



The College of Emergency Medicine

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CEM Statement for Fellows & Members on the Francis Inquiry Report

What is the Francis report?

In 2010, the government commissioned Robert Francis QC to [report](#) on failings in care in Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust. What was clear was that there had been a significant, and persistent breakdown in standards of care including patients left in their own faeces, so thirsty they had to drink from flower vases and suffering without pain relief. Such occurrences had become normal practice... the culture appeared to have become very damaged and staff accepted poor practice as something that could not be changed.

Why is it important?

The College believes that patients have a right to good quality care and much of the business of the College is focused on ensuring emergency physicians are able to deliver this care. However, as staff who deliver care at the time of most urgent need emergency physicians have a unique role in both ensuring care is appropriate but also taking action when they identify poor care. Individual emergency physicians need to ask themselves if all the care they have seen delivered (or delivered themselves) has always been good enough?

Francis wants to change that... so should we. We need to have a culture in the NHS where all staff are committed to delivering the highest quality patient care, and work towards the elimination of poor care. Whilst the Board of a hospital are ultimately responsible – we are all individually responsible for developing a culture of compassion, caring and excellence and holding others to account when this is not the case.

What can you do?

1. Speak out

If you see something that isn't right – start speaking up and speak up until someone listens. It is often easier to comply with or ignore poor care than to highlight it.

2. Take action

Don't just go through the motions of audits, or quality improvement. Having identified something that needs doing - report it, talk to your manager, or consultant, and contribute to making a difference. Your energy will make things happen and help to embed change in our daily work. Do not accept what is clearly abnormal.

3. Lead

Set the right example, create the culture you want to work within and one you want your patients to be treated in. We have a responsibility to patients and our colleagues; and we all have a role in improving the future of patient care.

The report itself can be found at:

<http://www.midstaffpublicinquiry.com/report>

the College values can be found at:

<http://www.collemergencymed.ac.uk/College/Membership/College%20Regulations/default.asp>

Excellence in Emergency Care