

Clinical Audit

Under Section 15(1) of Statutory Instrument 478 of 2002 “The European Communities (Medical Ionising Radiation) Regulations” the Dental Council has, in consultation with the Faculty of Radiologists Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland, has adopted the following criteria for clinical audit:

What is Clinical Audit

1. Clinical audit is a quality improvement process that seeks to improve patient care and outcome through systematic review of care and comparison with explicit criteria followed by implementation of change.
2. In a clinical audit, aspects of the structure, processes and outcomes of care are selected and systematically reviewed against explicit criteria. Improvements are then instituted and the process re-evaluated, thus completing the audit cycle¹.
3. The primary rationale for audit is to determine that the dental radiographic practice under review meets a reasonable standard.

Criteria for Clinical Audit

An audit of a dental practice should encompass all radiological procedures including

- Selection Criteria
- Technique selection
- X-ray Equipment
- Patient Dose
- Processing
- Image Quality
- Image Interpretation
- Records
- Training
- Internal Audit

The audit process should involve a dental practitioner engaged in full time practice similar to the practice being audited. The advice of a medical physicist / radiation protection advisor may be appropriate. The audit process should include a report from the radiation protection advisor attached to the practice.

Dental practice is dramatically different in many ways from a medical radiological installation. The dental practitioner is typically the prescriber, practitioner and radiographer. The dentist may also be in work alone with no team support. It would be normal in a typical dental practice that the dentist would not write him/her self a prescription when the dentist makes the radiographic exposure in the same unit as the decision to prescribe. The clinical information and type of request does not need to be transferred to the radiological installation which in a dental practice is typically located chair side or in the next room.

