

Understanding and measuring safety in care homes

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Project Summary

Overall aims: Explore how the concept of safety is conceptualised and measured in older adult care homes and whether it is possible to use safety indicators from the health care sector for ongoing monitoring.

Phase 1: Scoping review and analysis of Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs).

Phase 2: Interviews with strategic stakeholders.

Phase 3: Interviews with care home managers and staff.

Safety Measurement and Monitoring Framework (SMMF) (Vincent et al. 2014)

Dimension	Question & definition
Harm	<p>Has patient care been safe in the past?</p> <p>The measurement of multiple types of harm, over time, to help assess whether care has been safe in the past.</p>
Reliability	<p>Are our clinical systems and processes reliable?</p> <p>Gauging the probability that a task, process, intervention or pathway will be carried out/followed as specified.</p>
Sensitivity to operations	<p>Is care safe today?</p> <p>This domain concentrates on the day to day, hour by hour and even minute by minute management of safety.</p>
Anticipation and preparedness	<p>Will care be safe in the future?</p> <p>This domain focuses on the identification of possible sources of future harm and working to become more resilient to them.</p>
Integration and learning	<p>Are we responding and improving?</p> <p>The development of systems to promote a cycle of learning and sharing from safety incidents, multiple sources of safety intelligence and insights developed through the other domains.</p>

Phase 1: Scoping review

- Aimed to identify older adult care home safety indicators used (internationally) to inform quality, safety improvement or decision-making and map them to the SMMF.
- 45 studies included.
- Rand S, Smith N, Jones K, et al Measuring safety in older adult care homes: a scoping review of the international literature *BMJ Open* 2021;11:e043206. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2020-043206.

Phase 1: Scoping review

- Range of available safety measures used for quality monitoring and improvement which cover all five domains of the SMMF. For example:
 - Harm: measurement of pressure ulcers, falls and pain.
 - Reliability: medication-related measures.
- Gaps include:
 - User experience of safety.
 - Psychological harm related to home environment.
 - Abusive and neglectful care.
- Some gaps relate to challenges and feasibility of measurement in the care home context.

Phase 1: Analysis of Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs)

- SARs: multi-agency reviews which seek to understand if relevant agencies and individuals involved could have acted differently and prevented harm or a death from taking place.
- Content reviewed to assess how well safety issues in older adult care homes map to healthcare derived safety concepts (the SMMF).
- 18 SARs (2015-8) relevant to older adult care homes reviewed.

Phase 1: Analysis of Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs)

- Dimensions of safety developed in health care are relevant to social care.
- But, older adult care home context needs to be considered. For example, the balance between physical and psychological harm.
- Factors influencing whether a care home is safe include factors outside of the home – such as staffing issues, occupational therapy or community psychiatric team.
- SMMF can be applied to a single institution, group or a system. There are challenges for measurement in a fragmented system.

Phase 2: Strategic stakeholder interviews:

- Aimed to understand the views of strategic social care professionals on the measurement of safety for monitoring, improvement and learning in older adult care homes.
- 18 interviews conducted:
 - Providers and provider associations.
 - CQC.
 - Local authorities.
 - NHS England, Digital, Improvement,
 - GPs.
- Thematic analysis.

Phase 2: Strategic stakeholder interviews

- Lots of different safety and safety-related data being collected.
- Broad range of what is defined as safety data.
- Examples of data being used for learning, such as thematic reviews by CQC and a provider mapping falls patterns. But:
 - Data often stays within organisations.
 - Sometimes used for blaming.
 - Sometimes not used at all.

Phase 3: Care home manager & staff interviews

- Aims to explore ways in which the concept of safety is interpreted and how safety data is collected and used in older adult care home.
- Data collection delayed due to COVID-19.
- Plan to interview 20 care home managers and 20 care workers
 - Currently 3 managers and 2 care workers have participated.
 - Fieldwork due to run until July 2022.

Concluding remarks

- Phase one suggests that health derived models are relevant to care home settings, but the different context might mean that the different dimensions might need to be defined or operationalised differently.
- How does that fit with the views and experience of:
 - Strategic stakeholders.
 - Care homes manager and staff.
 - Residents and their families.
 - Plan to have an additional phase on interviews.

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