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SAVING LIVES WITH TIMELY INFORMATION

ANZICS uses SAS for accurate reporting

Industry

Healthcare

Business Issue

In order to provide member Intensive Care Units (ICUs) with accurate and up-to-date reporting facilities, ANZICS identified the need to implement a Web-based portal for self-service reporting. This would also bring about significant reductions in the administrative effort required on the part of ANZICS to print, collate and mail hard copy reports.

Solution

In partnership with SAS Australia and New Zealand, ANZICS implemented a data entry and reporting portal based on the SAS® Enterprise Business Intelligence solution.

Benefits

The SAS solution has given ICUs throughout Australia and New Zealand the ability to obtain timely reports that provide an accurate view of their performance in numerous key areas. The result is an ongoing improvement in the overall level of care afforded to ICU patients.

Maintaining a world leadership position in hospital intensive care services has been the stated – and achieved – goal of the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society (ANZICS) since its founding in 1975. A not-for-profit and wholly self-funding organisation, ANZICS has established itself as the peak professional and advocacy body for medical practitioners specialising in the treatment and management of critically ill patients in public and private hospitals; and playing a role in this over recent years continues to be a data entry and reporting portal based on the SAS® Enterprise Business Intelligence solution.

Monitoring performance

One of the most important benefits afforded to Intensive Care Units (ICUs) throughout Australia and New Zealand has been the dramatic improvement in the ability to gain accurate reporting on the performance levels across numerous areas.

Associate Professor Graeme Hart, Chair of the ANZICS Database Management Committee, explains, “Very few ICUs in Australia and New Zealand have the necessary funding to support internal data collection and reporting for unit performance measures; and these are absolutely critical!”

Partly in response to that need, since 1992 ANZICS has been collecting data from its ICU members and providing those members with a valuable data collection and reporting

facility that would otherwise have been unavailable. While the database commenced with only four intensive care units contributing, recognition of the enormous value of its work has seen that number grow to 120 ICUs in Australia and a further 11 in New Zealand. As a result, the ANZICS database is increasing at a rate of 70,000 admission records per year, with the number of records currently standing at well over 600,000.

In addition the Paediatric Intensive Care Registry with over 10 years of resource and staffing information on all Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Units is being converted and loaded onto the web portal.



As well as the individual ICUs, the SAS solution is providing the ANZICS committee and its two affiliated research groups – ANZICS Research Centre and ANZICS Clinical Trials Group – the ability to gain valuable insight into the state of Australian and New Zealand intensive care.

“By using the SAS solution we are able to see immediately if a certain Unit’s performance appears to be less than expected,” A/Prof. Hart says. “With that information we can then help the ICU determine precisely what it is that is causing the change in performance – such things as checking data quality,

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reviewing bed and staffing numbers or other resources – then address those issues before they have potentially disastrous results in patient care.

“Furthermore, with the ability to draw on nearly ten years worth of admissions data, we can use the SAS solution’s analytical and reporting functionality to gain valuable insight into the state of Australian and New Zealand intensive care.”

Self-service streamlining

As the demands on ANZICS database staff continued to increase, the organisation recognised the need to deliver a portal for ICU personnel to generate on-demand reports. In order to meet that demand, ANZICS implemented SAS® Web Report Studio, a solution designed specifically for on-line self-service reporting.

According to ANZICS Project Manager, Ms Carol George, the SAS solution’s portal-based reporting has enormous potential for ICUs to monitor and improve their own performance levels. “Historically, we have used SAS to generate a range of reports, which were then sent in hard copy to the ICU members,” she says. “With the self-service capabilities, though, rather than waiting for us to print, collate and dispatch the reports every quarter, the majority of ICUs are now able to go on-line

and create their own reports on an as-needed basis.”

Importantly, it’s the self-service on-demand nature of the solution that is ensuring the ICUs gain the additional benefit of timely information. “Instead of reports that can be outdated almost as soon as they are received by mail, our users have reports that are an accurate reflection of current, centrally held data,” Ms George explains.

Aside from providing ICUs with accurate and up-to-date reporting, the self-service portal has removed much of the administrative burden previously carried by Ms George, allowing her to concentrate on the core business of enhancing the solution’s functionality.

Improving customer care

Adding further to the benefits gained by ICUs through their use of the SAS solution-based portal is its platform-agnostic nature. As a fully Web-based solution, the portal can be accessed and utilised by the ICUs regardless of changes to their own IT infrastructure. “This,” Ms George says, “is one of the key advantages we use to encourage ICUs to contribute to the ANZICS database. Using nothing more than a standard Web browser, they are able to take full advantage of the solution’s data

entry and reporting features. Instead of having to develop custom front-ends to support individual ICU operating system environments, we simply provide them with secure log-in details and the portal’s URL.”

Ultimately, ANZICS is focused on improving the levels of customer care in the ICU environment. A/Pro. Hart comments, “External quality assurance and clinical governance is a critical area of medicine; and by helping the units through the use of the SAS-based solution and portal, we are able to support their cases for ongoing funding and other resource allocations, which enable high quality care for the communities they service”.

Global recognition

The success of the ANZICS SAS portal has had such a positive impact on Australian and New Zealand ICU operations that the organisation has been approached by health authorities in other countries to gain membership. While the specifics of these approaches currently remain in confidence, Ms George says, “Just the fact that we have been approached by authorities overseas is testament to the work we are doing and the benefits this work is bringing to the healthcare community”.



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