

## Cardiac arrests - a thing of the past?

Over the last 20 years rapid response systems (RRSs) have been introduced in the majority of hospitals around the world. Before they existed, many patients would slowly deteriorate and of those, many would either die or have a cardiac arrest. The concept of RRSs is based on intervening early before these serious events occur. In many cases, the RRS has replaced or merged with cardiac arrest teams.

The concept is easy. **RECOGNISE** deteriorating patients **EARLY** and **RESPOND** to them **RAPIDLY** with staff who have appropriate skills. As a result, the usual medical hierarchies and rigid silos are ignored and the patient is put first, at the centre of a new way of organising health care in our hospitals.

Patients are **RECOGNISED** simply by abnormal vital sign readings on the chart at the end of the patient's bed. Once signs are seriously abnormal, the bedside nurse immediately calls for skilled assistance. A bit like the cardiac arrest team but earlier. A nurse can also call for urgent assistance if he/she is **CONCERNED**. In some hospitals visitors can also call for urgent help if they are seriously worried about their patients.

Rapid response systems are now an integral part of hospitals around the world. In hospitals where they have been introduced, patient deaths and cardiac arrests have been reduced by approximately one-third. There are few other interventions in the hospital of hospitals that have had such a dramatic impact.

### Publication

[Rapid response systems.](#)

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