SYNOPSIS REPORT

An effectiveness of internal audits in maintaining quality standards in hospitals.

at

Paras HEC Hospital, Ranchi

Master of Business Administration

In

Hospital Management

by

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IIHMRU/01/1885

Batch – 2023-2025

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INTRODUCTION:

Internal audits are essential quality management tools used in hospitals to ensure adherence to healthcare standards, guidelines, and protocols. In the context of accreditation standards like NABH, internal audits serve as proactive measures for identifying gaps, monitoring non-conformities, and recommending corrective actions. These audits help promote patient safety, improve service delivery, and maintain continual quality improvement (CQI). Despite their wide adoption, there remains a question of their actual effectiveness on how often recommendations are implemented, how timely corrective actions are taken, and to what extent these audits improve quality outcomes.

This study seeks to assess how internal audits are performed in a hospital setting and to evaluate their impact on maintaining and enhancing the quality of care, based on compliance metrics, patient safety indicators, and staff responsiveness to audit findings.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. How frequently are internal audits conducted in the hospital?

2. What are the major non-conformities identified during internal audits?

3. How promptly are corrective and preventive actions (CAPA) implemented post-audit?

4. Do internal audits lead to measurable improvements in quality indicators over time?

5. What are the barriers to effective implementation of audit recommendations?

STUDY OBJECTIVES:

Primary Objective:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of internal audits in maintaining and improving quality standards in hospitals.

Secondary Objectives:

- To identify common non-conformities highlighted during internal audits.
- To analyze the time taken and adherence to implementing CAPA.
- To assess the impact of audit recommendations on quality indicators (patient complaints, HAIs, medication errors).
- To understand staff perception and involvement in the audit process.

HYPOTHESIS:

Null Hypothesis (H0):

Internal audits have no significant effect on maintaining or improving quality standards in hospitals.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1):

Internal audits have a significant effect on maintaining and improving quality standards in hospitals.

METHODOLOGY:

STUDY DESIGN-

1. Descriptive Study:

A descriptive study is used to systematically describe the characteristics of a phenomenon or population being studied; the descriptive element focuses on documenting:

- The frequency of internal audits
- Types and frequency of non-conformities identified
- Departments most involved
- The time taken to implement corrective and preventive actions (CAPA)
- Common trends in quality indicators (infection rates, patient complaints, medication errors)

This aspect does not attempt to establish a cause-and-effect relationship, but it helps build a clear picture of how internal audits are currently functioning within the hospital.

Purpose:
To create a factual, numerical, and thematic profile of internal audits, and how often and in what areas they are conducted.

2. Observational Study:

In an observational study, the researcher does not intervene but simply observes and collects data it involves:

- Observing audit processes (if any ongoing audits take place during the study period)
- Reviewing documentation such as audit reports, CAPA logs, and compliance checklists
- Conducting interviews with staff (quality team, department heads) to gather insights

The researcher does not influence or alter any aspect of the audit process. They only record and analyze what is already happening in the natural hospital setting.

Purpose:
To understand the real-world audit practices and identify how the hospital staff engages with the audit process.

3. Analytical Study:

An analytical study goes a step further than description and tries to analyze patterns, correlations, or trends:

- Comparing quality indicator data before and after internal audits
- Measuring the impact of timely vs. delayed CAPA on repeat non-conformities
- Analyzing whether departments that implement CAPA quickly have better compliance scores
- Finding associations between the frequency of audits and improvement in quality metrics

This portion may include basic statistical tools such as:

- Mean, median, standard deviation for audit intervals

- Correlation analysis between audit frequency and reduction in errors
- Comparative charts of quality indicators across two periods

Purpose:

To validate patterns found in retrospective data and observe real-time dynamics of the audit process.

STUDY SETTINGS-

The proposed study will be conducted at a NABH-accredited multi-specialty tertiary care hospital located near urban areas. This hospital serves as an ideal setting for the research as it operates under stringent quality standards and has well-established internal audit mechanisms that are aligned with accreditation requirements.

STUDY POPULATION-

Participants:

Quality team members, department heads, nursing in-charges, and internal auditors.

Audit Records:

Data will be collected from internal audit reports of the past 12–18 months.

DURATION OF STUDY-

On 3 months including data collection, interviews, analysis, and report writing.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES-

Purposive Sampling will be used to select internal audit reports and relevant departments.

Convenience Sampling for key informant interviews (quality officers, nursing staff).

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS-

Internal Audit:

A systematic evaluation conducted within the hospital by a trained team to assess adherence to set standards and protocols.

Quality Standards:

It defined criteria based on NABH or hospital-specific SOPs, policies, and benchmarks.

Non-Conformity:

A deviation or failure to meet a prescribed standard.

Effectiveness:

Measurable improvement in quality indicators, timely closure of NCs, and staff compliance post-audit.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS-

- Audit checklists and reports
- CAPA implementation records
- Quality indicators

- Interview schedule for staff perception
- Observation during ongoing audits

DATA ANALYSIS PLAN-

Quantitative Analysis:

- Frequency and type of non-conformities
- Time taken for CAPA implementation
- Trends in quality indicators before and after audits
- Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

Qualitative Analysis:

- Thematic analysis of interviews

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS-

- Approval will be obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee.
- Informed consent will be taken from interview participants.
- Data confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained.
- No patient-identifiable data will be used.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH:

This study will help us understand how effective internal audits are in driving quality improvement initiatives. It will offer practical insights for the hospital administration to strengthen the internal audit mechanism, improve CAPA implementation, and enhance compliance culture. The findings can be used to tailor training programs and develop feedback systems for continuous monitoring.

CONCLUSION:

Internal audits, if implemented effectively, can serve as vital tools for sustaining quality assurance in healthcare settings. By systematically assessing and addressing non-conformities, audits contribute to safer patient care, improved operational processes, and regulatory readiness. This study will provide evidence-based insights into how hospitals can leverage audits not just for compliance but for continual quality enhancement.

REFERENCE:

www.google.com

NABH Standards

www.iqchospitals.com

Western Europe Hospitals