Table 1: Clinical Research vs. Quality Improvement

	Clinical Research	Quality Improvement
Purpose	A systematic investigation to establish facts, principles or contribute to generalizable knowledge	To implement knowledge, evaluate or improve a process or program through established/accepted standards
Design	Follows a rigid protocol that remains unchanged	Adaptive, iterative design
Mandate	Activities not mandated by institution	Activities are mandated by institution as part of operations
Starting point	Knowledge-seeking is independent of routine care and intended to answer a question or test a hypothesis with the intention of contributing to generalizable knowledge	Knowledge-seeking is integral to ongoing management system for delivering health care
Population	Usually involves a subset of individuals and specific sample size	Includes information on all affected by process or program change receiving
Benefits	May or may not benefit current participants; intended to benefit future participants	Immediately and directly benefits a process, system or program; might or might not benefit participants
Risks	May put participants at risk with consent	No increased risk to participants, with exception of possible participants' privacy or confidentiality of data
Data collection strategy	Systematic data guided	Systematic data guided
Testing or Analysis	Statistically prove or disprove hypothesis	Compare program, process or system to established standards
Effect on program or practice	Findings of the study are generally not expected to immediately affect or change practice	Findings of study are expected to directly and immediately affect institutional practice
Adoption of Results	Dissemination of results may require more time	Dissemination of results occurs rapidly and adopted into local care delivery
Endpoint	Answer a research question and/or invite critical appraisal of that conclusion by peers through presentation.	Improve a program, process or system
Publication/Presentation	Intent to publish generally presumed at the onset of the project	Intent to publish may or may not be presumed at the onset of the project but QI practitioners are encouraged to share systematic reporting of insights

The table above is based on information adapted from:

- *The Ethics of Using QI Methods to Improve Health Care Quality and Safety*
- *Human Subject Research – vs. – Quality Improvement*