Managing quality in health care

PR Sodani
Publisher: Rawat Publications, Jaipur (India), 2010: ISBN 81-316-0368-7; 180 pages, Indian Rs. 595

The quality of care is an important factor that increases patient satisfaction. Good quality care is also critical for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, quality has been perceived differently in various communities. A lot needs to be done to improve quality in health-care programmes. Health managers require a thorough understanding of not only the concepts but also the practical ways to enhance the quality of care.

Dr Sodani has designed this book as a primer for health professionals working in the area of health systems and public health, as well as for those engaged in research on quality in health care. It provides decision-makers at state and district levels with an understanding of planning, strategizing and implementing programmes aimed at providing quality care to patients. The book is a useful resource for students and to some extent for teachers of health management.

Six chapters of the book cover various topics related with measuring and diagnosing the quality of care, and strategizing and implementing the quality-of-health-care programmes with particular focus on reproductive and child health-care services at district level. The opening chapter of the book presents a brief overview of quality of care. The second chapter presents the quality-of-care frameworks developed by Donabedian, Bruce, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Pan American Health Organization, International Council on Management of Population Programmes, as well as the United Nations Population Fund’s Reproductive Health Quality Framework. However, it would have been better if the book presented the advantages and disadvantages of these frameworks in a tabular form. As Bruce’s framework is accepted worldwide for family planning services, an effort has been made to see its relevance for other health components like safe motherhood. Literature review on quality of care is discussed in the third chapter. The current status of quality of health care in Udaipur district of Rajasthan in India is also discussed in detail taking into account the six elements of quality of services: choice of methods; information given to users; technical competence; interpersonal relations; follow-up or continuity mechanisms and appropriate constellation of services.

Chapter four outlines the method of determining the factors responsible for the current quality of care. For this, the systems approach has been used, employing Jain’s Diagnostic Model that consists of five components: desired output; environment; input; information; and process. This approach is useful for health managers who are involved in health planning. Another chapter deals with strategy formulation to improve the quality of services. Several methods have been identified...
to evaluate strategies. Two methods have been used: Portfolio Analysis and Strategic Position and Action Evaluation Analysis. In the last chapter, the steps to translate a strategy into a plan of action have been elucidated. It is good that a case study has been used to explain how quality can be measured at district level, as well as the strategies that were found to be useful.

Several countries in the WHO South-East Asia Region are struggling to achieve the MDGs, the momentum for which can be increased by improving the quality of care. This book can be of help to health professionals and managers as it provides knowledge on how to improve the quality of health services at district level. This in turn will help improve health system performance that ultimately results in achieving the MDGs. Quality of health care in itself is an important area that needs attention. The book is a good resource for building conceptual understanding on the quality of health services, as well as for improving it in the current context of low-and middle-income countries.

Reviewed by: Kalpa Sharma
Institute of Health Management Research,
Jaipur 302011, India
e-mail: kalpasharma15@gmail.com