

The Royal London Hospital Institutional Memory Project

Terms of Reference

Richard Carden, Samy Sadek, Jenny Smith

Rationale

The emergency department is an environment with inherent risk due to high patient volumes, time pressure and limited information. This environment and the high patient turnover may increase the risk of mistakes and errors. Institutional memory is the collective experience and knowledge of a department which often mitigates this risk is often diluted with time and staff turnover. It is beyond the individual and as such requires transmission of this experience and knowledge through 'the institution'. The memory project aims to strengthen our institutional memory and communicate the lessons learnt in the emergency department at RLH. This may also serve as a platform for learning throughout the wider trust and the specialty as a whole.

Methodology

The memory project requires inputs from a number of sources in order to achieve the above objective. Important occurrences, common themes and clinical lessons learned will be fed into the project from all aspects of the departmental governance framework, including:

- Serious Incident reports
- Complaints
- Interrogation of Datix
- Departmental teaching and case based discussions
- Staff feedback

Also other sources will be used and the process will remain fluid to allow input from whichever source brings important information. It is proposed that the outputs elicited from this will be stored on a database, accessible for reference and teaching and reviewed by a small team of clinicians monitoring for trends and changing needs.

Output

It will be necessary to regularly maintain the database. This will require named individuals to collect and collate information from the above sources. This in turn will be fed back into induction, departmental teaching and used to inform departmental practice and shape guidelines and pathways.

A summary will be regularly updated and displayed around the department to encourage passive as well as active learning by all staff within the department.