The Problem
Institutional learning from adverse events and near-miss events is imperative. However, due to the non-direct patient care workflow in Pathology, many of our root cause analyses and lessons learned occur behind closed doors. Within the Department of Pathology at BIDMC and across the nation, Morbidity and Mortality Rounds, a forum typically reserved for clinical review of adverse events, does not exist in the realm of the Laboratory. We chose to implement this systematic mechanism to share internal root causes, and facilitate learning from previous. Without a department-wide learning approach, we were not able to continuously improve our quality and safety performance and foster a culture of safety and transparency for the sake of our patients.

Goal
Our goal is to facilitate the learning from near-miss or adverse events through setting up monthly Morbidity and Mortality conferences in the Department of Pathology. In addition, we aim to equip participants with necessary problem analysis and process improvement tools as well as grow a culture of transparency and continuous improvement.

The Team
- Jeffrey D. Goldsmith, MD - Director, Surgical Pathology Laboratory.
- Yael K. Heher, MD, MPH - QA/QI Director, Pathology.

The Interventions
In order to achieve the best results of discussion and learning, blame-free is our first and also the most important rule. Data is presented in a de-identified manner with experienced Departmental Leadership moderating the sessions. In addition, we prepare monthly pathology M&M conference by using a standardized model:

Lessons Learned
- BIDMC is one of the only hospitals in the nation to hold pathology M&M conferences.
- Adverse events are more complicated than anticipated, therefore having standardized and systematic methods for analyzing the root causes is extremely important.
- Learning from failures is an organizational effort, inviting people from different backgrounds or from other departments (bridging silos) is one of the keys to success.
- Never underestimate people’s enthusiasm and investment when it comes to discussing and problem solving around QA/QI issues, everyone wants to minimize adverse events.

Next Steps
- Continue optimizing the model M&M conferences in the Department of Pathology.
- Expand topics from Anatomic Pathology to Clinical Pathology, include all levels of care from diagnostic to operational and administrative.
- Break down silos: expand inclusion of other Departments where relevant to our M&M conferences.

For more information, contact:
Yael K. Heher, MD, MPH; QA/QI Director for Pathology
ykheher@bidmc.harvard.edu