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Do German hospital report cards have the potential to improve the quality of care?

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Background

Hospitals report cards have been put in place within the past few years to increase the amount of publicly reported quality information in Germany.

Objective

The aim of this study was to assess the potential of German hospital report cards to improve quality of care.

Methods

First, a systematic Internet search aimed at identifying available report cards was conducted. Second, cross-sectional data (August/September 2013) were analyzed with respect to awareness, comprehension, and impact of report cards by using descriptive analysis and binary multivariate logistic regression models.

Results

Hospital report cards (N = 62) have become broadly available. However, awareness remains low, about one third (35.6%) of all respondents (N = 2027) were aware of German hospital report card. Regarding comprehensibility, in 60.7% of all experiments (N = 6081), respondents selected the hospital with the lowest risk-adjusted mortality; significant differences could be determined between the report cards ($p < .001$) with scores ranging from 27.5% to 77.2%. Binary multivariate logistic regression analysis revealed different significant respondent-related predictors on each report card. Finally, an impact on hospital choice making was determined.

Conclusion

To increase the potential of hospital report cards, health policy makers should promote the availability of report cards. In addition, the comprehensibility of German hospital report cards cannot be regarded as satisfying and should be enhanced in the future.

Comprehensibility of report cards (p value was calculated using chi-square test and t-test).

Did patients select the hospital with the lowest risk-adjusted in-house mortality?	Yes (N=3694; 60.7%)	No (N=1495; 24.6%)	No answer (N=892; 14.7%)	p
Age				
Mean	40.97 (±15.241)	41.60 (±16.703)	44.04 (±16.709)	<0.001
-20	57.8%	29.2%	13.1%	<0.001
21-30	63.2%	24.0%	12.8%	
31-40	64.2%	22.4%	13.4%	
41-50	62.3%	23.8%	13.9%	
51-60	62.7%	22.0%	15.3%	
61+	50.8%	28.4%	20.8%	
Gender				
Male	62.3%	23.0%	14.7%	0.010
Female	59.0%	26.3%	14.7%	
Nationalität				
German	60.8%	24.4%	14.7%	0.308
Others	57.4%	29.6%	13.0%	
Marital status				
Married	60.2%	25.4%	14.4%	<0.001
Single	62.3%	23.8%	13.9%	
Divorced	60.7%	23.6%	15.7%	
Widowed	36.8%	30.7%	32.5%	
(General school) Education				
High school graduation/Technical university entrance qualification	66.0%	22.2%	1.8%	<0.001
Intermediate secondary school	57.0%	25.9%	17.1%	
Secondary general school	50.9%	28.9%	20.2%	
Without school qualification	46.7%	0.0%	53.3%	
High school students	55.1%	33.8%	11.1%	
Health insurance				
SHI	60.7%	25.0%	14.3%	<0.001
PHI	63.5%	22.4%	14.1%	
No Health Insurance	13.3%	20.0%	66.7%	
Health care utilization				
No treatment	60.0%	21.6%	17.7%	0.014
1	60.5%	24.9%	14.5%	
2	59.4%	27.1%	13.4%	
3	61.8%	25.3%	12.9%	
4	60.7%	24.3%	15.0%	
5+	63.1%	24.1%	12.8%	
Internet use				
> once a day	61.3%	24.4%	14.3%	0.057
once a day	57.8%	26.6%	15.6%	
< once a day	57.2%	22.4%	20.4%	
Health Status				
Very Good	64.0%	23.4%	12.6%	0.042
Good	62.7%	23.7%	13.6%	
Satisfactory	58.9%	25.8%	15.3%	
Less Good	56.8%	26.3%	16.9%	
Bad	60.0%	26.7%	13.3%	
Postal code				
0xxx	63.2%	20.9%	15.8%	0.074
1xxx	64.7%	23.3%	12.1%	
2xxx	59.2%	25.5%	15.3%	
3xxx	59.7%	26.2%	14.1%	
4xxx	59.1%	25.3%	15.6%	
5xxx	64.0%	22.8%	13.1%	
6xxx	63.3%	23.8%	12.9%	
7xxx	59.8%	27.4%	12.8%	
8xxx	56.9%	25.5%	17.6%	
9xxx	58.5%	24.3%	17.2%	
Household				
1 person	59.7%	24.4%	15.9%	0.144
2 persons	59.6%	24.6%	15.8%	
3 persons	62.3%	24.6%	13.1%	
4 persons	62.0%	24.2%	13.8%	
5 persons and more	62.8%	26.5%	10.7%	

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