

INCORPORATING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS INTO GUIDELINES

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The US Institute of Medicine (IOM) defines quality of care as ‘the degree to which health care services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes and are consistent with current professional knowledge’. A quality measure is a mechanism that enables the user to quantify the quality of a selected aspect of care by comparing it to a criterion. A subtype of a quality measure is a clinical performance measure often derived from guidelines. Specifically, a clinical performance measure is a mechanism for assessing the degree to which a provider competently and safely delivers clinical services that are appropriate for the patient in the optimal time period. There are many issues to consider when selecting a quality measure. It is important to consider and balance the different perspectives and expectations among different stakeholders. The challenge is in balancing these varying expectations and perspectives. A starting point is to make clear what the varying stakeholders ‘value and regard as an essential mission of health care. Areas of agreement among these perspectives ought to define the central focus for quality measurement’. This segment will discuss an approach to finding and using quality measures as a way of utilising guidelines to drive the improvement of health outcomes.