kept up to date—often a challenge after initial enthusiasm starts to wane.

Competing interests: I chair the National Advisory Group for Clinical Audit and Enquiries that advises NHS England.

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4 Smith MD. What about a national clinical audit results database? BMJ 2014;348:g1303.