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Perspectives on the Strategic Health Impact in Romania

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Abstract: *The health system and management of medical services is a sector of major importance, considering that it concerns the entire population, emphasis should be placed on the medical act, on the motivation and training of medical personnel to provide quality health services that respond fully meet patient expectations. It should be remembered that it is easier to prevent than to treat, and primary prevention represents the basis of a healthy society and the most effective and inexpensive method to stop the occurrence and evolution of chronic diseases.*
In this sense, new concepts and methodologies have been developed, both worldwide and in our country, especially recently, that try to meet the needs. It is approached differently and specifically depending on the individual needs, the resources we have at hand, all of which have as the result the improvement of the medical act and the satisfaction of the patient.

Keywords: *management; strategies; motivation; training, health; satisfaction; importance.*

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1. Introduction

This article focuses on the perspectives on the strategic health impact in Romania.

Starting from the premise that in the structure of any society, the health system and the management of medical services represent a sector of major importance, given that it interests the entire population, we should focus on the medical act, motivating and preparing the medical staff to provide quality health services that fully meet the expectations of patients.

The main objectives of the management of medical services in the health system concern the motivation, development, increase of the quality of services and implicitly the satisfaction of the patients.

The actuality of the approach in terms of research consists in the necessity of approaching two different sciences, management and medicine, but which have as a common goal the efficiency of human resources, the expense-benefit ratio, and the improvement of the medical act and of the time (Buchbinder, 2017, p. 4-5)

Primary care defines the provision of comprehensive first-contact health care, regardless of the nature of the health problem, in the context of a continuous relationship with patients, in the presence or absence of the disease. It should be noted that it is easier to prevent than to treat, and primary prevention is the basis of a healthy society. In this regard, new concepts and methodologies have developed both worldwide and in our country, especially lately, those try to meet the needs, to approach differently and specifically depending on the individual needs the resources we have at hand, all of which have as a final result the improvement of the medical act and the satisfaction of the patient (World Health Organization, 2018)

1.1 The management of the quality of health services has as main objective at the level of the health unit to plan, organize, coordinate, methodologically guide and monitor the activities by ensuring and continuously improving all medical actions.

In order to ensure the highest possible level of professionalism of the medical staff, the execution positions at the level of these structures must either occupied by doctors or staff with specialized education. Human resource is important, being regarded as an essential component for the success of medical institutions and for a proper functioning of the health system as a whole. (Engels et al., 2006)

Reforms in the medical sector focus on structural changes, cost control, increasing customer satisfaction, without focusing on human resources, medical staff, without taking into account the aging of the

population, informed patients with increased demands, high costs of acquisition and maintenance of medical technology, lack of an efficient, standardized information system, all these lead to a migration of medical staff and decrease in the efficiency of the medical act .(Marshall et al., 2002)

Prevention is the most effective and inexpensive way to stop the appearance and evolution of chronic diseases, we can act on the main risk factors – unbalanced diet, physical inactivity and smoking - in order to significantly improve the state of health and longevity and not only in terms of quality of life but also in terms of financial aspect, saving the money that would have allocated for further investigations, medicines but to modernize the offices, hire medical staff, to enjoy the most precious resource: time – both of the medical staff (they will have fewer patients to treat), of the society – people can work, contribute to economic activity, no medical leave is paid and the patients will be satisfied with the quality of the medical act. (Mozaffarian et al. 2016, p 448)

From an education perspective, it is important to recognize that education plays a key role in shaping strategic health impacts in countries including Romania. Well-informed and educated people can make more informed decisions about their health and well-being. Educational institutions and programs therefore have an important responsibility to impart knowledge and skills in health promotion, disease prevention, and health care.

Educational institutions can help individuals take responsibility for their health by promoting health literacy and fostering a comprehensive understanding of health-related issues. This includes providing accurate and up-to-date information about diseases, healthcare systems, access to healthcare services and healthy lifestyle choices. Furthermore, education can help reduce health inequalities by addressing the social determinants of health and ensuring equal access to quality health care for all, regardless of socioeconomic background. can play an important role in In addition, educational institutions can contribute to the health sector by producing a skilled workforce. By offering health-related programs such as degrees in medicine, nursing and public health, we are able to develop professionals who can actively contribute to the improvement of the Romanian healthcare system as a whole. Armed with their knowledge and expertise, these professionals can work to develop effective strategies to address national health challenges and improve public health outcomes (Green & Kreuter, 2005, p. 384-385)

In addition, research conducted at educational institutions provides valuable insight into various aspects of Romanian healthcare. Rigorous scientific research enables researchers to identify health problems, analyze

their causes, and suggest evidence-based solutions. These research findings can inform policymaking, guide health interventions, and contribute to the overall strategic health impact of the country. It is worth noting that individual contributions in education can vary widely. Researchers, educators and policy makers focused on health-related issues can play an important role in shaping strategic health impacts in Romania. Their efforts to advance knowledge, develop innovative educational approaches, and influence policy decisions can have far-reaching implications for health outcomes.

1.2 The importance and motivation of the topic of study is amplified by the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, both from a medical point of view – the need for immunization, prevention and control of the spread, as well as from a managerial and socio-economic point of view, the approached topic has a wide applicability in the medical field, prophylaxis being at the base of the pyramid of medical documents.

In the specialized literature there are papers that address the subject treated, also in my scientific approach, I noticed that the efficiency of a management of medical services in primary prevention has not been established and demonstrated, so in this case, I will aim to prove practically this causality and I will argue it through case studies. (Ruth&Robitscher, 2021)

It is not by chance that I will bring into discussion the human and managerial factor, because in the current conditions of the pandemic, the manager must find a way to motivate his colleagues not to give up, to perform their tasks as well as possible with an important shortage of medical staff, limited resources, this being achieved only through an appropriate organizational-managerial structure.

At the same time, the research will focus on aspects of health care, comprising at least two of the following elements: -promoting proper nutrition; family planning, childcare and foster care; immunization against major infectious diseases; prevention and control of local endemic diseases; suitable treatment of common diseases and trauma; providing treatments for basic conditions. (Ghebreyesus, 2020, p. 62-63)

The implications and motivations behind strategic health impact analysis in Romania are multiple and include different perspectives.

Public Health: Understanding and evaluating strategic health impacts in Romania is critical to promoting public health and well-being. This enables policy makers and health professionals to identify prevalent health problems, prioritize interventions and allocate resources effectively. Make informed decisions based on disease prevalence, access to health care, lifestyle factors, and environmental conditions by assessing the impact of

different factors on health outcomes. Hygiene policies and interventions can be improved.

Health System Efficiency: A strategic health impact analysis helps assess the efficiency and effectiveness of Romania's health system. It provides insights into provider performance, healthcare facility availability, and access to quality care. By identifying gaps and areas for improvement, policy makers can improve the efficiency and equity of health services, reduce inequalities and make informed decisions to optimize resource allocation.

Economic considerations: Strategic health impact analysis also has economic implications. By examining population health, the burden of disease, and the economic impact of disease, policymakers can understand the impact on productivity, labor force participation, health care spending, and overall economic development. This information guides resource allocation, investment in healthcare infrastructure, and implementation of preventive measures, ultimately leading to long-term economic benefits. Policy development and evaluation: Strategic health impact analysis provides the basis for evidence-based policy development and evaluation. This helps policy makers understand the effectiveness of existing policies, identify gaps and areas that need attention, and develop strategies to address them. By monitoring health indicators and outcomes over time, policy makers can assess the progress of health initiatives, change policies where necessary, and assess their impact on public health. (Popa et al., 2016, p. 97-99)

International comparison: Analysis of strategic health impacts in Romania allows comparison with other countries and regions within Europe and around the world. This comparative perspective will help identify best practices, learn from successful strategies implemented in other regions, and adapt relevant approaches to the Romanian context. This facilitates benchmarking and facilitates cooperation in research and policy development, as well as the exchange of knowledge and expertise. In summary, strategic health impact, analysis in Romania is essential for promoting public health, optimizing health system efficiency, understanding economic impacts, guiding policy development and evaluation, and facilitating international comparisons. It serves as the foundation for evidence-based decision-making and improving public health.

1.3 The evolution of the health services system in Romania

The health services system in Romania is towards the end of a long-drawn transition from an integrated model, in which most of the organizations providing healthcare were in public ownership, under the authority of the Ministry of Health, employed by state medical staff, to a contractual model financed predominantly from public sources, in which

most private or public health service providers, with a high degree of autonomy, concludes compulsory contracts with the health insurance funds. These contracts are based on a framework contract, by which the State, in consultation with the representatives of the main categories of providers, regulates the conditions for providing medical services.

Health outcomes have improved significantly since 1990, but they remain well below the European Union average. Life expectancy in Romania increased by more than 4 years from 2000 (71.2 years) to 2019 (75.6 years) – Eurostat 2021

In addition, the growth rate in terms of life expectancy decreased from 2011 – 2019 being only 1 year, from 74.4 to 75.6. (Nicolescu et al., 2014)

Low life expectancy and modest growth rate of life expectancy reflect unhealthy behaviors, deficiencies in the provision and access to health services, socio-economic imbalances.

Regarding the public health interventions, it has been observed that they are limited in scale and intensity, the human resource and the infrastructure are insufficient, this generating unsatisfactory results. (Vladescu, 2016, p. 5-9)

The performance of most vaccination programs has been reduced, below 95%, a representative example being the reduced vaccination values with the measles-rubella-mumps vaccine (MMR), which are correlated with the measles epidemic between 201 - 2020, which recorded 64 deaths and no less than 20,000 cases of measles.

The causes are diverse, from the refusal of vaccination and the promotion in the mass media of various anti-vaccine public persons, of the adverse reactions, to the lack of vaccines.

The screening of the national population is underdeveloped, the only active screening program funded by the Ministry of Health's budget being the one for colon cancer, which also has unsatisfactory results. Several regional screening programmers are currently underway, which are co-financed by EU funds.

Primary care in Romania is mainly focused on the care of acute conditions and the monitoring of patients with chronic diseases, and active monitoring and prevention represent only a small part of the reported activity of family doctors.

Access to health services, especially primary care services is unequal due to the non-unitary distribution in terms of family medicine offices, with poor coverage in rural areas.

The average number of insured persons enrolled in family doctors in rural areas is higher compared to the urban area, this aspect having a

negative aspect of the access to health services. It is worth remembering that in 2019, 6% of the communes (168) did not have a work point or family medicine office on their territory. (Coculescu, 2016)

Nationally, the hospital sector remains the main component of the health system, the main disadvantage remaining the inefficiency of allocating and using resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced access to diagnosis and therapeutic services, especially for chronic diseases, this will be reflected in the coming period, in an increased incidence of complications of these diseases.

Against the background of insufficient human resources, but also unsuitable or poor infrastructure, the development of communicational medical assistance levels, palliative care, long-term care and rehabilitation-recovery care is slow.

Expenditures for health services have increased much faster compared to Romania's GDP, representing 6% of GDP in 2020, 80% of resources come from public resources, they are fewer than most states at EU level.

Another major problem is the fact that 14% of the country's population does not have health insurance, they have access only to the minimum package of services that cause an excessive use of medical services and the late detection of chronic diseases with negative effects both in terms of the health status of the population and on the efficiency of using public funds. (Radu C.P. 2021)

More than half of the resources of the National Health Insurance Fund is used for hospital care, and primary health care, specialized outpatient, medication, medical technologies receive less than half of the funding, compared to EU member states that invest for technology, innovation, primary health care, preventive, hospital care receive a smaller share.

The efficiency of allocating resources is diminished due to the lack of a canceled investment plan, the inefficient administrative capacity, based on political criteria, the inefficiency of communication and coordination between the Ministry of Health and other financiers. (Bichescu, 2017, p. 434–446)

Romania elaborated last year, in 2021, the National Plan for Reconstruction and Resilience (PNRR), which is to be implemented by 2026, with reimbursable and non-reimbursable financing from the European Union. PNRR provides reforms in terms of human resources management, payment mechanisms and investment management. (Ministry of Health, 2021).

In addition, the health system will have access to considerable non-reimbursable funding through the Operational Health Program 2021-2027.

Conclusion

The management of medical services in the health system is of major importance as it affects the entire population. The main objectives are to motivate and develop the medical staff, increase the quality of services, and ultimately satisfy patients.

The approach to this issue involves both management and medicine, with a focus on efficiency of human resources, cost-benefit ratio, and improvement of the medical act.

Primary care is emphasized as a crucial aspect of preventative healthcare, and new concepts and methodologies are being developed to meet the specific needs of individuals and improve the medical act. The management of the quality of health services aims to plan, organize, coordinate, and monitor activities to ensure and continuously improve all medical actions.

Human resources are essential for the success of medical institutions and the proper functioning of the health system. The importance of the topic of study is amplified by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on medical, managerial, and socio-economic aspects.

The efficiency of management of medical services in primary prevention has yet to be fully established and demonstrated in the literature.

Additionally, it is important to note that reforms in the medical sector should not neglect the importance of human resources and the need to address issues such as the aging of the population, informed patients with increased demands, and the high costs of acquiring and maintaining medical technology.

A lack of an efficient, standardized information system can also lead to a migration of medical staff and decreased efficiency of the medical act.

Prevention is crucial in addressing chronic diseases and can significantly improve the state of health and longevity, both in terms of quality of life and financial aspects.

By addressing key risk factors such as unbalanced diet, physical inactivity, and smoking, we can save money that would otherwise be allocated for further investigations, medicines, and other expenses.

This can then be used to modernize offices, hire medical staff, and ultimately improve the quality of the medical act and patient satisfaction.

Overall, the management of medical services in the health system is a complex and multi-faceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach to address the various challenges and ensure the best possible outcome for patients and society as a whole.

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