

Cost of Quality in Palliative Care Centers: development of a questionnaire and its implementation in a Palliative Care Center

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BACKGROUND:

Cost of Quality (CoQ) is an important tool for ensuring continuous quality improvement, viability and sustainable competitiveness in Organizations which has not yet been tested in Palliative Care (PC).

AIMS:

To study and assess the CoQ of PC Centers (PCCs) through the creation of a CoQ evaluation questionnaire specialized in their operating conditions.

METHODS (DESIGN, DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS): Through a scoping review for CoQ in industry, service companies and healthcare, we identified available CoQ questionnaires only applied in industry. We developed a modified questionnaire to estimate the CoQ both in homecare and inpatient PC services including items where costs incurred either due to low quality or due to initiatives taken to achieve high quality. For the classification of the identified CoQ items the Prevention-Appraisal-Failure Method (PAF) was applied; the items were classified into its 4 categories: prevention, appraisal, internal and external failures. The questionnaire was then validated by a group of experts. Finally 12 members of the staff of a specific PCC applying a mature Total Quality Control System, used the suggested questionnaire to evaluate its CoQ. Descriptive statistical techniques were applied for the evaluation of data collected by this specific PCC to assess level of impact of each CoQ item and category on its total CoQ and correlation analysis (Pearson correlation coefficient, CCP and P-Value, PV) was used to estimate the correlation between the PAF categories.

RESULTS: A 72 items CoQ questionnaire was developed for PCCs. Its use in this specific PCC identified an increased level of impact of only 3 CoQ items in its total CoQ (mean value>4.5 in a

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7-grade scale); the correlation between the 4 categories of CoQ proved to be high (Table 1, CCP (*PV*) with the prevention cost being predominant.

CONCLUSION/DISCUSSION: Our experience showed that the questionnaire can be used as a tool by PCCs to assess their CoQ, identify quality improvement opportunities and develop and implement a Continuous Quality Improvement System.

	Prevention CoQ	Appraisal CoQ	Internal failures CoQ
Appraisal CoQ	0,850 (<i>0,000</i>)		
Internal failures CoQ	0,766 (<i>0,004</i>)	0,814 (<i>0,001</i>)	
External failures CoQ	0,450 (<i>0,142</i>)	0,646 (<i>0,023</i>)	0,699 (<i>0,011</i>)