

## HEALTH: HOW AND HOW MUCH ARE WE WASTING?

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### **Aiming for appropriateness and quality of care to reduce waste in financial, human, and material resources**

Recent health-related events have highlighted areas of waste in our healthcare system, emphasizing the need to invest in a more resilient healthcare system. A key factor contributing to this waste is the complex organization of the healthcare system. Inadequate collaboration and communication between parties result in redundancies, misdirections, and, consequently, the inefficient allocation of financial, human, and material resources. To address this issue, it is essential to implement efficient organizational strategies that foster collaboration among all parties involved in the health sector. The impacts would be visible at both the macroeconomic and micro levels, directly affecting the daily routines of healthcare professionals. The latter dedicate between 25 and 30% of their time rectifying inefficiencies stemming from a lack of organizational relevance. The existing situation presents a noteworthy obstacle in terms of attracting and retaining healthcare professionals.

When focusing on healthcare quality, health authorities should adopt a holistic approach, rather than a segmented one. This means assessing quality comprehensively to identify specific issues, to establish clear objectives, and to execute tailored strategies. To drive this enhancement, various measures can be deployed, such as effective communication, transparent quality benchmarks, financial incentives for both patients and healthcare providers, and the implementation of suitable regulations.

### **Reducing healthcare waste: emphasizing sobriety and smart data utilization**

In the current context characterized by efforts to minimize the environmental footprint of human activities, reducing resource waste in the healthcare sector is a clear imperative. The healthcare system significantly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 8% of such emissions in our country. Embracing sober, environmentally friendly practices is an inevitable choice if we are to work towards decarbonizing this sector.

Simultaneously, the process of digital transformation presents a valuable opportunity for reallocating resources more effectively, thereby reducing waste. Data and information systems are central to this transformation. The smart utilization of data, for instance, has the potential to diminish unnecessary prescriptions by analyzing patients' biological data. It can also provide crucial information during surgical procedures or customize prevention efforts by focusing on at-risk populations.

### **Giving precedence to prevention over treatment to achieve cost savings and to promote a healthier population**

Emerging healthcare challenges, including chronic diseases and an aging population, call for a fundamental shift from a primarily curative approach to a proactive and preventive approach. This shift aims at mitigating the substantial costs linked to preventable illnesses and postpone their adverse consequences. For instance, in France, the extension of the national tobacco control program through 2050 would result in substantial healthcare cost reductions and an improved quality of life for the population. Furthermore, maintaining and intensifying vaccination programs is an effective means to prevent a wide range of diseases.

### **Engaging all stakeholders in defining action blueprints and fostering interest in taking proactive measures**

In the battle against healthcare waste, the commitment of every stakeholder is essential. This requires cultivating a widespread interest in the quality and relevance of care. The French National Health Insurance Fund (CNAM) is implementing initiatives to ignite interest, primarily through awareness campaigns designed to advocate for the proper use of the healthcare system. Another significant aspect relates to hospital prescribers, who account for half of the medication prescriptions in urban areas. However, their engagement in resource-efficient management remains limited. Future reforms in hospital funding must decisively tackle this issue. Linking funding to the quality of care could offer a potential solution.

Acknowledging and appreciating the expertise of healthcare professionals throughout their careers is crucial for enhancing their impact. Ongoing recertification of individual skills promotes continuous improvement, resulting in improved job quality and the overall appeal of the healthcare field. A more robust recognition of skills acquired, both during initial training and throughout one's career, is imperative for effectively responding to the evolving requirements of the healthcare field.