

Mapping a national plan for quality of health care improvement in the Republic of Moldova

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For more than a year, WHO has provided support to the Ministry of Health in the assessment and documentation of the quality of health care services in the Republic of Moldova. The development of a country policy report "Quality and safety of health care in the Republic of Moldova" is one of the final results of the process.



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The process

The process started in April 2014 with a rapid assessment made from review of public documents and stakeholder meetings using a format developed to enable identification of existing policies, organizations, methods and resources available for the quality and safety of health care nationally. The documentation process followed an agreed framework that focused on 5 strategic areas for quality improvement:

1. empowering consumers
2. institutional development
3. management development
4. clinical practice development
5. professional development.

5 national strategic working groups were created to analyze and give feedback on the above areas. Briefing meetings and background papers including results of initial assessment of the situation, and international comparisons and references were provided to participants.

Throughout the documentation process, a series of workshops to build capacities on specific technical issues were provided to support the strategic working groups:

- development and application of performance indicators
- international experience and standards for accreditation programmes
- criterion-based clinical audit
- principles of quality improvement.

As part of the documentation and capacity building process, technical assistance was provided to pilot a clinical audit case for acute myocardial infarction (AMI) among 22 hospitals from the country. The practical exercise followed a guideline developed by a WHO consultant

using internationally agreed upon principles and performance indicators on AMI auditing at provider and system levels. As a result of the conducted clinical audit, the National Center of Health Management developed a report, which was presented and discussed among key stakeholders at a roundtable.

Reaching agreement among key stakeholders

An important objective of the mapping process was to reach agreement among the key system-level stakeholders about the results of the assessment, to identify grey areas in quality assurance that need to be addressed in a coordinated manner and to test some of the recommended policy options. Accordingly, a series of visits to local and central-level service providers and discussions with the Ministry of Health, the National Council for Accreditation and Attestation, the National Health Insurance Company and the State University of Medical and Pharmacy "Nicolae Testemitanu" were conducted to debate and discuss findings, determine areas of stakeholder responsibility and identify options for quality improvements within a potential national plan. Quality improvements and system-level reforms in the Republic of Moldova were further debated at the National Health Forum in October 2014.

Additionally, the documentation process involved building synergies around the work conducted by several development partners who are planning to support quality of care in the country. WHO convened several meetings on an ad-hoc and regular basis using the quarterly organized Health Sector External Assistance Coordination Council at the Ministry of Health to introduce the findings and potential areas of improvement.

Recommendations of country policy report

The mapping process has led to a policy report, "Quality and safety of health care in the Republic of Moldova". Developed jointly by WHO and the 6 national strategic working groups, under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and guidance of WHO, this report provides the findings of the assessment and recommendations for national stakeholders to consider.

The assessment documents that many of the policies, structures and methods for improvement common to other countries have been initiated in the Republic of Moldova over the past 10 years. Many of these policies have not been fully implemented, supported, integrated or systematically evaluated for impact. For the purpose of designing a national plan, the mapping process explored the opportunities for future achievement and for learning from the past.

The report reflected several key findings.

- Quality is seen as a separate domain and is not regarded as an integral part of the provision of medical services.
- There is little opportunity for sharing data flows or learning within and between the stakeholders.
- The current external medical audit system is based on reported non-compliance rather than systematic examination of clinical

- priorities.
- There is a shortage of training on quality management for continuous professional development of both clinicians and managers.
 - Much could be achieved in the Republic of Moldova without any additional funding, especially if the use of existing resources and opportunities for efficiency savings were monitored more closely.

A list of 58 recommendations was provided to address the gaps, barriers and conflicts identified by this report. These could form the basis of a national framework for quality and safety, or even a national plan, but the action plan must come from consultation, communication and ownership of the public and many stakeholders within the Republic of Moldova. Discussion could begin with agreement on common strategic visions.

- The legislative framework supports values and principles of quality, safety and performance by enabling information exchange and cooperation between responsible bodies.
- Key dimensions and principles of quality in health care are agreed nationally as a basis for sharing methods and results of assessments and evaluations.
- Professional self-regulation, peer review and clinical governance complement top-down external assessment.
- Financing of system and institutions rewards achievement based on evidence of performance.
- Corporate and individual learning is based on feedback and sharing results of systematic audit and evaluation.
- Information systems are integrated and shared between managers, clinicians, and financing and supervisory bodies.

The process is organized as part of the biennial collaborative agreement (BCA) 2014–2015 between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova and WHO/Europe. It is related to the European Union/WHO joint initiative to support policy dialogue and universal health coverage.

News – Mapping the quality of health care in the Republic of Moldova
(<http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/republic-of-moldova/news/news/2014/05/mapping-the-quality-of-health-care-in-the-republic-of-moldova>)

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(<http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/republic-of-moldova/publications2/health-policy-paper-series-nr.-19-quality-and-safety-of-health-care-in-the-republic-of-moldova-2015>)