

A2: The Diabetes Audit: How It Started and Why It Matters

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The IHS Diabetes Care & Outcomes Audit has been in existence for nearly two decades. Its origins can be traced back to local and regional assessments of diabetes care pioneered by IHS sites in the Midwest,⁽¹⁾ with rapid advancement of interest and use following publication of the original "IHS Minimum Standards of Care for Patients with Diabetes."⁽²⁾ To perform an audit, local reviewers examine medical records from a random sample of active diabetes patients and extract data onto a standardized form. The information on the form is then manually entered into diabetes audit software pre-programmed in Epi Info. The resulting data file is used to generate reports for local use, and then forwarded to the Area Office and ultimately to a central audit data center. This method, referred to as a "manual audit", allows the easy aggregation of audit data to produce Area and national reports.⁽³⁾ Early on, nearly all diabetes audits were done manually. As more sites gained experience and skill in using RPMS, interest rose in using PCC data for the diabetes audit. In 1996 a "bridge" was constructed to extract RPMS data into an Epi Info-readable audit file (a so-called 'electronic audit' or 'e-audit' file) and to create a summary report. Currently more than half of all participating sites perform e-audits (53% in 2007), and the percentage increases each year. Considerable time and effort has gone into establishing and confirming comparability between the Epi Info based manual audit and the RPMS based e-audit. Audit participation has been voluntary although in recent years it has been a requirement for SDPI grants. With widespread use and the accumulation of multiple years of diabetes audit data, a number of articles have been published on trends in AI/AN diabetes care and outcomes, as these examples illustrate.^(4,5,6,7,8) A new set of tools for data entry, processing, and reporting via the internet, known as the WebAudit, has been developed. To date the WebAudit has been used only at a few pilot sites, but it will be ready for implementation during the 2008 audit cycle.

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