

Measuring our success: how well do we follow our patients?

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The importance of developing protocols for patient care in many fields, including Bariatric Surgery, has been emphasised by many authors. Prospective data collection is essential in a successful clinical service to enable robust self-audit and promote the opportunity to compare clinical services and critically evaluate outcomes against external metrics. As part of the Perth Circle of Care Bariatric program, our surgeons and physicians are committed to thorough and regular follow up. In preparation for protocol improvement, we conducted an audit of our compliance with existing follow up protocols and data entry over three years spanning the introduction of electronic health records. In 2008, before the electronic system was in place, 114 (62%) of 183 postoperative patients were seen within 4 weeks of the six months post operative review point, yet 142 (78%) attended within 4 weeks of the scheduled 12 month review. The new system was implemented at the beginning of 2009, and appointments were more consistently adherent to the followup protocol. In 2010, we have demonstrated continued satisfactory adherence to the 6 month followup protocol. 10% of visits recorded changes in co-morbidities, which reflects our practice of thorough enquiry at initial assessment. This review of our collected data provides opportunity to improve our assessment of the patients at these sentinel reviews.