Evaluation of the Central Australian Medical Retrieval and Consultation Centre

Why this research is needed: In February 2018, a dedicated Medical Retrieval and Consultation Centre (MRaCC) was launched by the Central Area Health Service to provide a medical retrieval service for acute care cases, inter-hospital transfers and repatriation of patients back to country. MRaCC was designed to streamline communication processes during emergency retrievals; to bring the current system into line with national developments in Retrieval Medicine practice; and to enhance the quality of the retrieval service and decrease risk to acutely sick patients. This study will prospectively evaluate this model of retrieval service.

What this research will do: The aim of this study is to evaluate the timeliness, efficiency and impact of MRaCC. Specific objectives include (inter alia) assessing changes in the timeliness of specialist emergency advice and retrieval and the impact of the service on remote clinicians’ efficiency and patient outcomes.

A pre- and post-implementation design will compare routinely collected and linked retrieval, hospitalisation, primary care and financial data from three years prior to implementation and two years post-implementation of the service. Interviews will be conducted with key informants to understand perceptions of benefits of the service, and case studies/critical incidents reviewed to investigate impact on patient outcomes.

How this research will be used: Results from this study will be immediately applicable to the central Australia region in informing opportunities to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of its retrieval services. In addition, the study will generate new, rigorously derived knowledge about the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of an evolving model of emergency care with applicability to remote parts of Australia and other geographically and demographically similar countries.

Project details
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