

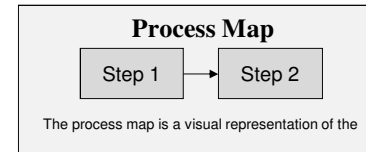
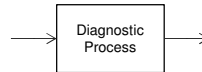
DEFINING THE DIAGNOSTIC PROCESS

Understanding the diagnostic process is the first step towards improving diagnosis in health care

On September 22, 2015, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a report entitled "Improving Diagnosis in Health Care". To achieve that goal, the committee, "developed a conceptual model to articulate the diagnostic process, describe work system factors that influence this process, and identify opportunities to improve the diagnostic process and outcomes."

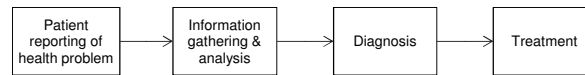
A Process Map is similar to a geographical map in that it can provide different levels of detail while remaining accurate. For example, a map of a country as a whole typically contains only the most major roads, a map of a city will contain far more roads, and an inset providing detail of a section of the city may contain all the roads. All these maps are accurate; but the city map contains more detail than the national map.

With a goal of improving a given process - in this case, the diagnostic process - it's important to understand how the process should work in theory (which may be very different from how the process actually works in practice). Breaking a process down into steps allows for an analysis of problems that occur at each step.



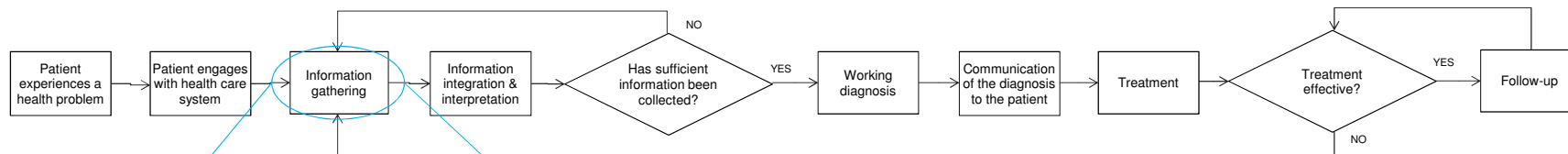
Process Overview

An overview of the diagnostic process can be summarized in just four steps.



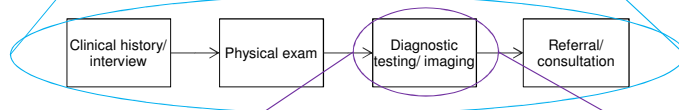
By adding more detail to this process, the responsive nature of the process is revealed - if sufficient information is not gathered to make a working diagnosis, the process returns to the information gathering step. A similar "decision point" is made after treatment - if treatment is found to be ineffective, the process again returns to the information gathering step for another look at the diagnosis.

More detailed process

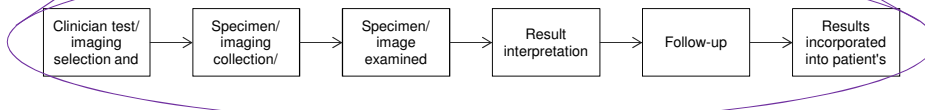


Even more detail can be provided about the information gathering step.

More detailed description: Information gathering process



More detailed description: Diagnostic testing/ imaging process



As the information gathering step can be broken down into more detail, so can the diagnostic testing/ imaging step. Because of the similarities at a high level between the diagnostic testing and diagnostic imaging processes, I've combined them, but a more detailed process would have separate steps for each.

Cause Mapping is a Root Cause Analysis method that captures basic cause-and-effect relationships supported with evidence.

CAUSE MAPPING

Problem Solving • Incident Investigation • Root Cause Analysis

- Step 1** **Problem** What's the Problem?
- Step 2** **Analysis** Why did it happen?
- Step 3** **Solutions** What will be done?

For a free copy of our Root Cause Analysis Template in Microsoft Excel, used to create this page, visit our web site.

