TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COMPILATION ABOUT AUDIT AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

ABSTRACT

Objective: to analyze the relationship between audit and quality management in health care services, based on the literature. Method: integrative review with the leading question: What is the relationship between audit and quality management in nursing care? The inclusion criteria were: articles available online and in full, produced between 2008 and 2015, in Portuguese, addressing the study topic, found in LILACS and BDENF databases, with the descriptors: Nursing Audit; Health Care Quality; Health Evaluation. Twenty-six articles were found, 13 of which met the inclusion criteria. Results: the results showed that health care quality is directly related to audit, which has the purpose of recording, adjusting, analyzing and controlling it, so as to meet the needs of patients. Conclusion: audit is a process of assessing the quality of care services provided, which is mostly done by means of medical records or on-site evaluations of patients. Descriptors: Nursing Audit; Health Care Quality; Health Evaluation.

RESUMO

Objetivo: analisar, a partir da literatura, a relação da auditoria com a gestão de qualidade nos serviços de saúde. Método: revisão integrativa, tendo como questão norteadora: qual a relação da auditoria com a gestão de qualidade, frente aos cuidados de enfermagem? Adotou-se como critérios de exclusão: artigos disponíveis online integral na íntegra, no período de 2008 a 2015, em português, contemplando a temática do estudo, nas bases de dados LILACS e BDENF, utilizando os descritores: Auditoria de Enfermagem; Qualidade da Assistência à Saúde; Avaliação em Saúde. Foram detectados 26 artigos, 13 atendiam aos critérios de inclusão. Resultados: os resultados mostraram que qualidade em saúde está diretamente relacionada com auditoria, que tem por competência registrar, adequar, analisar e controlar, atendendo às exigências dos pacientes. Conclusão: evidenciou-se que a auditoria é um processo de avaliação da qualidade dos cuidados da assistência prestada, sendo esta verificada, em sua maioria, por meio de registros em prontuário ou observação in loco do paciente. Descriptors: Auditoria de Enfermagem; Qualidade da Assistência à Saúde; Avaliação em Saúde.
INTRODUCTION

There is a great deal of interest by organizations in combining low prices with excellent quality so that their customers are satisfied. Hospitals have begun to look for alternatives for management, focusing on the need for good quality care and services, so they can adapt to a competitive market. Therefore, in order to ensure the quality of services provided, they are making use of audit services.¹

Within a company, the manager is responsible for different activities related to planning, control, and the leadership of activities carried out by third-parties; but before planning, they need to gather data and information and make decisions. In order to perform an excellent planning, they need time and tools, such as audit, which provides decision making with accurate information, which in turn must reach everyone so the adequate actions are taken focusing on a highly competitive market.²

Audit supports the company manager in the detection of mistakes that burdens the budget, and it promotes a quality service by assessing, monitoring and analyzing the ways to foster the implementation of goals in a scope that relates value for money and quality in hospital services. The main purpose of health care services is still to provide the best care service, with effectiveness, equity, acceptability, accessibility and suitability.³

Audits may be defined as an assessment process for the redirection of different actions, since corrective or preventive measures can be taken to reshape these actions after the service has been analyzed and weaknesses have been found. It is composed of a multiprofessional team that performs qualitative and quantitative analyses of medical records prior to and after billing, checks the remarks made and writes final reports for decision making.⁴⁻⁵

In the context of Nursing, audits have been increasingly present. It is about the evaluation/analysis of medical records and the assessment of compatibility between the procedures performed and the items charged by the hospital. Nursing care services can also be assessed by means of records.⁶⁻⁷

There is a lack of studies about the topic and a theoretical deepening is necessary due to its relevance in clinical practice. This study is expected to contribute to the dissemination of information to auditors, managers and other health professionals, so they can improve their actions and decision making within hospitals.

Therefore, we aimed to analyze the relationship between audit and quality management in health care services, based on the literature.

METHOD

This is an integrative review. In order to carry out the study, six steps were undertaken: 1. Identification of the topic and selection of the research question; 2. Definition of inclusion and exclusion criteria; 3. Identification of pre-selected and selected studies; 4. Categorization of selected studies; 5. Analysis and interpretation of results and 6. Presentation of knowledge review/synthesis.⁸⁻⁹

The leading question was: What is the relationship between audit and quality management in nursing care?

The selected inclusion criteria were: articles available online and in full, produced between 2008 and 2015, written in Portuguese, and that addressed the study topic. Duplicate articles, reports of experience or articles whose methodology and subject did not match the purpose of this study were excluded.

The search was carried out by two reviewers to ensure thoroughness of the process of selection of articles in the Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences (LILACS) and BDENF databases, in the second semester of 2015, with standardized descriptors found in DeCS (The Virtual Health Library of Health Sciences Descriptors): “nursing audit” [and] “health care quality” [and] “health evaluation”.

Twenty-six articles were found, but only 13 of them met the inclusion criteria. Therefore, the final sample was made up of 13 articles. After this step, a careful reading of all articles was carried out sequentially, with the following variables of analysis and discussion of data outlined: year of publication/authors, titles, methodology used, journal.

In the subsequent step, the studies were assessed as to their year of publication, language, methodology and applicability of results in practice, methodology strictness, measured interventions and results found, type of study and level of evidence, considering: 1 - systematic reviews or meta-analyses of relevant clinical trials; 2 - evidence of at least one clearly outlined controlled randomized clinical trial; 3 - clearly outlined clinical trials with no
randomization; 4 - clearly outlined cohort and case-tracking studies; 5 - systematic reviews of descriptive and qualitative studies; 6 - evidence arising from one descriptive or qualitative study; 7 - opinion of experts or committees of experts, including interpretation of information not based on studies.10

At the end of data slice-and-dice, the material was classified by semantic similarity, and topics were grouped according to the content similarity, and the topic analysis category was created, characterized and analyzed.

**RESULTS**

The achievement of results and discussion took place after all articles were careful read, as described below:

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<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
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<td>Godoi AP, et al.</td>
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<td>documentary study, exploratory and descriptive-retrospective13</td>
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<td>Silva JA, et al.</td>
<td>Quality assessment of nursing records in a semi-intensive care unit8</td>
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Chart 1. Distribution of the selected articles: year of publication/authors, titles, methodology applied, journal and level of evidence (n=13).

Thirteen articles were found in LILACS database, between 2008 and 2015, using a quantitative approach (n=12), two of which using Delphi method and one (n=1) using literature review. The years of publication that prevailed were: 2008 (n=3), 2009 (n=2), 2010 (n=1), 2011 (n=1), 2012 (n=2), 2013 (n=2), 2014 (n=2). The journals that published the greatest number of articles on the topic were the Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem (n=2) and Revista Gaúcha de Enfermagem (n=2).

♦ Class 1: Audit and Quality Management

The search for improvements in life has been increasingly intense in different fields of health, and with the globalization in the country’s current political and financial setting, the health sector has looked for management alternatives, with a focus on the need for health institutions to adapt to an increasingly competitive market. With this search for improvements and adjustments in
the managing system, a new conception has appeared for professionals regarding their work processes. 12-15

This attitude values quality and it is already a reality among some professionals and health institutions. However, increased adherence and commitment are necessary to achieve quality of health services. 13,16

In order to achieve this quality, and in addition to commitment, professionals must understand the reality of the services provided and carry out a risk assessment so as to find cases of noncompliance and propose improvements. Audit is a method that consists of assessing the way care services are provided by the nursing staff, on the basis of specific standards that are defined in accordance with the reality that is to be assessed. 12,15-19

It is a tool that assesses the quality of health care services by means of a systematic and formal evaluation process. However, the concepts of management and care are still seen as restricted by many nurses, which is apparent in the work division and peaks at the dichotomy ‘management vs. care’ in the daily routine of these professionals. In turn, they should not be so reluctant to introduce in their practices protocols or instruments that seek to improve quality and safety for patients. 1,11-8

The dissemination of information and management of actions to implement management quality include clear education and motivation traits on the part of workers of health institutions. The educational aspect is present since the internal team formation, which learns about the accreditation methodology, conducts the self-assessment process, and implements a quality culture based on standards. This team is responsible for providing recommendations and guidance of the process, quality planning and monitoring of indicators. 19,21

All actions proposed that aim to improve care services need to be assessed as to positive and negative aspects, regarding both its applicability and the professionals involved. Otherwise, the identified needs will not be met effectively. 16

Nurses apply the technical-administrative knowledge acquired in their undergraduate studies to organize and control the work process. However, it is not possible to rely entirely on this knowledge and overvalue management when it is not focused on a high-class care; although management is essential for an effective execution of nursing care, these two aspects must be interconnected. 13,15,17-21

Nevertheless, audits have been increasingly present in care assessment processes, since they provide insight about the reality of the work process that is being executed, they allow for interventions based on care services that do not comply with the quality standards, and also for supporting actions of continuing education. 12,15

The implementation of an evaluation process of care services is justified by the importance of preventing possible risks or losses resulting from an inappropriate action. In view of that, carrying out audit and quality management has become essential. 16

Audits remain an effective tool used to evaluate accounting books within an institution. Their purpose is to confirm or not the information by means of surveys, studies and systematic analyses of process, operations and routines to help managers in the decision making. 15,16

**CONCLUSION**

The results showed that health care quality is directly related to audit, which has the purpose of recording, adjusting, analyzing and controlling it, so the needs of patients can be met.

Hence, after the compilation, it was found that audit is a process of assessing the quality of care services provided, which is mostly done by means of medical records or on-site evaluations of patients. Patients benefit from a health care of greater quality and safety.

It is essential that all professionals understand the importance of this class, with specific activities for service improvement. A health care service that does not comply with acceptable standards may result in serious consequences and discomfort for patients. The concern with an evaluation process of services provided with quality is justified by the fact that it can prevent possible risks or losses for patients. In view of that, carrying out an audit and quality management has become essential.

It is important to remember that all health care professionals can be involved in this improvement process, on the basis of guidance and education provided by the audit.

**REFERENCES**

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