Knowledge management and innovation in medicine: how to go beyond practice guidelines?

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Doctors’ decisions determine three quarters of health care costs and depend critically on medical knowledge [1]. However, medical knowledge is complex and doubles in amount every 20 years [2]. Once knowledge has been captured in some form such as a guideline, it can be managed in three related ways [3]:

1. Providing access to the knowledge in paper or electronic libraries [4], Web sites etc. so that doctors and others can find what they need rapidly and interpret it without error;

2. Disseminating knowledge that is of high quality and relevant to decision makers in newsletters, emails, printed educational material [5], verbal presentations [6] etc.

3. Using the knowledge as the substrate for “clinical innovation” methods such as reminders, audit and feedback, decision support systems [7] and other approaches such as outreach visits [8] to bring about changes in clinical practice.

This talk will discuss the evidence from systematic reviews which assessed the effectiveness of these methods for changing clinical practice, then will focus on clinical innovation methods. We will discuss barriers to change and the Clinical Innovation Toolkit / web portal being developed at the Knowledge Management Centre to assist local clinical teams or directorates. Clinical innovators who wish to pilot this toolkit are currently being recruited.

References

http://www.roysocmed.ac.uk/pub/bkwyatt.htm

See www.ucl.ac.uk/kmc for further details
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