

## HOW TO ASSESS THE QUALITY OF A HOSPITAL?

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### **The certification of healthcare facilities is a tool for management and change**

The certification of healthcare facilities is renewed by the French National Authority for Health (HAS) every four years. It serves both healthcare professionals and decision-makers in ensuring the quality of care provided in an institution. The certification process goes beyond auditing as it involves the feedback and collaboration of Regional Health Agencies (ARS) to assist struggling facilities. It plays a key role in change management as it facilitates the adoption of best practices and is part of a continuous quality improvement process. It also creates a sense of accomplishment and pride for professionals in certified facilities.

### **The certification process evolves in response to new challenges faced by healthcare institutions**

The certification process continuously evolves based on real-world experiences. Currently in its fifth version, the evaluation method is renewed each year with a new reference framework. In 2023, adjustments were made regarding ethical criteria, while the changes in 2024 will focus on digital requirements. Other issues are also being considered e.g., the quality of human resources, the quality of work-life, teamwork, environmental sustainability, and patient care pathways to better support patients after their discharge.

### **The quality of care is assessed by and for the patient**

The patient is at the centre of the quality assessment of hospitals. The e-satis national platform measures patient satisfaction and experience. For instance, it collects feedback from patients that have been hospitalized for more than 48 hours in an ambulatory surgery ward or a Follow-up and Rehabilitation Care (FRC). Their comments are analyzed through automated language processing. E-Statix allows to assess the smoothness of the patient pathway, the quality of human relationships, professionalism, and the quality of information provided by the staff. This analysis has highlighted the need to improve the reception and processing of patients. Patient-centred quality assessment also involves incorporating the patient's experience into governance of healthcare facilities, which requires substantial investment.



## **The hospitality model is a lever for improving the quality of patient intake in healthcare facilities**

In the hospitality industry, the provision of warm and welcoming experience is fundamental. It involves the commitment of the staff who reflect the image of their establishment and an individualized approach to customers. For patients, a hospital of high quality is one that considers their stay as important and engages them at every step of their patient journey. The quality of healthcare facilities reflects the quality of the professionals working there. By drawing inspiration from the hospitality model, healthcare institutions can rethink how they welcome their patients and preserve their dignity. This personalized approach consists in focusing on the patient, eliminating sources of complaint, introducing small gestures of kindness, and ultimately enhancing the overall patient experience. Offering additional paid services, along the lines of the services that patients pay for when they are at home, could be a way to finance these initiatives.

## **Corporate culture and continual improvement models could help addressing the complexity of indicators in healthcare facilities**

A healthcare facility encompasses many internal processes and professions. From a managerial perspective, implementing monitoring systems for these processes is complex given the number of indicators involved. Moreover, some processes like logistics and catering may not fall under typical managerial organizations. Hence, corporate culture, even if intangible, often carries more weight than indicators. It involves effective dialogue between physicians, healthcare providers, and managers, and, more broadly, a culture of medico-economic efficiency and the common good. In addition to corporate culture, continuous improvement models, which have proved their effectiveness in businesses could also benefit healthcare facilities.

These alternatives will not replace monitoring indicators or "data-driven" analysis. Indeed, indicators and corporate culture are not incompatible, as demonstrated by the integration of machine learning into operating room scheduling. Machine learning, which is a branch of Artificial Intelligence (AI), focuses on creating systems that learn or improve their performance based on the data they process. This requires having an initial review of performance to fuel the AI. This initial performance can stem from corporate culture.