

British Association of Dental Nurses®

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AN INTRODUCTION TO CLINICAL GOVERNANCE

What is Clinical Governance?

"A framework through which NHS organisations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which excellence in clinical care will flourish."
(Government White Paper 'The New NHS, Modern and Dependable')

What does Clinical Governance mean to the dental team?

Having mechanisms in place that enable you to provide the best possible care to your patients. Dental nurses play a vital role in determining how to make this happen.

What are the key elements of Clinical Governance and what does it mean to dental nurses?

- Accountability and openness – recognising and taking on board responsibilities, justifying your actions and being open and honest
- Professional performance – monitoring your skills, recognising strengths and identifying development areas
- Monitoring and feedback – continuously checking what you are doing and sharing results
- Audit and peer review – examine what others are doing and appraise your colleagues
- Risk management – identify what could cause disruption to the service provided, how serious this might be and how to prevent or reduce the risk of harm
- Patient Satisfaction – providing patients with the opportunity to comment on the service provided and acting upon their comments
- Continuing Professional Development – actively taking part in your own life-long learning
- Sharing good practice – networking through professional bodies, local groups and your own immediate team, letting others know what works for you.

How can you make Clinical Governance work?

- The organisation must make a commitment to developing the team to achieve the above key elements
- Every member of the dental team needs to understand the concept and play an active role in the process
- Carry out a critical analysis of the organisation and on each member of staff
- Identify where you are now, where you want to be, and the difference between the two
- Identify what changes you want to make and how you plan to bring these about
- Implement the changes
- Continuously monitor the changes and decide if they have brought about the desired improvements
- Review periodically and revise where necessary

Summary

Clinical governance benefits the organisation and the dental team. The result is that business needs and personal needs are met and a high standard of care is delivered.

Jane Bonehill RDN
August 2001



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