

Differentiating QI/QA from Research

| POINTS TO CONSIDER | RESEARCH | QA/QI |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Purpose | To test a hypothesis OR establish clinical practice standards where none are accepted | To assess or promptly improve a process, program, or system; OR improve performance as judged by accepted/established standards |
| Starting Point | To answer a question or test a hypothesis | To improve performance |
| Design | Typically a fixed protocol with fixed interventions that are not revised as data is collected | Typically interventions are adjusted based on data collected if quality goal is not being attained |
| Benefits | Designed to contribute to generalizable knowledge and may or may not benefit subjects | Designed to promptly benefit a process, program, or system and may or may not benefit patients |
| Risks/Burdens | May place subjects at risk and stated as such | By design, does not increase patient's risk, with exception of possible privacy/confidentiality concerns |
| Data Collection | Systematic data collection | Systematic data collection |
| End Point | Answer a research question | Promptly improve a program/process/system, typically has a quality goal to measure improvement |
| Testing/Analysis | Statistically prove or disprove a hypothesis | Compare a program/process/system to an established set of standards |