



Clinical Quality Indicators for Acute Medical Units (AMUs)

1. All patients admitted to the AMU should have an early warning score measured upon arrival on the AMU.
2. All patients should be seen by a competent clinical decision maker within 4 hours* of arrival on the AMU who will perform a full assessment and instigate an appropriate management plan.
3. All patients should be reviewed by the admitting consultant physician or an appropriate speciality consultant physician within 14 hours of arrival on the AMU**.
4. All acute medical units should collect the following data:
 - Hospital mortality rates for all patients admitted via the AMU
 - Proportion of admitted patients who are discharged directly from the AMU
 - Proportion of patients discharged from the AMU who are readmitted to hospital within 7 days of discharge

** In most cases, clinical assessment and initiation of a management plan should be undertaken in much less time, and prioritised in accordance with clinical need; data collection should enable median and maximum times to be calculated for benchmarking.*

***Consultant review for patients arriving on the AMU between 08.00-18.00 should usually be undertaken within 8 hours of the patient's arrival on the AMU with provision for earlier review according to clinical need; data collection should enable median and maximum times to be calculated for benchmarking.*

Definitions

The acute medical unit (AMU) is a dedicated facility within a hospital that acts as the focus for acute medical care for patients that have presented as medical emergencies to hospitals or who have developed an acute medical illness while in hospital.

Early warning score (EWS): a physiologically based system of scoring patient's condition to help determine severity of illness and predict patient outcomes.

Competent clinical decision maker: competence in clinical decision making comes after a period of specific training to use the various tools of clinical assessment combined with appropriate use and interpretation of investigation. This facilitates the development of a rational differential diagnosis followed by prompt, safe and effective treatment of the patient. These skills are subject to assessment by more senior members of the team who have already developed these specific competencies.

Clinical assessment is an evaluation of a patient's physical condition and prognosis based on information gathered from physical and laboratory examinations and the patient's medical history. It is the process that is used to determine and document the cause of a patient's illness and to identify the appropriate treatment.

The management plan comprises of documentation of a relevant medical history and examination; documentation of a differential diagnosis and treatment plan; phlebotomy and radiograph requests where appropriate; completion of a drug and intravenous fluid chart to enable the administration of any immediate medications and fluids.

Consultant review should include further clinical assessment, review of any available blood test and radiograph results and revision of the management / treatment plan where appropriate.