

Labor & Delivery Quality of Care Short Observational Index

Session 2: Structured Clinical Observation

Session objectives

- Review and discuss the purpose and indications for collecting data through clinical observation
- Discuss the attributes of good clinical observers
- Discuss how clinical observers can become competent

What is structured clinical observation?

- Systematically observing an act or an element of health service delivery without intervening or providing immediate feedback
- Using a tool to observe the elements and stages of a process or service delivery element in an organized fashion
- Demonstrating the fundamental attitudes of respect and objectivity

Why clinical observation?

- Clinical observation is considered the “gold standard” in measuring the quality of health care.
 - Observation provides more accurate and complete information on the quality of health care processes than record review or patient/provider interview.

When is clinical observation particularly useful?

- When you are trying to understand an ongoing behavior, a process, an unfolding situation, or an event.
- When there are physical evidence, actions, and/or outcomes that can be readily seen.
- When written data collection procedures or other existing data sources (e.g., facility records) seem inappropriate or incomplete

What situations can use clinical observation?

- Quality assurance programs, such as those using the Standards-based Management and Recognition (SBM-R©) approach
- M&E within clinical quality improvement initiatives
- Special studies, such as the MCHIP Quality of Care Surveys
- Research on quality of care interventions/determinants
- Can participants name other situations in which clinical observers could be used?

What are the attributes of a good clinical observer?

- Objective observer
- Accurate documenter
- The goal of the observer is to simply watch the process unfold – the process should occur in the same way whether or not the observer is there to watch.
- What else makes a good clinical observer?

Becoming a competent observer (1)

- What makes a clinical observer competent:
 - Making objective reliable, and standardized observations
- How can observers standardize their work?
 - Review tools for structured observation
 - Practice skills observation of “flawed performances”
 - Practice observation in the classroom with opportunity to compare findings with other observers and receive feedback from “gold standard” observers
 - Practice observation at health facility

Becoming a competent observer (2)

- Develop deep knowledge of tools used for observation and the underlying clinical standards of care
 - You have to **know** how clinical procedures should be performed before you can **assess** whether they have been done well
- Calibrate with other observers
 - Review inconsistencies across observers and address them until all observers can observe in the same, standardized way
- Practice, practice, practice

Thank you!

