

# Patient Safety

## Improving Health Care Delivery Through Research on Patient Safety

Westat partners with clients to conduct innovative research that drives transformation in health care delivery while improving patient safety and patients' experiences with health care.

### EXPERTISE

Westat offers expertise in patient safety research:

- Program evaluation using qualitative and quantitative methods
- Environmental scans and white papers
- Survey and measure development and testing
- Multimode data collection
- Data analysis and statistical modeling
- Data benchmarking and visualization
- Technical assistance and support
- Development of tools, resources, and products
- Promotion and dissemination of research findings and tools
- Learning collaboratives involving health care organizations, stakeholders, patients, and family caregivers
- Design and analysis of patient safety event reporting and surveillance systems



### SELECTED PROJECTS

#### Surveys on Patient Safety Culture and Patient Experience

Westat supports two programs funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ):

- The Surveys on Patient Safety Culture (SOPS™) ask providers and staff in hospitals, medical offices, and other health care facilities about how well their organization's culture supports patient safety.
- The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) surveys ask patients about their care from health plans, medical offices, and other health care facilities.

Westat supports these programs by:

- Developing and pilot testing new surveys and items, including a Health Information Technology Patient Safety Supplemental Item Set and survey items on diagnostic error
- Managing benchmarking databases to help health care organizations compare their survey results
- Producing tools and resources and providing technical assistance to support survey users
- Analyzing survey data and linking the data to adverse events and other quality outcomes

Health care organizations and researchers use the CAHPS and SOPS surveys to identify strengths and areas for improvement and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement initiatives.

### Patient Safety and Home-Based Care

For the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)/ National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF), supported by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Westat conducted an environmental scan on patient safety in the home setting. The analysis identified key issues, strategies, and research needs related to improving patient safety in the home. Westat conducted in-depth interviews with subject matter experts, produced a summary report, and presented findings on key safety issues, model programs, and relevant tools at U.S. and international patient safety conferences.

IHI/NPSF used the environmental scan as background for an expert panel to discuss priorities concerning patient safety in the home. Westat also developed descriptions of eight exemplary programs designed to improve patient safety in the home, which are highlighted on the IHI/NPSF web site.

### Analysis and Classification of Health Information Technology-Related Patient Safety Events

Westat worked with two AHRQ-designated Patient Safety Organizations (PSOs) to analyze data from their safety event reporting systems. The analysis used taxonomies to classify health information technology (health IT)-related safety events and compared them to non-health IT events in terms of type, harm, preventability, patients, and contributing factors. Westat validated the classifications by comparing them to a manual review of safety event narratives.

Medication-related events were the most common health IT-related event type. Many of these events involved issues related to communication, availability and accuracy of data, patient identification, and interfaces between different software systems.



### Unintended Consequences of Health Information Technology on Patient Safety

For the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, Westat and the American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA) established a technical expert panel and two work groups to identify and address unintended consequences that may result from the use of health IT and health information exchange (HIE).

Westat worked in conjunction with health IT experts to develop the SAFER Guides, video, and web site (<http://www.healthit.gov/safer/safer-guides>). The SAFER Guides, a set of recommended practices based on the best available evidence, were designed to help health care organizations conduct self-assessments to optimize the safety and safe use of electronic health records (EHRs). The project developed several other resources to assist provider organizations and clinicians in safely implementing EHRs and HIE.

## OUR PATIENT SAFETY TEAM LEADERS

**Lois Olinger, MCP**  
Vice President

**Joann Sorra, PhD**  
Associate Director

**Russ Mardon, PhD**  
Associate Director

**Deborah Carpenter, RN, MSN, CPPS**  
Senior Study Director

[www.westat.com](http://www.westat.com)



An Employee-Owned Research Corporation®

1600 Research Boulevard  
Rockville, MD 20850

[marketing@westat.com](mailto:marketing@westat.com)  
301-251-1500