



QUDI Project QR03.ia

Radiology referral templates

RANZCR Response

Introduction

This QUDI project developed a set of radiology referral forms, designed to improve the quality of information flow between referrers and radiologists. It extends the work of a previous QUDI project (QR03.i) that explored the nature and desirable attributes of quality referral forms. The resulting forms provide a consistent design and data set for referral forms, which can be customised to meet local needs. The forms also provide a platform for a standardised implementation of electronic referrals.

Implications for RANZCR

Referral forms that prompt a clinician to provide all salient information about a patient will improve communication between referrers and radiologists. The implication is that a well informed radiologist will provide a report that is appropriate for the referrer's and patient's needs.

The project found that it would be very difficult to mandate the use of specific forms, given the variety of, and preferences for, forms currently in use. However, recommendations should be made about using a standardised data set and general layout. This is especially the case for electronic referrals. Standardising computer forms at an early stage of their introduction into practice may prevent the problems that occur when proprietary software is implemented in a piecemeal fashion with no consistency in the underlying principles, such as the current situation with digital image production and viewing on portable media, which is taking considerable time, effort and expense to rectify.

Recommendations

The RANZCR will publish and promote the referral form templates on the QUDI website and through stakeholder communication channels.

The RANZCR recommends that engagement between the College, e-health standards bodies (such as NeHTA and Standards Australia), health informatics organisations (e.g. IHE, HISA, HL7, CeH) and policy makers continues, so that developments such as these referral templates are consistent with, and can inform, national and international standards and national and State e-health policy.

The RANZCR supports initiatives to improve communication between radiologists and referrers.