

# Translating Knowledge from Medical Legal Claims to Improve Patient Safety

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## Context and Relevance

HIROC is a not-for-profit insurer for healthcare organizations and practitioners with a vision of **Partnering to Create the Safest Healthcare System**. Learning from medical-legal claims has been hindered by secrecy and stigma, long times to resolution, and low frequencies.

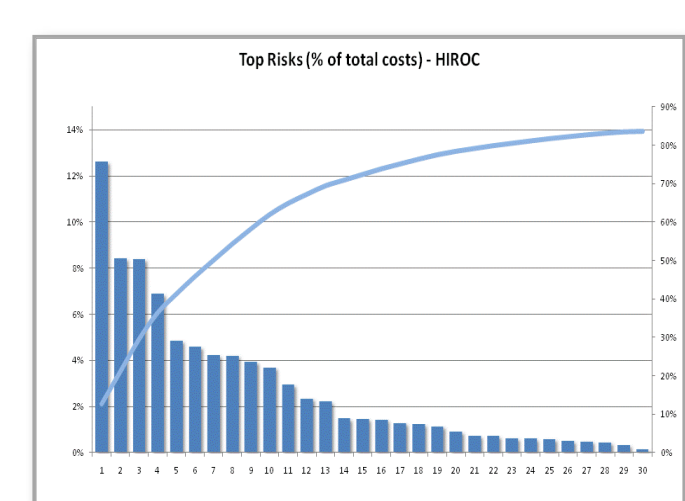
*Claims, however, are a rich source of knowledge that includes identification of unique types of risks and robust analyses by clinical experts. Claims data also allows for quantification of harm in terms of dollars.*

## Methods

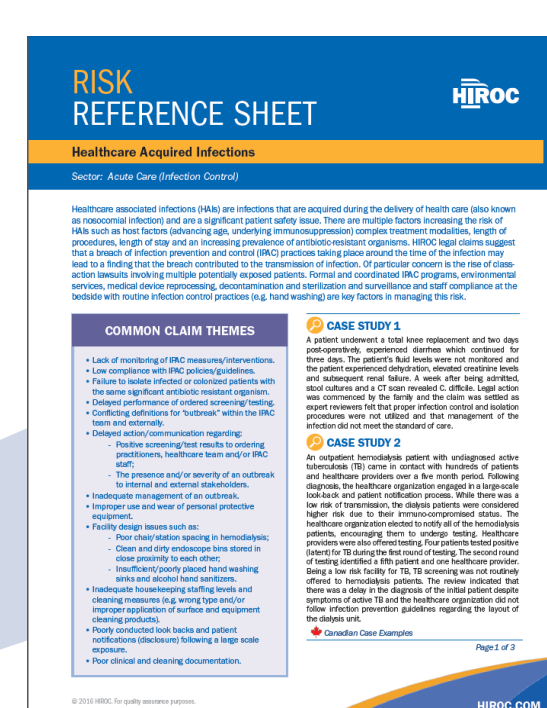
A **rank-ordered list** of top risks was developed for acute care hospitals; it was found that 30 risks accounted for over 85% of all claims costs. The list was disseminated to help organizations identify priority risks.

**Risk Reference Sheets:** concise resource for each risk highlighting: common claims themes; case studies; a checklist of actionable mitigation strategies.

**Risk Assessment Checklists:** online program enabling systematic self-assessment of compliance with each of the top 10 mitigation strategies for each risk. The program runs on a 3-year cycle. A summary report is generated each year to support enterprise risk reporting.



● Risk Ranking



Risk Reference Sheets



Risk Assessment Checklists (RAC)

## Outcomes

The program is being used by hospitals to help prioritize improvement efforts and annual reassessments are used to track changes over time. **The top 5 improvements are seen in:**



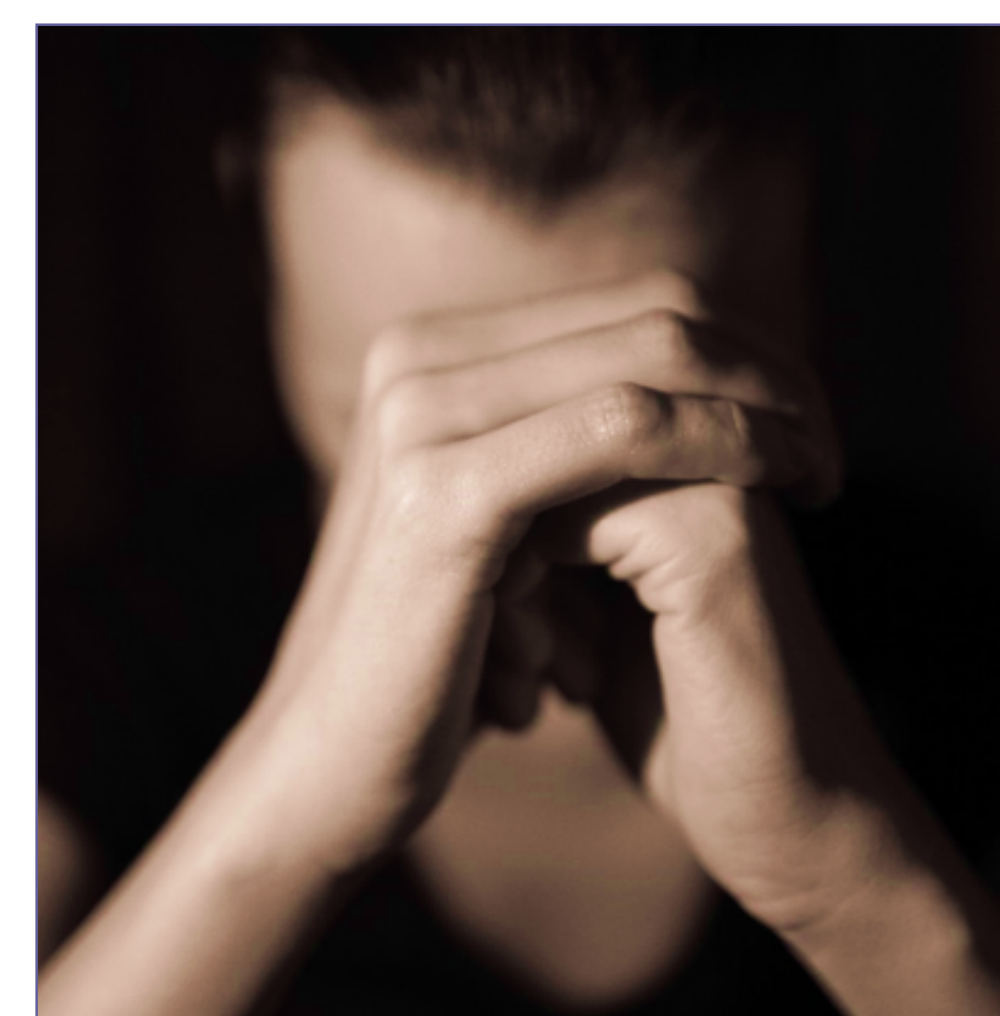
Failure to identify and/or monitor hyperbilirubinemia - Organizations without obstetrics



Inadequate quality checks for contracted/ agency nursing staff



Failure to identify/ manage intravenous (IV) infiltration



Suicide and/or self-harm of patient



Failure to appreciate deteriorating patient condition

To-date, 73 acute care organizations have completed the first 3-year cycle of the program. Results show an increase in overall compliance rate from 85% to 93%. Given the relatively low frequency and lag times of claims data, impact on future claims will not be determined for several years to come.

HIROC is using aggregated results to identify future areas of focus and intervention.

## Lessons Learned

Risk ranking, reference sheets, and the Risk Assessment Checklists program have also been developed for other healthcare sectors including: **Long-term care, Homecare, Mental health, Primary care, Community health, and Midwifery.**

Currently, approximately 275 organizations in Canada are taking part in the Risk Assessment Checklists program.

A strong vision for patient safety can overcome barriers to sharing knowledge from medical legal claims. Resources that are concise, prioritized and easy to use can facilitate knowledge transfer.

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