

## The Significance of Quality in Health Services

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Businesses and organizations in the current period strive to thrive in a fiercely competitive environment by attracting a maximum number of consumers.

**Purpose:** This review study seeks to examine the definition of quality in health care with the goal of promoting health.

**Materials and Methods:** The methodology employed involved doing a comprehensive literature search of review and research studies in internationally recognized databases such as Medline, Pubmed, and Cinahl. The articles were excluded based on the criterion that they were written in a language other than English.

**Results:** The concept of health is intricate, making it challenging to establish a precise and unambiguous definition of excellence in healthcare. Quality in healthcare is an essential focus for scientists, organizations, and healthcare personnel, as well as for individuals who receive these services.

**Conclusions:** Undoubtedly, quality in health services is an increasingly demanding first-priority need.

**KEYWORDS:** quality, organizations, environment, consumer, supplier, healthcare

### ARTICLE DETAILS

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### INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, enterprises and organizations are endeavoring to thrive in an exceedingly cutthroat milieu, with the objective of enticing a maximum number of clients. Consumers now have a wide range of options when it comes to choosing services and commodities, and they seem to be particularly conscious of the quality of what is being offered [1,2]. Crosby (1990) defines quality as the degree to which products and services meet specified requirements [3]. ISO8402 defines quality as the collection of attributes possessed by a product or service that can fulfill a specific or implied requirement [4]. The optimal level of quality for a specific amount will inevitably vary among individuals, as it is contingent upon the importance they place on quality. Stakeholders in health systems frequently prioritize distinct attributes of a service [5]. A more intricate inquiry pertains to determining the optimal range of quality levels to accommodate diverse preferences, while considering the significant expenses associated with producing individualized quality levels for each person. This concept of

ideal quality, as applied to medical services, encompasses all aspects that may be integrated into any clinical definition of quality [6]. Several factors have a substantial impact on the correlation between quality and health. Each stakeholder involved defines demand and supply for quality in their own unique way. The perception of quality varies among patients, health professionals, economists, the state, and insurance agencies [7]. Alterations in quality are inevitable, as a result of unforeseen influences and circumstances. Nevertheless, the decisions made by suppliers that impact quality are evident and logical, whereas consumer choices over which producer or supplier to select are based on their perception of quality [8].

### PURPOSE

This review study seeks to examine the definition of quality in health care with the goal of promoting health.

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### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The approach employed involved doing a comprehensive literature search of review and research papers in prominent international databases including Medline, Pubmed, and Cinahl. The search was conducted using specific keywords such as quality, health, health services, consumer, and supplier. The articles were excluded based on the criterion that they were not written in the English language.

### QUALITY IN HEALTH SERVICES

According to Evans and Lindsay, quality is the degree to which a product or service satisfies or beyond the expectations of customers or users [9]. Quality is synonymous with achieving consumer happiness while minimizing costs to the greatest extent possible [10]. Parasuraman (1985) defines service quality as the outcome of comparing the customer's expectations of what the company should supply with their perception of what was actually offered. Furthermore, it delineates the Five fundamental aspects of quality, enumerated as follows [12]:

- **Dependability.** Provider's capability to deliver the precise service as promised to the user-customer.
- **Promptness in responding or reacting.** The provider must possess the capacity and constant readiness to cater to the consumer-client's needs at all times.
- **Ensuring safety.** Employees are required to possess the requisite education and training in order to effectively cater to the demands of clients.
- **Precision.** To execute the given task accurately on the initial attempt.
- **Distinctiveness.** The service is tailored to meet the specific requirements of each individual client. The concept of health is intricate, making it challenging to precisely define the notion of quality in healthcare. It is indisputable that health quality is a crucial focus for scientists, organizations, and personnel in the healthcare industry, as well as for the people who receive these services [1]. Avedis Donabedian (1998) was one of the early pioneers in attempting to provide a precise definition of excellence in the field of healthcare. He defines quality as the style of treatment that seeks to optimize the "wellbeing" of the patient, including both the possible negative outcomes and the positive outcomes involved in the care process [13]. The author categorizes the delivery of healthcare into three distinct dimensions, as outlined in the subsequent sections [13]:
- **In the technical section.** To what degree are applications and practices of science and technology utilized to address the health issues experienced by the patient.
- **In the realm of human interactions.** Patient treatment encompasses the manner in which health professionals interact with patients, which is shaped by their professional status, adherence to moral and ethical standards, the prevailing societal values in their practice setting, and the patients' own expectations.

- **In the hotel section.** Hotel infrastructure include the physical facilities, amenities, and services provided by a hotel, including the health organization, cleaning, catering, and overall service environment. According to Palmer (1991), the quality of care can be measured and is influenced by both the perspectives of medical staff and its economic aspects. It is determined by the level of improvement in a population's health, taking into account specific conditions and limitations such as available resources and the burden of a specific disease on the population [10,14]. Maxwell (2001) states that the quality of care is contingent upon six parameters [15].

- **Accessibility:** Health services should be universally available to all users, without any obstacles such as financial or geographic constraints.
- **Equality:** ensuring universal access to healthcare services for all individuals, regardless of their circumstances.
- **Social acceptance:** the perspectives of patients - users regarding the delivery of healthcare services and the judgments they make to assess them.
- **Relevance to needs:** the extent to which the services provided align with the requirements of the users.
- **Efficiency:** carrying out any medical operation using the least expensive resources.
- **Technical efficiency** refers to achieving the optimal therapeutic outcome for every patient. Health services can be measured in terms of quality, as stated by Donebedian (1998). Donebedian identifies three primary qualities that can be identified [13]:

The term "structure" encompasses the resources that are accessible, including materials, manpower, and infrastructures.

- **The processes** encompass the organization, operation, and supply of health services by the organization. The outcomes of the organization's actions and services. Each category mentioned above has distinct quantitative attributes, including the expertise and training of healthcare professionals, the precision of medical equipment in producing results, the level of patient satisfaction with healthcare services, and the success rate of medical procedures and treatments [16]. These traits can be quantified and used to analyze areas that require modification or enhancement. This process helps establish benchmarks for best practices, evaluation criteria, and corrective measures in instances where the outcomes differ from the desired ones [13].

### IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF HEALTH SERVICES

The quality of health services pertains to the provision of optimal treatment for the patient. In order to accomplish this, care is provided at the optimal moment and in the most suitable manner, aiming to achieve the most potential impact [5]. From a managerial perspective, quality is attained by combining optimal care with minimal cost and achieving the most efficient allocation of limited resources. In terms of patients, quality is determined by their capacity to select the

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services they desire in the most efficient manner feasible [15,17]. In any organization, quality improvement is impossible without the establishment of a defined quality strategy. The quality plan, as a fundamental principle, necessitates a firm dedication to organizational management [18]. The quality plan should prioritize the requirements and preferences of the customers. Sullivan & Decker (2009) differentiate between 'external' customers, who are the users of health services, and 'internal' customers, who are the employees within the company. They also consider the demands of people who serve the system as an additional dimension [19]. Vouzas (2002) argues that firms should prioritize employee engagement, foster their professional development, and cultivate a culture of communication and cooperation [20]. In recent decades, the endeavor to enhance quality has advanced through four successive stages: inspection, quality control, quality assurance, and ultimately the establishment of overall quality management systems [21]. In her study, Papanikolaou (2007) identified 10 service quality elements that can be used as evaluation criteria for service providing [22]. These variables encompass all the components that characterize high-quality service. The following are important qualities: reliability, responsiveness, ability, accessibility, politeness, communication, professional credit, safety, understanding, and natural traits. The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies health service evaluation indicators into several categories, including input indicators, process evaluation indicators, intermediate output indicators, population health indicators, efficiency indicators, socio-economic indicators, and health policy indicators. It is evident that while evaluating a health service, it is necessary to carefully choose the proper indicators. The primary factors to consider while selecting an assessment index are utility, validity, reliability, comparability, responsiveness, specificity, and sensitivity [23]. The World Health Organization asserts that exceptional care in the healthcare industry, particularly within a hospital unit, must encompass the subsequent attributes [5]:

- Skilled healthcare workers (including doctors, nurses, and paramedics) at an advanced level of expertise.
- Effective allocation and utilization of resources (including personnel and materials) to enhance the quality and dependability of healthcare services.
- maximizing the potential to minimize risks for patients, encompassing areas such as healthcare, nosocomial infections, and surgical interventions. When it comes to quality assurance in health services, it is important to note that implementing a quality assurance system does not guarantee or aim to improve quality. Its primary purpose is to maintain the consistency and reliability of the products or services being provided [21]. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) created the ISO 9000 series of standards, which are universally employed to provide guidance to companies in developing quality systems. The ISO 9000 series establishes the criteria that a quality

assurance system must adhere to, without specifying the methods or approaches to fulfill these objectives.

## CONCLUSIONS

Undoubtedly, the requirement for quality in health care is of utmost importance and is increasingly becoming more demanding. Health services should prioritize the application of good practices to enhance quality, taking into account advancements in science, technology, and ethics. Operational processes within quality management systems guarantee their functionality and efficiency. However, in order to effectively implement the system, the involvement of all parties is required. This includes not just following the specified processes, but also recognizing the importance of their contribution to the system's existence [24].

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