

Comparing Quality Improvement, Research Projects, Clinical Redesign, and Implementation

	Summary	Guiding Question	Focus	Scope	Goal	Methods	How They Work Together
Quality Improvement (QI)	Localised, practical approach to improving specific care delivery processes.	<i>How can we make our systems and processes work better for patients?</i>	Incremental changes to local healthcare processes to improve efficiency, effectiveness, patient safety and other desired results.	Context-specific, targeting performance within a particular setting.	To improve local processes, performance, and outcomes in a defined healthcare context.	Continuous cycle of improvement, focusing on processes and metrics, using structured, systematic approaches like the PDSA cycle.	QI provides structured methods to test and refine changes.
Research projects	Designed to generate new knowledge, test hypotheses or validate existing theories, as a foundation for scientific advancement.	<i>What is the impact of a specific intervention, factor or phenomenon on defined outcomes?</i>	Advancing knowledge through systematic inquiry, including hypothesis testing, or exploring new methodologies.	Broad or specific, depending on the study design – can examine populations, interventions, systems or experiences with the aim of producing evidence that extends beyond the local setting.	To expand the scientific evidence base and generate insights that inform practice, policy or further research.	Rigorous scientific designs – experimental, quasi-experimental, observational, qualitative, or mixed methods approaches. <i>Note: Implementation research is a type of study design used in research projects.</i>	Research provides the evidence base that implementation projects adapt and apply.
Clinical redesign	Structured approach to reshaping healthcare processes and systems to improve efficiency, safety, and patient-centred outcomes.	<i>How can healthcare processes and systems, be redesigned to deliver safer, more efficient, and patient-centred care?</i>	Improving patient outcomes, care quality, safety and efficiency through streamlined processes and reduced inefficiencies.	Applicable across all healthcare settings and specialties, from system-wide reforms to focused service improvements, and can address both clinical and administrative workflows.	To transform systems and processes to strengthen healthcare quality, system efficiency and sustainability.	Systematic methodologies (e.g. PDSA cycle, Lean methodology, Six Sigma); process mapping; technology integration; benchmarking and data analysis.	Clinical redesign embeds policy, processes and innovations into workflows and clinical care delivery.
Implementation	Systematic process to ensure research is used in practice to improve health outcomes.	<i>How can we ensure research evidence is used in everyday practice?</i>	Applying and adapting research evidence across the continuum – from knowledge creation to implementation and evaluation – to improve health outcomes.	Broad, system-level activity involving various stakeholders including clinicians, policymakers and patients.	To ensure research evidence informs practice to achieve better health outcomes.	Iterative process using strategies for developing, synthesising, disseminating, and implementing research evidence.	Implementation ensures changes are grounded in the best available evidence.

Implementation theories and frameworks can be used to inform all the approaches above.