Creating a National Research Agenda for Improvement Science
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**Problem:** Although examples of excellence in quality and patient safety exist, without an infrastructure in place to link improvement and research activities, we will not come to understand which improvement strategies are widely effective and which are not. A clear focus on research priorities will assure success.

**Evidence:** Quality improvement and patient safety are high priorities yet insufficient progress has been made in improvement science. Improvement projects are often focused at the microsystem level, precluding sufficient data for rigor and generalizable conclusions. Progress in the field is hampered by the lack of a national research agenda to systematically build knowledge around priorities.

**Strategy:** The NIH-funded Improvement Science research Network (ISRN) is a national network for improvement and translational science. The ISRN is launching a relevant, robust program of multi-site research to improve patient care, outcomes, and safety within systems contexts. Over three months, academic and practice scholars and leaders considered information from multiple sources, including a national survey (n=560), environmental scans, and their own wisdom, to come to consensus around the ISRN research agenda.

**Practice Change:** In developing the ISRN research agenda, the expert panel created a paradigm shift from classic research to studies of improvement. This represents the first national agenda for the study of improvement strategies.

**Evaluation:** Response to the ISRN survey was deemed as representative of the targeted interprofessional group thought to be leaders in improvement studies. The environmental scans located research agendas primarily about patient safety. The ISRN research agenda will inform the selection of a demonstration project to test the infrastructure for implementing multi-site studies.

**Results:** The expert panel deliberations led to development of a national improvement science research agenda.

**Recommendations:** The ISRN is seeking partnerships with academicians and clinicians in acute-care settings to collaborate in improvement studies.

**Lessons Learned:** Using multiple data sources, importantly the deliberations of the ISRN Steering Council, led to a consensus on a national research agenda in improvement science.

**Bibliography**


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