UTILIZATION REVIEW

In the public health sector very few patients pay for the care they receive, the medical staff treating them have little insight into the cost of the service they provide and hospital administrators need to ensure that the cost of this care is neither excessive nor inappropriate.

What is utilisation review?
Utilization review is the term used for monitoring the appropriateness of management of patients admitted to a hospital.

Why is utilisation review important?
Appropriateness of hospitalization is judged on two grounds:
- Severity of illness, i.e., does this warrant admission
- Intensity of service, i.e., the service needed is only available at this level.

How is the review done?
Utilization reviews are usually conducted:
- by a third party not directly involved in the care of the patient or payment for the services
- retrospectively following the discharge of the patient
- as a folder/record review

What about a ‘Treatment Review’?
A treatment review is a modified utilization review that has been developed to assess the appropriateness of the care we offer to babies and children in the neonatal nurseries and children’s wards of hospitals in Area 2.

To facilitate this process proforma documents have been prepared for the review of both neonatal and paediatric care.

Who should do the review?
Responsibility for undertaking the treatment review lies with the doctor running the nursery or children’s ward in each hospital.

What process should be followed?
- Aim to review one or two case records each week
- Review the record at the time of discharging the patient
- Use the proforma provided
- Record patient details at the top of the form
- Review the clinical record day-by-day indicating on the proforma which modalities of care, investigations or treatment were provided each day
- Review the completed proforma to identify possible inappropriate care (over or or investigation or treatment, prolonged admission etc.)
- Space is provided at the bottom of the document for a comment on the appropriateness of the care or to justify the care provided (see example)

Feedback
- Essential, to ensure quality improvement from the process
- Must be to all staff working in the ward/unit
- Should occur monthly as part of the Unit Management Process