

How can prospective national audit drive quality improvement in the community setting?

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Background:

National registries and audit programmes are recognised methods of assessing quality of healthcare¹. The Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme (SSNAP) is a prospective audit of processes and outcomes for all stroke patients in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Evidence suggests it has been successful in driving quality improvement for hospital-based care².

Challenges exist in collecting national data beyond the hospital setting. Community services are diverse, with variations in commissioning, eligibility and staffing³. This raises questions as to how best to capture multidisciplinary team activity and how this relates to patient outcomes⁴. Findings from a previous online survey were used as a framework for interviews to explore these questions.



Research questions:

- What is the influence of organisational culture on engagement?
- What is the impact of combined roles on participation?
- What challenges are posed by the online platform?
- How is data from the audit perceived and used?

Methods:

Realist qualitative interviews⁵ were undertaken with stakeholders, recruited through clinical networks and social media. Due to contextual differences in health and social care between the nations, this study focusses on England, looking for transferable learning. These collaborative, semi-structured interviews were completed online using MS Teams™.

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Findings:

Representation was achieved from a broad-spectrum of stakeholders across the post-acute stroke care pathway (n=20).

Four key components were identified as supporting audit to drive quality improvement in the community setting. Each dependent on a number of factors that contributed to success.

Key Component:

1. Organisational Culture

An organisational culture that supports the active engagement of rehabilitation teams in the stroke audit

2. Data extraction

The ability to extract data easily and efficiently from feedback reports, to inform strategic conversations such as commissioning

3. Record Management

Managing patient records effectively so that data submitted is complete and accurate across the pathway

4. Using data

Confidence in using audit feedback to inform quality improvement initiatives

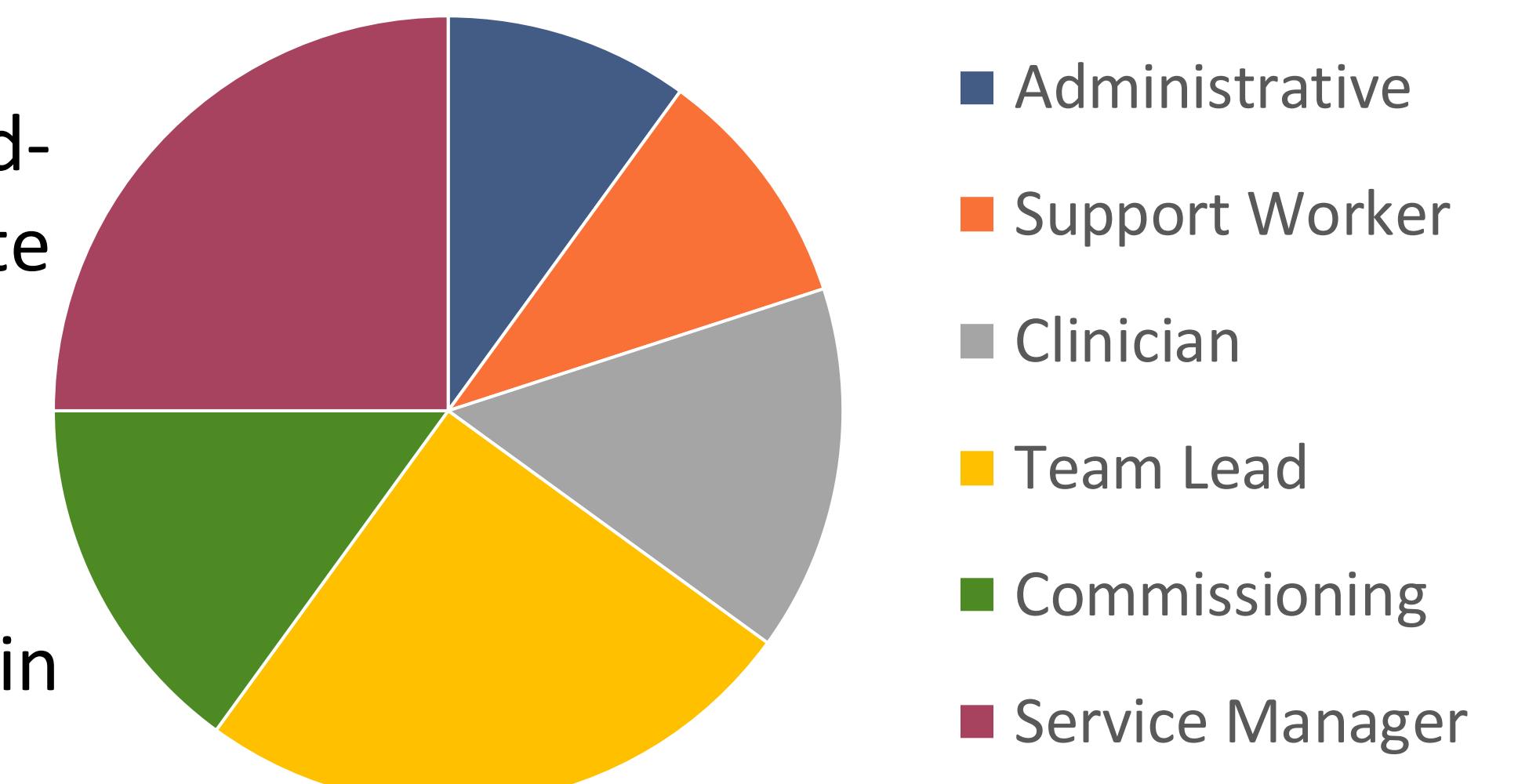
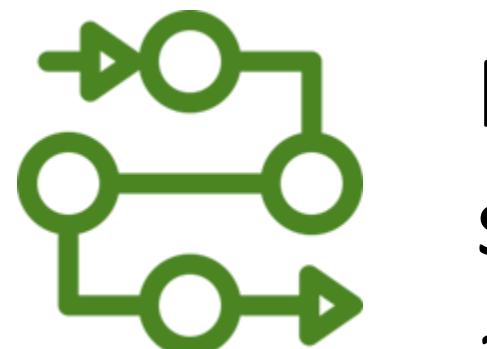


Fig. 1: Participant role

Conclusions:

- Multidisciplinary audits are complex, and stakeholders have diverse priorities.
- There needs to be a shared and strategic understanding of the purpose of audit across the multiple components of the pathway.

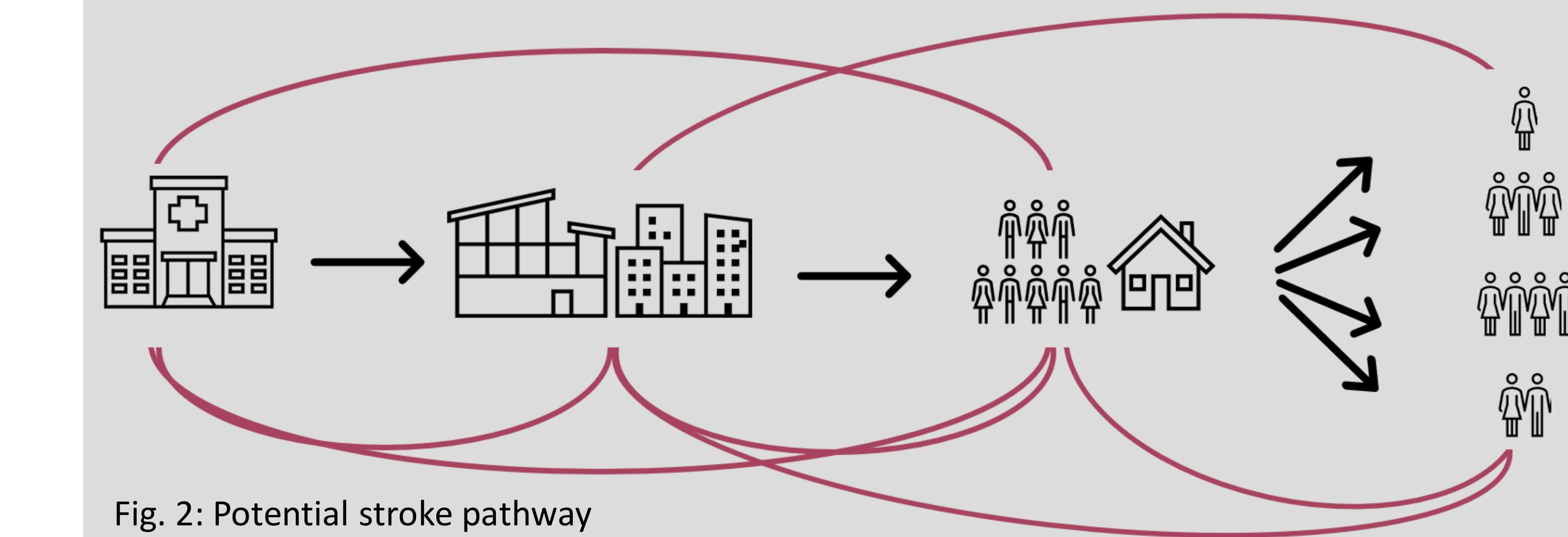


Fig. 2: Potential stroke pathway

- Those who actively engaged e.g., collaborated to transfer records appropriately or supplemented feedback with local data, experienced greater success in using the audit to drive change.
- Efforts are required from rehabilitation teams, provider organisations and SSNAP to realise the potential of national clinical audit as a tool for quality improvement in the community.
- Investment is required, including administrative support on the ground, building networks between services, engaging leadership interest from within the organisation and an audit programme receptive to stakeholder feedback.

References:

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