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PRESS RELEASE

NICE consults on new Quality Standards

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has launched a consultation on its draft quality standards for the treatment of dementia and stroke; once published the new standards will represent a benchmark to inform aspirations for high quality care across the NHS. The consultation, which began on 27 November, is part of a pilot programme of work, which will include further topics on venous thromboembolism prevention and specialist neonatal care which are due to be released as drafts in the New Year.

NICE quality standards are a set of specific, concise statements, including suggestions for measures, which act as markers of high quality, cost effective care across a treatment pathway or a clinical area. The primary purpose of NICE quality standards is to provide patients and the public, health and social care professionals, commissioners and service providers with a clear definition of what high quality care looks like. Once published, NICE quality standards will be a vital reference point for NHS Quality Accounts and World Class Commissioning. NICE quality standards differ from the Regulation Requirements for Registration that will be assessed by the Care Quality Commission and are about ensuring care delivered meets essential standards of quality and safety. However, they are likely to be used nationally as part of the Commission's assessment processes in some form, for example in special reviews and studies and the CQC's wider regulatory activities.

Each of the draft quality standards have been developed by an independent Topic Expert Group made up of 10-15 individuals with relevant clinical, public health, commissioning and lay expertise in the treatment of either dementia or stroke. Stakeholders, healthcare professionals and members of the public now have the opportunity to comment on the draft quality standards, which are available on the

NICE website (www.nice.org.uk), until 15 January 2009. This consultation, augmented by a field testing process, is of key importance to ensure the final set of statements reflects the key priorities for high quality care in stroke and dementia.

Val Moore, NICE Implementation Director, said: “The draft NICE quality standards provide an early version of what we believe high quality care looks like for the treatment of dementia and stroke. Once published the NICE quality standards will provide the NHS and the public with a clear aspiration, which can be used to assess existing performance and inform future service improvements. Our focus has been to distil from relevant NICE guidance and other accredited sources of guidance a list of the main statements that reflect a high quality service in a way that is relevant to patients, professionals, service providers and commissioners. We therefore encourage all those groups with experience in the treatment of dementia and stroke to send in their comments via the NICE website.”

Throughout the consultation period NICE will also be working with the NHS and social care stakeholders to explore the feasibility of the standards and inform the selection of the best statements and measures. This work, along with the more general comments received, will be fed back to both of the Topic Expert Groups at their next meeting due to take place early next year.

Ends

Notes to Editors

About NICE

1. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health.
2. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
 - **public health** – guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health for those working in the NHS, local authorities and the wider public and voluntary sector
 - **health technologies** – guidance on the use of new and existing medicines, treatments and procedures within the NHS
 - **clinical practice** – guidance on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS.

About NICE Quality Standards

3. NICE is currently developing Quality Standards for the treatment of dementia, stroke, neonatal care and venous thromboembolism (VTE). Consultation and field testing for the two remaining Quality Standards on neonatal care and VTE will be carried out early next year. Further information, including copies of the draft standards for dementia and stroke, are available on the NICE website:
<http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutnice/qualitystandards/qualitystandardsconsultation.jsp>.

4. An interim process guide which describes the pilot development process for NICE quality standards for the first year, until April 2010, is currently available at:
<http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutnice/qualitystandards/?domedia=1&mid=61B9F800-19B9-E0B5-D4F3DDD067C7B452>.