

The Patient Safety Research Group “The Abc-Sets Initiative”

Developing Apps to guide everyday care for patients and busy practitioners

The Patient Safety Research Group (PSRG) led by Professor Bill Runciman, is housed within the University of South Australia’s Centre for Population Health Research. The PSRG provides support for the Australian Patient Safety Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation devoted to advancing the cause of patient safety, and works closely with the Australian Institute of Health Innovation, based at Macquarie University, and with a number of consumer organisations and professional bodies.

The PSRG has a strong translational focus with some of the Group’s research interests focused around measuring and augmenting the provision of ‘appropriate healthcare’, testing methods for the development of evidence-based clinical indicators, patient-centred and e-health initiatives, and incident/adverse event monitoring for patient safety. An example of translational research being developed by the PSRG is the “*abc (agreed basic care) - sets initiative*”, which is part of a larger program of translational research into creating safe, effective systems of care.

The “*abc - sets initiative*” draws on lessons learned as part of the CareTrack Study^{1,2} led by Professor Runciman, showed that Australian adults receive appropriate care for selected common conditions only 57% of the time and outlined what would be necessary for monitoring the appropriateness of care into the future.

An essential first step will be to get agreement on what constitutes appropriate care. One of the issues being that with over 600 guidelines available in Australia, over 3,000 in the United States, and with the availability of the internet as a resource, the average user has trouble navigating the maze of options available and has no easy way of discriminating between care that is appropriate and care that is not. Therefore, while excellent resources, they do not, in any practical sense, guide everyday care for patients or busy practitioners.

The “*abc – sets initiative*”, when developed will be an inclusive, transparent, wiki-based process for creating agreed clinical standards for common conditions comprising a series of evidence based indicators embedded in electronic tools (‘apps’).



These tools will be kept up-to-date and will provide a common basis for informing patients, carers and practitioners about the condition in question, guide care, document what has been done, be amenable to electronic audit and allow appropriateness of care to be monitored and feedback to be provided at individual, practice, facility and jurisdictional levels. It is intended that these tools will be in a standard, succinct format, be endorsed by national bodies, and be suitable for hand-held devices and electronic records.

If you would like more information about The Patient Safety Research Group or the “*abc – sets initiative*” please contact Professor Bill Runciman: williamrunciman@unisa.edu.au.

¹ Runciman WB, Hunt TD, Hannaford NA, Hibbert PD, Westbrook JI, Coiera EW, et al. CareTrack: assessing the appropriateness of health care delivery in Australia. *Med J Aust.* 2012; 197 (2):100-5.

² Runciman WB, Coiera EW, Day RO, Hannaford NA, Hibbert PD, Hunt TD, et al. Towards the delivery of appropriate health care in Australia. *Med J Aust.* 2012 16.7.2012; 197 (2):78-81.