



AuSCR FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

Version 2.1: July 2022

1.0 Preamble

The Australian Stroke Clinical Registry (AuSCR) is open and responsive to feedback, complaints and suggestions from patients, carers, health professionals or administrators (e.g. ethics or governance officers) and any other individuals or organisations. This policy document provides guidelines for the notification, recording, responding and monitoring of feedback and complaints associated with the AuSCR. The AuSCR will always endeavor to seek resolutions that are satisfactory to all stakeholders in consultation with the appropriate governance committees.

1.1 Overview of the AuSCR

The AuSCR is an online dataset of information about the acute treatment of people with stroke or transient ischemic attack that has been collected and entered by participating hospitals across Australia. The AuSCR also contains patient health outcomes data collected three to six months after the time of hospital admission, via an approved survey (referred to as the Follow-up survey). The AuSCR office staff coordinate the distribution and collection of the survey data from eligible registrants via post, online methods or telephone interview. Registrants may choose to write additional details on their survey form, or contact the registry directly via telephone or email to express a complaint or provide feedback.

The AuSCR Consortium partners, (the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, the George Institute for Global Health, the Stroke Foundation and the Stroke Society of Australasia) do not directly provide health care or medical advice. Any registrant with a complaint or enquiry about medical or healthcare services is directed back to the relevant hospital, health service or medical practitioner for resolution as dictated by their own policies and procedures.

1.2 What are feedback and complaints?

Feedback is information (either positive or negative) about an individual's assessment of the AuSCR or the hospital in which they were treated. A complaint is feedback that is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern. While welcoming all types of feedback, AuSCR pays particular attention to formally addressing complaints. People may complain to prevent an incident from recurring, or to receive an apology.

In cases where feedback includes information deemed to be helpful for the relevant hospital, AuSCR staff will endeavour to share this with the relevant hospital site representative.

Feedback may relate to any aspect of the AuSCR, and the way in which patient data are collected, stored or accessed.

1.3 What is resolution?

Resolution is the desired outcome of having addressed a complaint to the satisfaction of the parties involved. It is a responsive process that seeks to address a person's concerns and accompanying emotions. The process involves complaints being heard, assessed, negotiated, responded to, and resolved to the best of AuSCR staff's ability.

1.4 Receiving complaints

All complaints about the AuSCR, its processes, staff or contractors should be directed to the AuSCR office via the 1800 free call number, email, post or via the comments box in follow-up survey. For registrants and their carers/family members, these details can be found on the Patient Information Sheet provided by hospitals and with follow-up survey. Contact details are also located on the AuSCR website.

1.5 Documenting complaints

All complaints are documented on the *AuSCR Communications Log* maintained by AuSCR staff. This database tracks the progress of the complaint and provides a record of any communication and actions taken in relation to the complaint, including dates of receipt and resolution.

1.6 Investigating and responding to complaints

All complaints will be acknowledged and reviewed as a matter of priority. AuSCR staff must determine whether the complaint relates to AuSCR or external health services. This categorisation will determine the appropriate investigation and resolution procedures.

- Registrants with a complaint relating to care received in a participating hospital will be referred directly to that hospital's patient liaison office for appropriate management. Depending on the nature of the complaint the AuSCR hospital site PI will be notified of the complaint via email.
- The AuSCR Program Manager or the AuSCR Data Custodian will oversee the management and response to all complaints directly associated with the AuSCR. All written complaints relating to the AuSCR will be investigated and addressed within 30 days of receipt. Written complaints will be addressed in writing with the complainant. Verbal complaints will be addressed according to the stated preference of the complainant, either verbally or in writing.

1.7 Improving AuSCR processes and procedures to avoid future complaints

The Chair of the AuSCR Management Committee will be asked to review complaints by the Program Manager or Data Custodian that are unresolved through the action of AuSCR staff or are complex because they involve multiple parties. The Management Committee Chair will advise on subsequent actions to be taken and determine whether AuSCR processes or procedures require modification to ensure the same problem(s) do not arise in future. The AuSCR Management Committee Chair may also consult with the Chair of the Steering Committee.

Changes to processes or procedures will be discussed and ratified by the AuSCR Management Committee. Should the resolution require a change to policies, the AuSCR Steering Committee will also need to review and ratify these.

Complaints and actions for resolution will be summarised annually for review by the AuSCR Steering Committee, along with correspondence about changes to AuSCR processes or procedures implemented as relevant.

1.8 Related AuSCR documents

- AuSCR Communications Log
- AuSCR Feedback and Complaints SOP