Overview and Background

In accordance with Qatar’s National Vision 2030 and the National Health Strategy (NHS) 1 and 2, the development of National Clinical Guidelines (NCG) represents a significant opportunity to enhance and advance approaches towards better health, better care and better value. Through this initiative high quality evidence-based guidelines have been localized and made relevant to the culture, customs, practice and formulary of Qatar, an initiative which the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) believes has great potential in driving sustainable improvements in the quality of care at the national level. The NCG team work in collaboration with representative from various MOPH projects/strategies with an overarching goal of delivering optimal, state-of-the-art healthcare services by setting care standards to guide the care delivery process.
The majority of healthcare practitioners working in Qatar have been trained overseas. As we draw upon the advantages brought forward by the diverse set of specialized skills, languages and perspectives in patient and peer interactions, it is also of utmost importance to acknowledge that this may innately contribute to a significant variation in the standard of care provided.

The National Clinical Guidelines project started in April 2015. Initially, through consultations with stakeholders, the MOPH NCG team mapped the processes for guideline development and localization by different organizations across Qatar’s health economy. The gaps between current practice in Qatar and the international best practice approach were identified and accordingly a model for guideline development was agreed and established. Analysis of healthcare data provided by stakeholder organizations helped identify priority long-term conditions, causes for admission to secondary care and conditions presenting for readmission within 30 days after discharge. To achieve the best possible health outcomes and drive optimized levels of care across Qatar, the MOPH worked with local providers to develop NCG for the most common conditions identified during the analysis phase. By garnering stakeholder expertise support, the NCG team was simultaneously stimulating a sense of ownership amongst end-users, this in turn, was expected to play a major role in adoption of the content by these providers and their peers in their daily practice.

To ensure maximum adoption, the MOPH NCG team continues to work closely with the Ministry’s Information Communication Technology (ICT) team to facilitate and support accessibility to the guidelines and presenting them in an easy to consult...
format accessible via the MOPH website. To further, encourage adoption, a
countrywide change management program that reaches out to end users such as healthcare providers and payers is underway.

Throughout the initial phases of the project the MOPH NCG team underwent activities to help build internal capacity, vital for facilitation of ongoing NCG development beyond the life of the project. A process for ongoing support, development, maintenance and evaluation of the process activities, NCG and Pathways has also been put in place.

The first batch of Guidelines and Pathways were published on December 15, 2016, roll-out and implementation of further Guidelines followed shortly thereafter.

MOPH

• Nominates members of the National Guideline and Pathway Committee (NGPC);
• Works with NGPC to support all their activities;
• Works to ensure that activity goals are clearly defined, budget and resources correctly allocated, monitors and documents activities, liaise with all relevant parties etc.

National Guideline and Pathway Committee (NGPC)

• Ensures GDG members are carefully selected based on the guideline topic and expertise;
• Ensures no conflict of interest among Guideline Development Group (GDG) members;
• Reviews and approves proposed prioritization of topics;
• Nominates appropriate GDG members;
• Reviews and approves National Guidelines and Pathways.
Guideline Development Groups (GDG)

- Meet to review baseline Map of Medicine Referral Guides and MCG Guidelines;
- Review feedback and approval of the modified Guidelines and Pathway;
- Modify guidance to the Qatari context.

Stakeholder Representative Group (SRG)

- Stakeholder representatives from the different healthcare organizations, within Qatar, who have the potential to be Engagement Champions;
- SRGs continue to be instrumental for the success of the NCG development as they work closely with the team on decisions related to communication goals, tools, methods and messages focused on educating and updating end-users and the public;
- Review and approve preliminary messages and help the NCG team in determining their mode of dissemination, streamlining the process by coordinating / linking the NCG team with leaders across the various facilities.

Guideline Development Process

1. Baseline guideline development: To ensure use of reliable evidence and to substantially reduce time and effort involved in assessing primary and secondary literature directly from evidence databases, high impact guidance from Hearst Health was deployed. These baseline guidelines are based on Map of Medicine Referral Guides and MCG content that was localized to the Qatar National context (Please see Fig. 1);
2. Baseline guideline disseminated to GDG members prior to the NCG workshop;
3. Full day workshops to review baseline organized by the MOPH for GDG members. MOPH staff facilitate the workshops but do not influence guideline content. GDGs were encouraged to share relevant guidelines already utilized at their work place or from the international literature as the workshops are seen as an opportunity for subject matter experts to examine and discuss all the relevant information so that the final content may incorporate the necessary information need for a high quality localized guideline;
4. Post workshop:
   a. Baseline guidelines modified based on workshop feedback
b. GDG review and finalize draft National Guideline in preparation for NGPC approval  
c. NGPC reviews and approves draft National Guideline  
d. Guideline published to an open-access portal accessible via an MOPH website link.

Fig. 1 Summary of the National Clinical Guideline Development Process
Pathway Development Process

1. Specialized Editorial Team review the National Clinical Guideline;
2. Clinical Care Pathway drafted using Map Management Suite software;
3. GDG review the Pathway;
4. Pathway iteratively modified by GDG in response to feedback;
5. NGPC reviews and approves Pathway;
6. Pathways are published to an open-access portal accessible via an MOPH website link.

Communication Plan

The communication plan continues to be a critical component throughout the NCG development as it continues to guide the messages disseminated to the stakeholders. The collective and coordinated efforts of the stakeholders and especially the stakeholder representatives group (SRG) has been an instrumental pillar in the success of this initiative as they provide support for the development and review of messages for end-users, whilst also suggesting/facilitating modes for communicating these messages to the wider population. Below are some examples of communication activities that were established:

- Established a Clinical Guideline MOPH web page which is being updated on a regular basis;
- Stakeholder Representative Meetings;
- Over 50 awareness raising sessions conducted in facilities across Qatar;
- Collected information from 2 surveys:
  - Survey # 1: Educational Needs Assessment
  - Survey # 2: Feedback on Access to the Launched Guidelines & Pathways;
- Consultation with experts from other NHS Strategies;
- Posts on social media;
- Publications: regular presence in the NHS Matters, national media outlets;
- International and local presence in conferences: ISQua, WISH, IHI, International Forum on Quality and Safety in Healthcare
Monitoring and Evaluation

Under this activity, data collection and analysis of the following is undertaken:

- Map of Medicine usage reports – metrics of microsite use;
- Number of attendees at communications events – engagement of SRG’s;
- Feedback ratings from communications events – evaluations of feedback and action plan development;
- Awareness surveys sent by email address to all physicians registered with the QCHP – including updates on the initiative;
- Email metrics – from email surveys etc;
- Social media interactions – end user engagement;
- Post implementation framework development: Two frameworks (Clinical governance and Outcomes Improvement) are currently available in draft form, both are expected to enhance NCG development governance and system performance monitoring of NCG uptake and adoption.

User Manual and Quick Reference Guide

A comprehensive User Manual and Quick Reference Guide has been developed and made available to end users on the MOPH website. The components of the User Manual are as follows:

- Pilot implementation of National Guidelines and Pathways
- Implementation and roll out of National Guidelines and Pathways

Information Communication Technology

Information Communication Technology (ICT) is essential to support accessibility and dissemination of National Clinical Guidelines. Users using Cerner may choose to access the pathways at the point of care utilizing the Cerner Map of Medicine integration. Institutions that do not use Cerner will be able to access Guidelines and Pathways directly via the MOPH website.
To access the National Clinical Guidelines:
https://www.moph.gov.qa/clinical-guidelines

To access the National Clinical Pathways:
https://www.moph.gov.qa/national-clinical-guidelines or directly

from Map of Medicine at
http://meapp.mapofmedicine.com/mom/251/index.html
**Achievements**

- Completed 60 guideline development workshops
- Published the Clinical Guidelines and Pathways
- Drafted Outcome Improvement and Governance frameworks
- Established a database of proposed future guideline topics
- Outreach visits to over 50 facilities across Qatar;
- Established an accredited continuous medical education program for NCG in HMC;
- Incorporated NCG within PHCC’s inter-professional continuing medical education program;
- Collaborated with the World Health Organization (WHO) in assessing the guideline development process.

**Moving Forward and Sustainability**

The NCG team will continue:
- Working to ensure that guidelines and pathways are maintained and up-to-date;
- Introducing more comprehensive processes for optimal monitoring of both process and outcome indicators;
- Clinical guideline and pathway development, dissemination and review;
- Exploring possibility of working with a broader range of stakeholders and experts to continually seek, assess and improve upon the guideline development activities.