

310: INFLUENCE OF THE ACCREDITATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

Bedlicki M., Siwiec J.

Objective:

The goal of the survey was to investigate the influence of accreditation and external mechanism of quality assurance and the perception of this process by the hospital staff after the accreditation survey.

Method:

The survey was based on the questionnaire method applied in two forms at two separate stages:

- Stage 1 – mail questionnaire (questionnaire forms delivered by mail to hospitals) accompanied by a notification letter with a request for the staff to participate in the survey, and with a special instruction on how to distribute the forms and who should complete them.
- Stage 2 - individual distribution of questionnaire forms (the questionnaire forms distributed according to a quota key defined for each individual hospital)

Hospital selection for the survey purpose

The first selection group included 20 randomly chosen hospitals participating in the accreditation process, which constituted about 30% of all the accredited hospitals in Poland in 2001. The participation ratios for individual personnel groups under the survey were defined separately for each individual hospital. These ratios ("tiers") were determined on the basis of hospital staff data within definite personnel groups (nurses, physicians, etc.) in proportion to their number per hospital unit. Hence, the layout structure of individual features in subsequent survey samples, defined for each hospital individually, reflected the actual proportion of personnel share in a hospital structure. After the selection, special code instructions were elaborated (for each hospital separately) to provide complete data about the personnel groups to be included in the questionnaire completion. The quotas for all the hospitals were set up at the level not higher than 50 respondents per hospital. Out of 1000 questionnaire forms sent out to hospitals, 901 were returned. The return ratio for individual hospitals was between 73% and 100%.

The questionnaire comprised questions referring to the following issues: **A.** Knowledge about the accreditation process; **B.** Involvement of individual personnel groups in the preparation to the accreditation process **C.** The most difficult tasks during the preparation; **D.** Factors which contributed to granting the certificate; **E.** Influence of the accreditation on the hospital performance; **F.** Advantages resulting from obtaining the status of an accredited hospital.

Results:

The majority of respondents were very well acquainted with the accreditation process itself (89%) and indicated that the accreditation was the hospital assessment process based on external standards. 7,8% answered that accreditation was a process connected with ISO certificate granting.

We asked the respondents to express their opinion on the involvement of particular personnel groups in the preparation to the accreditation visit. The best assessment was given to nurses – average 4.21 (in a 10-point scale from –5 to 5), next to assistant personnel 3.2; administration personnel 2.69; maintenance personnel 2.63; with the lowest assessment for physicians 2.20. The preparatory works for the visit were considered quite difficult and assessed by the respondents at 2.42 (a scale from 1 – very difficult to 5 - very easy). The most difficult tasks included gaining financial means for meeting the defined standards (2.4). Other tasks were assessed at a similar level and comprised: the unification of medical documentation assessed at 3.03, the handling of current medical documentation assessed at 3,3, implementation of proceeding standards at 3.41, the monitoring of quality indices at 3.11. A slightly higher score (4.02) was recorded with respect to a direct co-operation with the superiors, and was regarded as less strenuous. According to the respondents' opinion, the effort of the whole team was the factor that most contributed to granting the accreditation certificate (4.27).

In respondents' assessment, the preparation to the accreditation process resulted in a significant improvement of hospital's performance in its every single sector. With reference to the latter, there were differences in opinions between individual personnel groups. The most positive aspects of the accreditation process were noticed by members of management, followed by nurses, then maintenance as well as administration personnel with physicians closing the list.

The most significant improvement was noticed, and accordingly most highly assessed, with respect to hospital infections (3.28), medical documentation handling (3.40), patient satisfaction surveys (2.97) medicine handling (2,94) patient care (2.88) and hospital management (1.99). Many respondents indicated that after the assessment, the hospital didn't obtain the contract increase (45%) whilst the process of meeting the standards required additional tasks and duties (82%), yet, in spite of this, 70% of the respondents were proud of the success, and **80%** expressed the view that the hospital should try to obtain the accreditation certificate in future. The survey has proved that the accreditation is a tool supporting quality works, and contrary to many opinions, is accepted by hospital personnel.

