



How medical results are assessed by patients?

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1. Assessment of medical results or compliance with a care standard?

In the healthcare system, the end client is the patient, thus, his/her opinion is essential. Prior to or after having sought medical advice or been to a healthcare establishment, the patient turns to the internet. He/she goes to a doctor and gives assessments based on diverse criteria, including administrative management and hotel-type services. Concurrently, release questionnaires submitted to patients are more and more about hotel-type services, about administrative management and about the degrees of information. The dimension which is directly linked to medical care is gradually becoming less present in these questionnaires. Care is not really evaluated according to quality anymore, but according to its compliance with a standard.

2. Should patients be made to assess medical results?

The question should not even be asked. It is essential that patients evaluate medical results. Hence, the question should be: how? In some countries, in Sweden for instance, health establishments are evaluated by patients. The results are made known to the public and thereby allow for comparison. This leads to a significant improvement of the performances of establishments whose results were previously below-average.

3. Patient assessment regarding the management of his/her illness

In the beginning, patients only expected one thing, that his/her illness be treated. The patient hopes that this treatment will enable him/her to get back to a normal social or professional life. However, this dimension which is the most important thing for the patient is not or is hardly evaluated at all.

4. How to assess patients' quality of life after care?

The assessment of the effect of treatment on patients' quality of life cannot be done after leaving the healthcare institution. The patient should take the time to appraise his/her quality of life and be able to formulate an opinion without being pressurised - even unintentionally - by healthcare professionals. Pilots have been launched in order to initiate patients to express daily data about their quality of life, for example after cancer treatment.

In the long run, digital technology will help a lot in developing this evaluation. The assessment should not be restricted to a set of questions, but be designed to take various forms. It is essential to gather patients' spontaneous discourse and base oneself on a qualitative approach. Over time, the PMF could include a tab dedicated to patient assessment.

5. Towards a financial valuation of quality?

Nowadays, procedures are reimbursed in the same manner, which may seem absurd considering that the level of quality can vary sharply from one establishment to the other. In the future, the generalisation of medical results assessment may be of the kind to adjust the remuneration of healthcare professionals and healthcare establishments. The healthcare system is destined to satisfy a requirement within a set economic context.