Chapter 7
The Involvement of the Patient and his Perspective Evaluation of the Quality of Healthcare

Aleksandra Rosiek-Kryszewska
Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland

Anna Rosiek
Ross-Medica, Poland

ABSTRACT

This chapter describes how the complexity of the process of satisfying health needs is in providing different type of services at the same time. It is associated with both the qualifications of the staff and the complexity of the procedures. High-quality healthcare is a priority, because it provides trust, safety and health of patients. Engaging a patient in assessing the quality of healthcare contributes to the change in the way people think about healthcare system. In the chapter, the authors point out the role of patient engagement in the quality assessment of healthcare. The quality of medical services is one of the fundamental problems of healthcare. Providing good quality services at the right price - this is the challenge healthcare institutions are facing to stay ahead of the increasingly competitive healthcare market. The hard market demands healthcare units pay attention to the quality of healthcare, seeing the patient’s perspective, and gaining greater credibility in the healthcare market.

INTRODUCTION

Currently healthcare systems around the world are facing many problems, like infrastructure gaps and insufficient medical staff. The opportunity to improve and develop the healthcare system is to emphasize the role of the patient and to develop a concept of patient empowerment (Bridges, Loukanova & Carrera, 2017). This concept increases the patient’s health awareness, based on knowledge and willingness to cooperate with medical staff to improve the safety and quality of healthcare (Castro, Regenmortel & Vanhaeckt, 2016). Patient engagement brings potential benefits not only to himself but also to his surroundings (Cevasco, 2011). It is important to realize that an educated and cooperating patient is the

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-3946-9.ch007
The Involvement of the Patient and his Perspective Evaluation of the Quality of Healthcare

Foundation of any well-functioning healthcare system. It is important to place great emphasis on health education not only within the health system, but also within the framework of the functioning of the state as a whole. The benefits of such a solution are unimaginable. In the long run, the benefits provide an opportunity to improve the quality of the health system and to improve the health of the population. The concept of patient empowerment is, however, a long-term process. Noticeable effects can only be seen in the perspective of several dozen years. That is why the earliest education of the whole society is important.

However, in order to properly implement the idea, the activities of governmental and non-governmental institutions should be focused on that task, also at the local levels.

The idea of patient empowerment puts the patients at the center of attention and allows them to take control of their health needs, while designing health services to meet the needs of the beneficiaries (Aujoulat, 2007; Bravo, 2015; Makoult, 2006).

Patient perspective is essential in assessing and improving the quality of healthcare. Concentrating a wide range of activities on the provision of patient-oriented services and respecting their rights allows for faster, more effective action and better adapting to the changing needs of the beneficiaries.

The expectations of patients towards medical services are constantly growing. Patients pay attention not only to the availability of a GP but also a specialist. They focus primarily on the factors that affect the quality of service. Patient treatment, communication skills, time and attention given to the patient and safety during treatment are just some of the factors that contribute to patient satisfaction and improve the efficiency of healthcare facilities. The process of introducing constructive changes in an organization is complex and long-lasting. Employee behavior is often the main barrier to building the efficient management of a hospital (Piercy & Morgan, 1994). In the process of providing services not only knowledge and specialized skills, but also the level of involvement of employees and patients is important (Rogoziński, 2000).

Patient Engagement in Decision-Making Processes

Patient engagement is essential to improve safety and should be a key element in the reorganization of medical procedures (Vahdat, 2014; Hawley, 2017; James, 2013). In recent years discussions have been conducted on how to involve the patient in the decision-making processes. The answer to this question is not straightforward, as the term “patient engagement” was not understood by all in the same way. There are many definitions of patient engagement. Often this concept combined a healthy lifestyle with responsibility for one’s own health. For physicians and patients it meant following medical advices. The involved patient was also seen as a person providing health information to medical personnel. But true patient engagement is not just about education or communication. True patient engagement is based on a five-step strategy:

- Defining a patient’s engagement in healthcare entities
- The willingness of patients to manage their own healthcare and acquire knowledge and skills
- Active co-operation between patients and medical providers for the design and management of medical care to achieve positive health outcomes
- Culture of the healthcare organization, with priority being patient support (engagement culture)
- Willingness to change the organization in connection with patient engagement