

Research vs. Quality Improvement Activities

	Research	Quality Improvement Activities
Purpose	To test a hypothesis; or to establish clinical practice standards where they are not already accepted	To assess or improve a process, program, or system; or to improve performance as judged by established or accepted standards
Starting Objective	To answer a question or test a hypothesis	To improve performance
Benefits	Knowledge sought may or may not benefit current subjects, but may benefit future patients	Knowledge sought directly benefits a program, process, or system, and may or may not directly benefit patients
Risks/Burdens	May put subjects at risk	Does not increase risk to patients, with the exception of possible concerns for their privacy and confidentiality
Data Collection	Systematic data collection	Systematic data collection
Outcome Objective	Answer a research question; generalize findings	Improve a program, process, or system
Testing/Analysis	Statistically prove or disprove hypothesis	Compare a program, process, or system to an established set of standards or performance metrics