

OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: Performance management is a fairly new field, but it can be applied in many areas. In the health services system, performance management is present in many countries, with implementation being done through particular models, all centered on the level of patient satisfaction. In Romania, the emphasis is on the financial side, but there is a need for implementation for a patient-based system, patient satisfaction being an important indicator for the assessment of medical institutions.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, Performance Management has become a field of intensive interest, debate and research, a large body of literature that discusses various aspects of performance management being published.(1)

However, it is worth to note that performance management is not only of academic interest, but it is of high practical interest as well (2) and most notably, it is not particularly new, having been used for centuries at various organizational levels.(3)

Despite the fact that criticisms and concerns were raised by a number of authors (4,5,6) concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of the performance management systems, it is acknowledged in the business world that this kind of systems can make a useful contribution for improving the management of an organization.(7)

As organizations are constantly seeking performance improvement using new technologies, processes and frameworks, performance management systems come into help by assisting to improve their performance. Such systems can also help with identifying weaknesses, supporting communication and facilitating decision making processes.(2) In parallel with the emergence of management, performance activities have been a necessary part of the human life for as long as there have been organizations.

Brudan A (3) considers that in scientific management performance is associated with two key processes: performance management and performance measurement, which cannot be separated from one another.

Performance management both proceeds and follows performance measurement. Performance measurement deals with the evaluation of results, while performance management is a much more comprehensive concept preceding the performance measurement and giving it meaning.(8)

The most commonly used performance measurement tool is the performance indicator. They provide important data that is monitored and reported within an organization using scorecards or dashboards.

Performance management overview:

The field of healthcare has evolved over the course of history due to the basic human needs of living longer and staying healthy. Intensifying healthcare research has led to the

development of new techniques, devices and rescue medicines that have generated a greater life expectancy.

Healthcare is one of the most pressing, complex and fast growing areas in the world. The major challenges in healthcare have led to profound changes in the way medical services are accessed, delivered and funded. Within the health system, it is essential to measure levels of performance and service quality, given the nature of services and their impact on the community. At the level of healthcare, the desire to have quality services and good results is closely related to costs. All of these can be improved by implementing a performance management system with tools specific to the healthcare sector.

Key performance indicators are used all over the world by healthcare organizations to measure performance in this sector.

World Health Organization published in 2003 the Health Systems Performance Assessment, a comprehensive analysis of the health systems of the member states of the World Health Organization.(9) This study proposes a general framework for understanding performance management in health systems by defining three goals: improving the average level of population health, reduce health inequalities in the population and fairness in financial contribution to the health system.(9) They develop a tool for measuring hospital performance Assessment Tool for quality improvement in Hospitals (PATH).(9)

PATH is design out of 17 performance indicators, that defines five key areas of assessment: Clinical effectiveness and safety, Patient centeredness, Production efficiency, Staff orientation and Responsive governance. Because there is a wide variation in health outcomes related to performance levels due to different levels of education and income in countries or regions of the same country, the best measure of performance can be patient satisfaction.

According to "The Benchmarking Hospital Performance in Health" by Sanigest Internacional, which applied an analysis of hospital performance indicators in the United States of America, Canada and Latin America, it is necessary to implement a simplified performance measurement tool.(10) They pointed out that the greatest drawback in this process is data collection, because it is essential to use indicators that are easy to analyze and do not require the use of significant

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costs or resources.(10) One of these indicators is patient satisfaction or patient experience, being already implemented in many hospitals, effortlessly and without much cost.

Because of cultural differences, education levels, government health policies, living standards, it is very difficult to implement a performance measurement tool in the health care system that is relevant to all types of healthcare providers.

The KPI Institute has produced a comparative report on health systems in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), represented by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, "GCC Hospitals Performance Benchmarking Report 2016". The benchmarking report presents the analysis of a total of 75 indicators, structured in three major areas: Focus on Patients, Resource Management and Hospital Profile.

In the "focus on patient" field, there are included 14 performance indicators that measure patient satisfaction. As a result of this report, it can be seen that these hospitals place the patient's satisfaction at the forefront, as highlighted by the large number of indicators used for this department.(11)

Performance management in Romania:

Currently, performance indicators and the hospital management framework contract in Romania are regulated by the Order of the Minister no. 1384 of November 4, 2010, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, no. 764 of 16 November 2010, as subsequently amended and supplemented.

Under current legislation, indicators are classified into four classes: human resource management indicators, service usage indicators, economic and financial indicators and quality indicators.(12)

At the level of the human resource management indicators, 6 parameters are evaluated, 10 indicators are measured in the indicators of service use, 6 indicators are used for the economic and financial indicators class, 6 indicators are calculated within the quality indicators class. In Romania, according to the legislation in force, the classification of the performance indicators places a great emphasis on the financial and service side, in other words, the quantitative part inclines the balance compared to the qualitative indicators.

Furthermore, one of the top 25 performance indicators proposed by The KPI Institute globally is "Patient Satisfaction", an indicator that is not found in this formulation or a similar version and is thus not tracked in any of the four classes indicators in Romania, according to current legislation.(11,12)

CONCLUSIONS

Patients' expectations have increased in recent years and are not just looking for treatments, but also building a relationship with doctors, accessing information, and receiving care in a modern and appealing unit.

Focusing on patient indicators assesses the interaction between hospitals and patients in terms of quality of healthcare services, current healthcare, patient experience and safety.

In order to balance the balance both on the qualitative side in everything that means Performance Management in the healthcare system in Romania, it is mandatory to analyze the internationally-established models and the national legislation in the field of performance indicators in the medical sector and also to identify one set quantitative and qualitative clinical and nonclinical performance indicators relevant to hospital unit activity.

The need expressed by hospital managers to implement these indicators, in addition to existing ones at hospital level, needs to be evaluated and validated.

Raising awareness of the techniques and benefits of a

benchmarking analysis in the healthcare sector in Romania can change the way medical services are viewed from both patients and authorities.

The development of an effective measuring and improvement tool at the hospital level can ensure the continuous improvement of services in the medical system.

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