QUALITY CONFERENCE: OUR COLLECTIVE MINDSET FOR HIGH VALUE CARE

KNOWLEDGE CULTURE: INFORMATION FOR IMPROVEMENT

Adam Steventon, Director of Data Analytics, Heath Foundation (Chair)
Dr Paula Whitty, Director, North East Quality Observatory Service
Dr Marc Farr, Director of Information, East Kent Hospitals University NHS FT
Dr Kathy Chapman, Programme Manager, Mental Health Intelligence and Leadership Programme

Adam introduced the session as being about how we use data to improve quality of care. He said the NHS is not a ‘data free zone’, we use data all the time, but there are some problems with how we use it and the insight presented; in particular we don’t have data on all aspects of quality so it is an imbalanced picture.

Paula introduced the work of the North East Quality Observatory Service (NEQOS) which is a self-funded team hosted within Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS FT supporting acute and mental health providers with quality improvement. Their QI programme creates a feedback loop of locally collected data based on what should be happening (the national guidance) and what is actually happening. Between 2014 and 2016 their work on community acquired pneumonia improved the percentage of patients receiving timely processes from 30% to 60%. Paula stressed the importance of working with clinicians to be able to ‘measure what matters’ and understand what you are finding.

Marc highlighted some of the challenges he sees facing the informatics profession, in particular the workforce challenges as people don’t think of NHS informatics as a good career choice. He also encouraged the audience not to be held back by information governance but to be bold and assume it is ok to do something until someone tells you it isn’t. Marc also spoke about the concept of ‘responsible transparency’: moving from using data to share interesting stories, to celebrating success, to using it to challenge performance.

Kathy spoke about the work of Mindset, an organisation that was set up about a year ago to support the use of quality improvement techniques in mental health services. At that time it was difficult to find anyone who had used QI tools or data in a mental health setting. Kathy said that the quality of a system cannot be better than the individual units that it is made up of, so even with the large-scale transformational change that is currently happening we still need small-scale grassroots projects for improvement.

The Q&A focused on the sharing and interpretation of data. We spoke about how to encourage people to engage with data, and whether that is by making it open to all or adopting a professional services model. Marc said that the one thing he would change would be to democratise data. It was felt that it is the translation of data to information that is key, and getting the right relationships in place which create the right culture for using information well.

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