

The Chain of Effect in Improving Healthcare Quality



Figure 2; Framework for Pursuing Perfection, Institute of Medicine's March Report 2001, Across the Quality Chasm, presented by Dr Donald Berwick IHI Conference November 2001

Again, through the work of the Institute of Medicine, USA and the Institute of Health Improvement Pursuing Perfection Programme, a framework for delivering high quality healthcare was developed (see figure 2), referred to as 'The Chain of Effect in Improving Healthcare Quality'.

This framework may serve as a model that UK health organisations could adopt to help develop the understanding of everyone at every level focusing outwards towards the patient to improve the quality of care.

At the pinnacle of the chain is **patient experience**. This is where quality is measured. The aim being to deliver timely, appropriate, safe, efficient and effective care tailored to individual needs. This is 'true north' for everyone in the system. This is the common purpose.

At the next level is the **micro system**. This is where the quality of care is created. Microsystems are GP practice teams, ward teams, out of hour's services. How these micro systems work together to ensure quality across boundaries is essential. Micro systems need to co operate for the benefit of the patient.

The third level is the **organisation**. Everything that the organisation does should be focused on enabling and supporting the micro systems achieving positive patient experience. Managing the interactions across boundaries, facilitating co operation and removing the barriers to delivering quality care and treatment. The organisation should enable open learning and sharing for improvement.

The final level is the **wider organisational context**. This is the level of world class commissioning, staff education, service regulation and accreditation, partnership working with local authorities and policy development. The Department of Health have clearly set their commitment to focus towards the pinnacle of the Chain of Effect and are openly urging organisations/ communities to do the same. It will be essential that this happens at all levels of the system