

TO REFUND THE SYSTEM

Full introduction

Speaker: Guy VALLANCIEN, President of CHAM | France

Relevance and quality in healthcare.

I asked CHAT GPT to provide us with its perspective on the topic, and here is its response:

"Relevance in healthcare refers to the appropriateness of medical interventions in meeting the actual needs of patients. This means that healthcare should be based on strong scientific evidence and tailored to the individual characteristics of each patient. Relevance in healthcare aims at avoiding unnecessary, ineffective, or potentially dangerous care while ensuring that patients receive appropriate and beneficial treatments."

"On the other hand, quality in healthcare refers to the extent to which healthcare meets established standards. This includes patient safety, treatment effectiveness, service accessibility, care coordination, communication between healthcare professionals and patients, as well as patient satisfaction. Healthcare quality is evaluated using specific criteria and indicators, such as complication rates, readmission rates, waiting times, etc."

In 2023, how can we still pay for healthcare services without assessing their relevance or outcomes? The overprescribing of unnecessary or even dangerous treatments, as well as the lack of quality in medical procedures, are never questioned because the "obligation of means" principle, which could be understood when medicine was powerless. However, as of today, we must defend the obligation of statistically reliable results due to the precision of diagnoses and the therapeutic effectiveness.

While no one can predict the outcome of care for a given patient or injured person, for a thousand patients, averages and standard deviations can be used to assess the quality of a given healthcare facility, service or professional. The OECD estimates that 20% of diagnostic prescriptions and treatments are unnecessary. This means that billions of euros are wasted needlessly or dangerously in France every year.

Furthermore, as opposed to what local elected representatives try to make us believe, proximity and quality of care do not always go hand in hand. In the field of oncological surgery, the death rates, the rates of complications and the rates of stays in intensive care units can double, triple or even quadruple in over a hundred healthcare facilities with very low surgical volumes that do not comply with the decree on the minimum threshold of 20 to 30 surgeries per year. The elderly, who may have difficulty travelling, and the less privileged who may not be well-informed, are the victims of such unacceptable laxity.

It is therefore an absolute priority to assess and restructure the healthcare system by implementing a graded approach to patient care, even if it means travelling long distances to receive high-quality care.

The same principle should apply to hospital administrative services, as well as those supervising ministries, agencies, and other central and local administrations. They should all undergo regular analysis of their usefulness, efficiency, and management.

From an industrial standpoint, the regulation of access to healthcare products for patients needs to be profoundly rethought, as suggested in a report commissioned by the Prime Minister. The introduction of healthcare products, the time taken to build production facilities, all actions delayed by endless and redundant procedures, should be carried out much more rapidly in a more European framework based on genuinely relevant criteria established by highly qualified organisations.

In France, evaluation is too often seen as a punitive mechanism. On the contrary, it should be used to promote the improvement of healthcare services offered to patients. A cultural shift towards efficiency should be developed everywhere, leveraging artificial intelligence and the wealth of data that fuel it processes to understand in real-time who does what, how, and at what cost.

Without the aid of an objective analysis of prevention processes and access to the right care, by the right professional, at the right time, with the right products in the right facility, we will continue to dig an unsustainable financial deficit over time, while seeing a decline in the quality of patient care.

To all public and private healthcare stakeholders present here, there is no time to waste. Is it crucial to embark without hesitation on a comprehensive real-time evaluation of our professional practices, both with our healthcare facilities and in our healthcare companies, in the industrial sector, and within our regulatory bodies. The future of our healthcare system, serving the population, depends on it.