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**Abstract from the Literature**

by  
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**Higgins I. Benchmarking in health care: A review of the literature. *Australian Health Review* 1997; 20 (4):60-9**

This paper provides a review of the 10 significant publication related to benchmarking in health care. The discussion which follows is presented according to four headings: what the study did, how the study was conducted, what was learnt from the experience, and what the implications were for health care generally. The findings of this review are reassuring in that all studies provided valuable information, in terms of clinical practice and the health care service or the benchmarking process. They highlight the importance of the maintenance of quality health care, the reduction of health care costs and the need for improved efficiency and effectiveness in providing health care.

*Comment: As we all struggle with change, this article provides useful advice on best practice and benchmarking.*

**Sweeney AW. The malaria frontline. Pioneering malaria research by the Australian Army in World War II. *Med J Aust* 1997;166(6):316-9.**

Documents at the Australian Academy of Science and the United States National Academy of Sciences reveal that wartime research by the Australian Army at Cairns had a significant impact on United States malaria research programs, as well as providing a scientific basis for drug control of malaria.

**Keller TM. A roentgen centennial legacy: The first use of the x-ray by the U.S. military in the Spanish-American War. *Mil Med* 1997;162(8):551-4.**

The year 1996 marked the centennial of the advent of the roentgen ray in the United States. The compelling value of this novel scientific discovery by Professor Wilhelm Roentgen of Wurzburg, Germany, to image the previously arcane depths of the living human body was astounding and recognised as a major advance. This report details the work of some key personnel and developments in the science of warfare that confirmed the great promise of the X-ray in the diagnostic armamentarium of military surgeons (a leading proponent being Professor Nicholas Senn, the founder of the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States) in this last American conflict of the 19th century.

*Comment: Anti-malaria's and X-rays: two fundamentals of military medicine in the 20th century. These interesting article trace their early development and use in war.*