



**AUSTRALIAN STROKE
CLINICAL REGISTRY**
FACILITATING QUALITY

AuSCR FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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 with a specific focus on handling these from registrants. The AuSCR will always endeavor to seek resolutions that are satisfactory to all stakeholders in consultation with the appropriate governance committees or as outlined in formal agreements.

1.1 Overview of the AuSCR

The AuSCR is a clinical quality registry that includes information about the acute treatment of people with stroke 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, Stroke Foundation, Australian & New Zealand Stroke Organisation and Monash University, do not directly provide health care or medical advice.

1.2 Definition of feedback and complaints

Feedback is information (either positive or negative) about an individual's assessment of the AuSCR or the hospitals/health services 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 for various reasons including to prevent an incident from recurring or to seek an apology.

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

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

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 Seeking feedback

The AuSCR will periodically seek feedback from stakeholders including staff at participating hospitals, consumer representatives or jurisdictional representatives. This feedback may be obtained via surveys, governance committees, workshops or meetings. Feedback will be taken into consideration, and information from surveys will be summarised and presented to AuSCR governance committee/s to consider improvements to the registry.

1.5 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.

1.6 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.

1.7 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 the 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. Complaints may also be sent to jurisdictional clinical leads for concerns raised about hospitals within their state.
- The AuSCR Program Manager or the AuSCR Executive Director 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.
- If a complaint cannot be resolved through the action of AuSCR staff, or are complex because they involve multiple parties, the Chair of the AuSCR Advisory Board and/or Operational and Quality Improvement Committee will be consulted to determine appropriate action for resolution.
- Complaints from other stakeholders will be managed by the AuSCR Executive Director in consultation with the Chair of the AuSCR Advisory Board and/or Operational and Quality Improvement Committee, as required.

1.8 Improving AuSCR processes and procedures to avoid future complaints

The AuSCR Advisory Board and Operational and Quality Improvement Committee will be notified of complaints on a regular basis as agreed by the Advisory Board and documented in the Standard Operating Procedures for handling feedback and complaints.

If any complaint raises issues with AuSCR processes or procedures, the AuSCR Executive Director and/or Program Manager will discuss these with the Chair of the Operational and Quality Improvement Committee or Chair of the Advisory Board depending on the type and nature of the feedback or complaint. As part of the resolution process, a determination will be made on whether AuSCR processes or procedures require modification to ensure the same problem(s) do not arise in future.

Changes to processes or procedures will be discussed and ratified in consultation with the AuSCR Operational and Quality Improvement Committee. Should the resolution require a change to policies, the AuSCR Advisory Board will review and ratify the amended policy/ies.

1.9 Related AuSCR documents

- AuSCR Communications Log
- AuSCR Feedback and Complaints SOP