

Patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) in the Swiss health care system. An analysis of the requirements for implementing PROMs in the Swiss health care system based on the experience of the Dutch health care system.

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Introduction

In Swiss healthcare system, the interest in "Patient-Reported Outcome Measures" (PROMs) among healthcare providers, health insurers, politicians and the pharmaceutical industry is continually increasing. PRO measures the subjective perceived health status and quality of life of patients using standardized and valid instruments and questionnaires. With the results of these measurements, knowledge can be gained and patients can be offered an individualized and patient-centered treatment. Experts and researchers confirm that PROMs can improve the quality of health care for the population and avoid an oversupplied treatment. Despite this knowledge, PROMs do not seem to be applied across all areas in Swiss healthcare system. The Dutch health care system, which uses per-capita payments similar to the Swiss health care system, stands out in an international comparison when it comes to the implementation of PROMs.

Aim

Accordingly, with the help of a comparison with the Dutch health care system, this study aims to determine the conditions that promote the implementation of PROMs in Switzerland.

Methods

- A literature search on PubMed® was conducted to search for suitable studies with the topic of implementing PROMs in the Dutch healthcare system. The studies resulting from the literature search were thematically summarized afterwards and divided into facilitators and barriers for the implementation of PROMs.
- To complement the knowledge gained from the studies, an expert interview was conducted with an expert on PROMs from the Dutch Heart Registry. The interview was subsequently transcribed and thematically analyzed.
- A SWOT analysis was used to elaborate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of implementing PROMs from the perspective of the Swiss healthcare system.

SWOT-Analyse

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Positive attitude of various healthcare organizations (H+ FMH etc.) for the promotion of PROMs.– Positive attitude of health insurance companies and pharmaceutical industry.– National leading projects.– Inclusion in some national registries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Fragmented healthcare and thus numerous policy makers and stakeholders.– Lack of nationwide electronic medical record (eHealth).– Lack of defined fee-for-service for collecting and discussing PROs data.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Improvement of health care performance by providing individual treatment pathways.– Fee-for-service based on PROs data and justification of individual treatments by PROs data.– Reduction of medical oversupply.– Increased involvement of the patient in their treatment.– Transparent reporting of the treatments and services provided.– Enhancement of competencies for certain professional groups or creation of new professional groups.– Benchmarking by comparing healthcare providers in Switzerland and/or comparing them with other countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Lack of financial and time resources for PROMs and their discussion with patients.– Quality-based performance reimbursement for treatments provided, with existing risk of misinterpretation of PROs.– Comparison of PROs across health care providers with blame and creation of an unsafe environment.– Lack of language services for patients with immigrant backgrounds.

Results

The literature search resulted in nine studies that could be used to address the research questions. The thematic summary of the study findings revealed the following factors to consider when implementing PROMs: (1) electronic technologies and privacy; (2) motivation and incentives; (3) training and knowledge; (4) interpretation of collected data; (5) team; (6) time and workflow; (7) finances and resources; and (8) flexibility. The expert interview was able to show that the Dutch healthcare system finances and drives the implementation of PROMs with projects, while there is currently no obligation or contractual commitment to PROMs. The SWOT analysis showed that the Swiss healthcare system has more strengths than weaknesses and that the implementation of PROMs offers key opportunities for patient healthcare provision.

Conclusion

- ✓ The Swiss healthcare system does not seem to be significantly lagging behind in implementing PROMs.
- ! Nevertheless, it is recommended to include the implementation of PROMs in the next health strategy in order to profit from the resulting opportunities for the Swiss healthcare system.

