MANAGEMENT OF THE HEALTH SERVICES
IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTEGRATION
OF A STANDARDIZED SYSTEM AT EU LEVEL

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Abstract
The Romania’s integration in the European Union drew upon it a series of major changes at the level of society and of the administration system. As it was foreseen, the changes took place at the level of health system, too. This case, the changes are major and strike mainly to the rigid infrastructure built along time.
For an acceleration of changes in the health system for the harmonization with the European system, it is necessary the tracing of certain stages in a more accelerated rhythm, even jumping over some intermediary stages. These fast changes don't lack yet the risks, by this reason, one recommends prudence and possibly the adoption of transition systems, which have already been successfully applied in other similar countries.

INTRODUCTION – THE CURRENT SITUATION
The goals of health services are: a healthier population and equal access of citizens to the health services. The persons who have a bigger need of care are a priority. There is a series of criteria that must be fulfilled, so that the health services to be considered of a high standard. They must:
- Be of good quality, based on knowledge based on scientific researches and proved experience;
- To be based on the observance of patients' dignity and the right to choose, and to be open to the participation and influence by the patients;
- To be accessible for everybody;
- To offer the patients the right to choose;
- To offer the citizens and patients complete information with respect to the access to quality services and the effects of these services;
- To use efficiently and responsibly the resources.
The efficient health services are not vital only for the health state, safety and welfare of citizens, but also for the trust of population in the ability of society and state of responding to their own needs. The health system must face certain major provocations, as consequence of the increase of requirements and expectances of population. Therefore, it must:
- To supply health services for an aging population;
- To answer fast the even higher requirements of appropriate care, particularized for each citizen, with the available resources;
- To adapt the care structures to the citizens' needs;
- To allow the patients and their families to play an active role in the decisions regarding the supply of health services;
- To offer competitive services, at international standards (European) of health care;
- To answer the needs of trans-border medical services and facilitate the mobility of patients and medical staff in the European Union.
To answer these high needs and requirements regarding the health services, supported efforts must be made in order to develop and improve the efficiency of sanitary system at all the levels.

From these efforts, we mention:

- The fast spreading of the new information, as for example by constant introduction of new methods of diagnosis and treatment;
- The insurance of the better care for the patients that need a treatment from different health service suppliers;
- The more efficient use of the last generation equipments and of the qualified staff;
- The implementation of organization changes related to the supply of care. As for example, we have to mention the transfer of healthcare from the hospitals into ambulatory and home;
- The insurance of staff access to the permanent training means;
- The supply for citizens and patients of the information regarding issues of care, like the access, quality, treatments, services, rights and alternative treatment forms;

Currently, the improvement of medical care services must be issued from the patients' perspective, not from the one of the medical staff. This supposes the active involvement of patients and the accent on their needs.

THE SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM MANAGEMENT IN HEALTH

Strong points of the health system in Romania
- Interest and intention of launching common strategies with the European Union;
- Work group for the strategy and inter-operation capacity with the similar services of E.U.;
- The very well trained family doctors;
- The hospitals and other health services providers with a large experience in the field;
- The long tradition in the activity of data collection and keeping;

Weak points of the health system in Romania
- Absence of an appropriate endowment of the hospitals;
- Frequent changes in the staff structure at the level of the Ministry of Health;
- Lack of an appropriate budgetary support;
- Insufficient level of endowment with computers in the hospitals;
- Low lasting of the results from the previous projects;
- Lack of a standardization frame, lack of cooperation between the main actors in the field;
- Lack of updated information for the management and making the decisions at all the management levels;
- Low level of the process automation, both at the level of health services providers and at the administration level. At the administration level, the lack of system for the clinic and management decision process;
- Insufficient information support for clients - citizens and patients

Opportunities for the health system in Romania
- Permanent price decrease at the necessary technologies;
- Increase of the quality and availability of technologies;
- Economies issued by the automation of processes, using the modern technologies (capability, efficiency, quality and safety);
• European member state and the possibility of using the European financing programs;
• The possibility of using the experience of other EU member states and MHO;
• International cooperation taking into account the belonging of Romania to several profile bodies.

Threats for the health system in Romania
• The ad-hoc priority, preference of other priorities;
• Low training degree of the users of new information applications;
• Insufficient support from the central and local authorities;
• Lack of financial resources;
• Lack of qualified experts;
• Bigger and bigger dependence to the quality and trust in hardware and software products;

IT SOLUTIONS IN THE HEALTH SYSTEM

Currently, the technologies are used almost in the whole sanitary system, in different ways and for different purposes. The information systems are a very good example in the optimization and harmonization of the Romanian health system with the European one.

The information potential has never been used at its maximum potential. Until now, only certain domains of the sanitary system used information technologies at a high level. The reasons are easy to understand: difficulties in the acceptance of certain specific requirement of inter-operability for the information solutions, the need of communication was not so big in the past, but also the high costs of information solutions. Many of the information instruments are only used for a small part of the charges that they could take over, and the inter-operability is very limited.

Also, the investments in information systems were not accompanied by the development of the users' competencies. Additionally, the costs regarding the maintenance and post-implementation operation have been for most of times under-estimated.

The current limitations of the information solutions are:
- Problems with the exchange of information:
- They can't take over easily new functions, like the decision support in different treatment schemes;
- They can't compile and communicate easily information to the accountancy and management systems at an upper level to the national registers;
- The lack of common interfaces for users, which makes difficult their use by the medical staff;
- They are not developed for a cost-efficient operation and management;
- The patients can't access their own health file or compiled information for them by the medical staff.

There are needed supported efforts for the improvement of use of the modern solutions and especially of the information ones in health. As for example, there are necessary better processes of making decisions, when the information solutions are introduced.

For this, it is necessary a new approach towards the information solutions: a new strategic operational perspective.

The modern information technologies make possible things that seemed impossible to be made in the past: organization, coordination and supply of medical assistance, clinic research in hardly to image ways in the past and with reasonable costs.
The citizens, patients play an active role in the definition of the new supplying ways of services, depending on their needs and requirements:

- Simple procedures of finding and contact of the units that supply different types of care;
- Access to information regarding the care needs, symptoms, diseases and treatment;
- Information regarding the available options of care, their availability and the results until now;
- Choices in health; information regarding the guarantees concerning granted cares;
- Access without troubles to the information stored in electronic form regarding the diagnoses, test results, adopted measures and the prescribed drugs;
- The access to information concerning the patients' rights;

From the point of view of the health staff, the benefits may be listed as follows:

- The information stored in a certain place of the health service system may also be used in other places, as the case may be, any time and without technical difficulties;
- The communication between the patients and the health service providers may take place in certain cases by electronic means, by secured electronic mail, for example:
- The medical service suppliers, the assistance units, the patients and their families will be able to communicate one to each other by new means: video-conferences and other communication means;
- One may benefit of remote medical consultations;
- The registered information related to cares and treatment may be used for other purposes: for the management, for the pursuance of treatment, for research, development, quality insurance.

The efficient and inter-operable solutions can decrease the number of hours spent for administrative charges, which means more time dedicated to patients. Also, they may decrease the incidence of mistakenly administrated treatments, may promote the more active participation of patients and a better accessibility.

The operational perspective supposes several actions performed step by step:

- consolidation of the patient's status and a better participation of him to the medical act;
- supply of medical assistance services without operational, administrative or geographical limits;
- better work instruments for the staff abroad;
- efficient management of resources and economic efficiency in the health services;
- establishment of the conditions for use of information solutions in health.

It must be adopted a common position regarding the goals for the permanent development, renewal and improvement of efficiency of health services in Romania in order to harmonize with the health systems of the European Union. These areas of action could be as follows:

1. Consolidation of the patient's status and a better participation of him to the medical act
   The status of patients and of their families regarding the supply of health services must be consolidated, they must have a better access to information regarding the medical act. Efforts have to be made in the direction of involvement and more active participation of patients and their families in the health domain, which will impact on the increased use of information solutions and on their access to different useful information.

2. Supply of medical assistance services without operational, administrative or geographic limits
   The mobility of population increased as consequence of movement of the students for university education, changes of the places of employment and residence, etc. The health services must be able to operate without interruption, even for the persons
who move or live in more than one single place. Also, the assistance services for the specific care needs must be able to be supplied in more than one medical assistance unit, which is, for example, specialized for certain types of care.

3. Better work instruments for the health staff
The use of information technologies in the Romanian medical assistance system is unequal and quite low. The work instruments must be much easier to use, but they must also simplify the common work procedures in the health domain. The instruments must have a common interface for the users, access common possibility, security and common communication functions. The accessibility and services may be much improved by the aid of information solutions. Like the competencies and capacities of the health staff, by specialized systems of decision support based on knowledge.

4. Efficient management of resources and economic efficiency in the health services
The information solutions were used in the planning, management and monitoring processes of health services. The permanent development and improvement of information solutions in these domains are essential. The decrease of waiting times, coordination of patients' care and decrease of the administrative burden of health staff are only few of the beneficial effects of their use.

5. Establishment of the conditions for use of information solutions in health
For the establishment of conditions for use of information solutions in health, there are necessary few actions, namely:
- harmonization of legislative frame with the high needs of information technologies, insuring in the same time the data protection
- development of national technical infrastructure in health, having as purpose the establishment of a secured system of electronic communication, able to perform the connection of the medical assistance units and the advance medical devices
- The intra-sector cooperation is essential
The operational perspective in the health domain supposes a tight cooperation between the different actors of the sanitary sector. It is essential the adoption of a common approach regarding the information problems.

The solutions in the health domain of tomorrow must be coordinated at national level and must be supported by a unique technical infrastructure. Therefore, the information solutions (National electronic health card, electronic prescription) must be administered, coordinated and monitored at national level.

The solutions in health suppose the cooperation of all the actors in the sanitary sector, at national level. The main goal is that of establishment of the basic conditions for the use of information solutions, including the harmonization of legislative frame, establishment of an information structure and of a technical common infrastructure.

Another reason of cooperation at national level is the control of costs, as well as the staff policies, as for example, the need of training in the use of modern equipments for the health staff, on all the system levels.

The future changes suppose a series of employments of the involved actors at national, county and local level in the health service supplying process and a general mobilization at the level of all the functional systems at state level.

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