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Determinants of Quality of Care for NHS England and the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic

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Quality of care is the number one priority of hospitals for NHS England, and patient experience is at the heart of the quality of care indicators. The aim of this paper is to study the significance of quality of care determinants before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Using data for 2019 and 2020, this study finds that the number of A&E attendances and the number of cancer patients waiting for 62 day+ for the first treatment are significant determinants of quality of care for both years. It also finds that and that the number of Covid-19 cases in hospitals is not significant to patient experience aspect of quality of care.

This study investigates the multifaceted relationship between hospital operational metrics and patient satisfaction within NHS England, focusing on the determinants of quality of care in 2019 and 2020, before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research examines five key factors—procedure waiting times, cancer treatment delays, A&E attendances, bed occupancy rates, and reported safety incidents—assessing their collective impact on patient complaints as indicators of healthcare quality. By employing a linear regression approach, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of how operational pressures and safety concerns correlate with patient complaints, offering insights into potential improvement areas within NHS hospitals.

The results reveal that prolonged cancer treatment waiting times and increased A&E attendances are strongly associated with higher complaint volumes, pinpointing critical operational areas requiring attention to enhance patient care and satisfaction. Additionally, findings suggest that the pandemic temporarily influenced complaint levels, likely due to heightened public awareness and tolerance for the NHS's constraints. Conversely, the impacts of bed occupancy and safety incidents on complaints were variable, emphasizing the complex drivers of patient dissatisfaction during a healthcare crisis. This study underscores the importance of adaptive resource allocation, enhanced patient communication, and expectation management, especially under increased healthcare system pressures. These insights contribute to existing literature by highlighting an integrated approach to identifying and addressing the determinants of quality care in public healthcare institutions.

Biography

Mrs. Fatima Ezzahra Abdelhak is a healthcare researcher from the United Kingdom specializing in performance management and quality of care within NHS England. Her work focuses on understanding how operational factors—such as A&E attendances, cancer treatment delays, waiting times, and bed occupancy—affect patient experience and complaint levels. Through her recent study comparing pre- and mid-pandemic data, she provides valuable insights into how COVID-19 influenced quality indicators and patient satisfaction. Her research supports evidence-based improvements in resource allocation, communication, and overall care delivery across NHS hospitals.

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