Quality Standards
For Australian Emergency Departments

It is widely acknowledged that emergency departments (EDs) in Australia and around the world face increasing pressure due to growing demand. With growing demand comes other challenges such as improving the patient experience and the continuing need to provide high quality and safe care to patients.

The ED is a complex environment which requires the combined effort of clinical and administrative staff to ensure all patients receive timely and effective care. With this in mind, a collaborative project between the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, the College of Emergency Nursing Australasia and consumer representatives has been undertaken to develop the Quality Standards for Emergency Departments. These ED Quality Standards aim to provide guidance to improve the quality of care offered to patients, their families and carers who present to the ED.

The implementation of quantitative targets in EDs has historically been associated with considerable disadvantages such as difficulty in data collection, or more seriously, care being re-focused to a time target rather than the patient’s care pathway [1, 2]. Consequently, in these quality standards a qualitative focus has been used. It was considered that this would enhance compliance for clinicians as it would promote the quality improvement process, rather than the standards being used to measure performance [2].

These Quality Standards for EDs will offer departments guidance through standards and defined criteria (Figure 1) to aspire to without fear of penalties. In this way, it is anticipated that the standards will allow EDs to better engage in quality improvement activities (Figure 2), and influence change from within.

Resources developed include the Quality Standards (Figure 1), as well as a Self-Audit Workbook and Patient Guide.

AVAILABLE AT:

REFERENCES