

# Private Medical Departments after COVID-19: A Review and Essay Regarding the Need for Improvement of Medical Facilities and the Need of Proper Healthcare Management

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## Abstract

This essay focuses on the need for restructuring the strategic backbone, especially in terms of patients' safety and increasing the medical center's ranking and standing in the healthcare field, in order to increase the number of medical examinations performed by the medical center. This will be done by facing the issue from multiple points of view: in terms of increasing quality and patients' safety COVID-19 hit the healthcare sector hard, revealing weaknesses and downfalls of hospitals and private medical centers alike. There is a need for funds and proper measures of quality and improvement for the sake of the patients. Proper healthcare management and directive funds are necessary in order to improve and keep the standards of healthcare for the only goal that must exist in a medical hospital or private medical clinic, the well-being of the patients above everything else.

## Keywords

Healthcare Funds, Italian Healthcare Management, COVID-19 Funds

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## 1. Introduction

It is of vital importance to properly and effectively organize an organization's framework in order for the working team of professionals and workers to be well integrated and organized in terms of intercultural relationships and heterogeneity. It is the author's opinion that a heterogeneous and diverse team which works in unison and harmony is indeed the best working force that a company and organization can have. This is even more vital when talking about implementing a

new strategy or phase. In this report, the author will outline how long strategic plans with the aim to increase the activity of a Medical Practice can be formulated and applied by increasing the standing of the company's quality, increasing patients' safety and satisfaction, which will allow the company to increase the number of medical examinations and make new partnership with insurance providers in the healthcare sector. The author believes it is very appropriate to discuss the fundamentals and theoretical backgrounds regarding the strategies that will render possible the implementation of such a plan.

The principal author used competencies and references to works he formulated for the North Wales Management School and the SSBR in order to bring forth its view and methodology.

Changes are one of the constants that are seen in the world of business and even more so in the healthcare field, where developments and new regulations shape the framework and workings of a healthcare company. A useful tool to be used to check for quality improvement of a change is the McKinsey 7 S framework. This special type of model is based on seven concepts (each of these starting with the letter S). These concepts are Systems, Structure, Strategy, Skills, Style, Staff and Shared values. This type of model is used to evaluate and monitor changes within an entity such as a company or organization. The seven S system is based on the concept that changes will have a positive impact and the reaction in terms of performance and stability from the part of the organization will be positive only if these seven concepts are in equilibrium and act in a synergistic way with each other.

Therefore, as a manager in the healthcare field, a person should evaluate which of these seven concepts is not working properly or in unison with all the rest and therefore act upon them to bring them to equilibrium. The hard elements of the model, the more tangible ones such as strategy, are more easily targeted and could be much easier to deal with than the soft elements, such as skills.

## **2. Body**

COVID-19 pandemic, across all the waves and dramatic impact, has shown a need for improve several factors in hospitals and private medical centers, including the need to increase patients' safety by increasing quality of staff, by training and dedicated courses, and increasing their skills. Dealing with complexity, culture and engagement with a professional group, and identifying which quality improvement methodology to consider with team engagement is not an easy task, especially when thinking that success rates for a proper implementation a quality improvement change is between 10% and 30%. Therefore, the planning phase of a strategy implementation is vital for its success, with tools such as the aforementioned McKinsey's tool. The factors highlighted by this model can also be treated as potential obstacle for a new implementation. A synergy between the departments is fundamental for a successful patient management infrastructure.

In order to properly and effectively increase care and patients' safety (Dickinson et al., 2008), which will directly increase notoriety, top professionals' attractiveness to the medical center and therefore number of medical examinations performed, a multifaceted outlook on the matter must be taken (Locock et al., 2001).

In the field of healthcare, especially regarding the sub-field of clinical medicine, the main objective should always be and is the wellbeing of the patient. The reason why the author is focused on putting an incredible high focus on these points is that in order for increase insurance company's related partnership, there must be an incredibly high focus and attention to patients' needs. It is fundamental to create an environment which minimizes the risk and potentiality of human error together with a reduction in organizational-induced error. This is done in order to avoid any possible avoidable error which could lead to harm of the patient. To achieve this, international standards have been placed by a plethora of organizations (such as the ISO standards) so that medical centres must comply with a minimum set of rules and requirements in order to being able to legally practice medicine, surgery or dental procedures to patients. However, it is to be noted how in order to achieve excellence in the field of medical practice, it is extremely important to go well beyond the average standards of practice and become a real gold standard of practice (Scott, 2021).

An excellent strategic plan to ensure safety to patients (both in-patients and out-patients) coming to the medical centre is to increase the safety and organizational knowledge to the staff (which include not only the medical doctors, but also secretary and front office staff, nurses and operator assistants). This can be done by organizing courses about empathy, care and organization or team works. When trying to increase safety it is important to note that one must take into account the inherent flawed performance of humans and human error, all the reason for an increase in quality and patients' safety measures. For instance, improving team efficacy and organizational working between interdisciplinary staff members will reduce risks to patient's safety by reducing the known "Swiss Cheese Model" (Perneger, 2005) where a hazard will go on causing damage due to "holes" in the system, which in the case of a medical centre could very well be the interdisciplinary management of the patient. Failure of teamwork and communication is often disruptive and destructive in terms of effective patients' management. A reduction in the culture of human error, especially in the healthcare field, is vital for both the wellbeing of the healthcare company and most importantly for the patient.

In order to achieve quality improvement, a plethora of different tools can be used by the managing staff. One of these tools is the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle. It focuses on the issue of translating and materializing the plan to implement and change which is required to enact it properly. PDSA provides a backbone for implementation of ideas, however in a delicate field of healthcare this could be very well too oversimplified and therefore dangerous (Reed, 2015). The role of PDSA is to swiftly get updated on whether the implemented plan is

working in a particular scenario and act accordingly, even making the appropriate changes if needed. In the complex social interactions and processes occurring in the field of healthcare, this easiness of use and high adaptive capacity of PDSA are extremely important features that support the adaption of strategic plans.

There is an urgent need for leaders in the healthcare field to become knowledgeable (Locock, 2001) in terms of the needs of the system itself and of the patients to make proper decisions in terms of funding and management.

Of course, not only implementation and monitoring, but also it is worth a quick mention in terms of how a strategic plan is thought up by the management team. In this part of the implementation other typology of analysis are relevant, which even though are more focused on resources capabilities diagnosis, they are also very useful in properly implementing a plan, for instance, the SWOT analysis (Parsons, 2021). This analysis is a particular type of analytical technique in which it consists of evaluating external and internal factors together with the corresponding factors' effects on the wellbeing of the business. For the internal factors' evaluation the VRIO analysis (Jurevicius, 2022), which stands for: Value, Rareness, Imitability, and Organisation, can be applied. Why mention this phase of plan implementation? The reason is that often in healthcare there are specific reasons for implementing plans or policies (fundamental in the healthcare sector). In fact, it is important, when thinking of what drives policy, to consider policy with either a big P or a little p. In terms of a big P, it usually comes from courts, law, policy statement, national health and governmental strategy, and sometimes even Supreme Court ruling. Instead, policies included under the umbrella term "small p" tend to be organisational policies. Both types of policies are fundamental and can have tremendous impact in the healthcare field, so the aforementioned analytical techniques may be useful when thinking about them, especially in the formation of such policies (mainly small p policies) (Jurevicius, 2022).

In terms of the post-implementation phase of a strategic plan or idea (Hart et al., 2021), it is vital, especially in the peculiarly complex and delicate field of healthcare, to monitor the sequelae and the progress of the implementation. One way, and quite important at that, to achieve this is to set what is known as "key performance indicators" (KPIs). These indicators will be measurable features that can be used to check how the implementation of the plan is going. These key performance indicators must be set initially, right at the planning stage, before the implementation, as it is necessary for a manager, especially in the healthcare field, to implement plans and projects directly connected with measurable features which will allow the management to directly and promptly measure the performance of the implementation and make appropriate changes if needed (for instance by using the PDSA cycle). For instance, the author will apply KPI for the case of implementation of a plan to increase patients' safety, a KPI could be an evaluation questionnaire to be filled by the patient to see the quality of the organization and the service provided by the staff. Another KPI can be a random assessment by an inspector of the proper manoeuvres and appropriate protocols implementation in the different wards. KPIs are fundamen-

tal because they make the implementation part of an idea or strategy or even a policy (McCance, 2015), a live process, which can rapidly change course and path in accordance to how well the plan is being implemented. Therefore, a second point is the evaluation of the pace of the strategy plan being implemented. All changes require a proper timing. For this to happen it is vital that the staff moves together with the change, and is not left behind. The engagement of the staff and the entire personnel is vital for the success of the implementation of a strategy, especially in the healthcare clinical field where patients' interaction is fundamental and the staff has to always move together with change and new strategies. To make sure that the staff is properly engaged, meetings and inter-departmental teamwork practices are important together with constant updates, explanations and interactions between the "front-line" staff and the administrators and managers. In fact, feedback from the staff is vital for proper accuracy of implementation and change, as a top-to-down approach may lead to mistakenly interpreted reasons for the improper implementation or unsatisfactory results received from the measurement of the KPIs. In case the pace is not correct or the implementation of the strategy is not going according to plans, corrective actions can be taken. When implementing a change, a corrective change to an implementation of a plan in response to a decrease in pace or improper effect of the change, it is vital to keep in mind the outcome, the goals of such plans. Finding the reason for the failure of the implementation is the main step towards a successful corrective measure creation. Is it the lack of motivation from the staff or the lack of resources available to the staff? The answer to these types of questions shapes the corrective measure to be implemented.

The final step to the implementation of a strategy plan or an idea is to review the entire progress of the process. It is important to see the goal achieved and the progress completion. As the topic in question is quality improvement in the healthcare field, it is of vital importance to remember that the progress of such a plan is not linear but circular. A never ending, and constantly improving process for the improvement of the medical facility and the patients' safety status. Redefining the KPIs and taking further corrective measurements can be extremely useful tools to improve the progress of the implementation, always keeping in mind to reward the staff for the success achieved and celebrating while motivating them to achieve greater goals for the improvement of the healthcare company but most of all for the health and wellbeing of the patient, the latter an extremely important point which makes the healthcare field such a magical, difficult and extremely rewarding field to work in.

Another factor which strongly affects the number of medical examinations that a healthcare company can perform includes expanding its number of medical centers. This expansion has to be applied in the later stage of the three years plan of incrementing revenues. This is due to the maintenance of high clinical standards in terms of medical examination performed. International strategy is a fundamental area of study in the field of strategy development and implementation regarding the proper success of a company.

### 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, shed new light on the worth of new management protocols in the healthcare field to fix issues emerged after the COVID waves and the need for further funds. There is an urgent need for leaders in the healthcare field to become knowledgeable (Locock, 2001) in terms of the needs of the system itself and of the patients to make proper decisions in terms of funding and management. With the proper management and healthcare leaders, there is the hope of maintaining high quality services, in both private and public medical settings, because every healthcare professional has to keep in mind one thing, something that has been at the core piece of the Sarandria-Cardone multi decennial experience in the healthcare field, that the patient must be at the center of everything, because the main goal is to treat the patient and bring the patient in a situation of wellbeing and health, both physically and mentally.

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### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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