Has the clinical governance agenda stalled? Findings from the 2017 New Zealand survey of DHB health professional staff

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Objectives
In the late-2000s, New Zealand saw introduction of a national policy that all 20 government-funded District Health Boards (DHBs) work to establish and support clinical governance and leadership. We developed and conducted a survey designed to assess progress with implementation of clinical governance, initially of senior medical staff in 2010. In 2012 and 2017, the full health professional workforce were surveyed. This has enabled progress with development to be assessed and for comparison of DHBs and workforce groups. This presentation compares the 2017 findings with those from 2012.

Methods
All registered health professionals employed by DHBs were invited to participate in a brief online survey, with questions designed to gauge implementation of government policy. Survey invites were sent directly to professionals by their respective DHB with a link to the survey website. The website and data analysis were managed by the researchers.

Lessons Learned
Progress between 2012 and 2017 was limited; in many cases, respondents were less positive in 2017 than they were in 2012. This may be due to a stronger focus in 2012 – nationally and across the DHB sector – on clinical governance development.

Implications
The 2017 findings have implications for health sector policy, governance and management as well as for health professionals. In particular, there may be a need to refresh the emphasis on clinical governance and aspects of the quality and safety environment nationally and within DHBs.