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Continuous Quality Improvement in hospital organizations: toward a new way of thinking^{*}

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Abstract

Under the impetus of governmental and public institutions, many hospital organizations undertook ambitious projects to implement Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). Although this drive is currently accentuated, the failure rate in such applications is rather high. In this paper, we propose our CQI model as a conceptual framework that will allow CQI to be applied to hospital processes. Through its innovative approach to modelling, analysis, redesign, and risk monitoring (based on established indicators), this framework can help to perpetuate the organizational improvements effected in the hospital processes. The generic character of our model will be illustrated by real-life applications on two hospital organizational configuration: clinical laboratory processes (CHU de Charleroi/Belgium) and pre-hospital emergency networks (Region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais/ France).

Key words: Continuous Quality Improvement, hospital processes.

1 Introduction

Over the last few decades, systematic, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) of care has been on the agenda of many healthcare organizations. However, though this trend is currently getting a lot of attention, “there is little evidence of the success of these CQI initiatives” [1] and despite the demonstrable enthusiasm of those who have implemented these initiatives, the fact remains that they have not delivered on the promised results [2]. The major cause of this failure is that the factors guaranteeing the effectiveness of these CQI programs are frequently neglected [3].

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