

Dental Department of the New Nicosia General Hospital, Dental Services-Ministry of Health, Cyprus

1) Title of the case

The Quality System of the Dental Department of Cyprus - Development of the operational policy, risk assessment and clinical/administrative protocols for the Dental Department of the New Nicosia General Hospital

2) General description of the organisation and/or project

Oral health care in Cyprus is provided by dentists and dental auxiliaries employed by the government (Dental Services of the Ministry of Health) and by private (non-governmental) dentists and dental auxiliaries financed by payments by patients or a source other than the government.

Access to public oral healthcare depends on income. Ultimate goal of the Dental Services is the Promotion of Oral Health combining curative and preventive activities.

- Services in Need- prevention and treatment to school children
- Services On Demand- general dental care, emergency care, specialised care(Prosthodontics, Oral-Maxillofacial surgery, Periodontics, Paedodontics, Restorative, Endodontia)-through the 56 Dental Clinics of the Hospitals, the urban and rural health centres

Dental Department of the New Nicosia General Hospital belongs to the Dental Services of the Ministry of Health.

3) The main content of the case

Since the establishment of the Dental Services there have not been any written documents stating that a specific operational policy or specific clinical or administrative protocols should be followed by the dental, paradental or supporting staff of the Department. Due to the factors stated in point 4, and mainly the implementation of CAF the need for developing such policies and protocols arose. With the contribution of the staff of Dental Services an operational policy and specific protocols have been prepared. These procedural measures will be initially implemented in the New Nicosia General Hospital and then gradually in all urban and rural dental clinics of the public sector. Some protocols may be distributed to the Cyprus Dental Association, that is the professional body of dentists in Cyprus, for further implementation.

4) The reasons behind the case

The Dental Services of the Ministry of Health of Cyprus are one of the Departments of the Cyprus Civil Service that participated in the Pilot

Application of CAF. The reasons behind the case were internal and external factors.

- Internal factor is mainly the implementation of CAF-the action plan developed and specially criteria 5, 7 and 8
- External Factors are: Introduction of GHIS, IT and new technology, Patients' needs & rights (Law), patients' complaints, operation of the New Nicosia and Famagusta General Hospitals, accession of Cyprus into the EU (free movement of patients and professionals)

5) The actors behind the case

In charge of the case was the Director of the Dental Services of the Ministry of Health. The case was supported by the Ministry of Health. Two dentists and a dental assistant (from the Dental Services) were assigned to coordinate the initiative. The personnel of the Dental Services was engaged in the initiative through departmental meetings and individual written engagement. The personnel engaged with the task used dentistry books and electronic databases-libraries to formulate the protocols (evidence-based dentistry).

6) The process leading to success

The implementation of the process was planned by the Ministry of Health and steered by consultants (a commissioning firm).

The Operational Policy of the Dental department of the New Nicosia General Hospital has been formulated first.

As stated in the Introduction of this policy, the Dental department is committed to developing and sustaining high quality standards of oral care based on the principles of quality management (Joint International accreditation standards (Second edition) and ISO 9001 – 2000). It believes that in doing so the department will increase its operational efficiency and financial effectiveness and promote the development of clear and concise processes, clinical guidelines and patient information which will be measurable and guarantee the continuous promotion of a safe environment for patients and staff.

The protocols will be reviewed in year 2008 (every two years).

The persons assigned by the Director of the Dental Services to coordinate this effort, collected the contributions of each officer and after formatting them and then submitted them to the Governance Committee of the New Nicosia General Hospital for approval.

7) Results indicating the success

Each member of the staff will implement the protocols adopted and will measure, where applicable, the clinical results of any procedure performed. The coordinating team will encourage and assist the personnel on this effort.

8) The main obstacles of the case

The initial effort was to persuade the personnel on the need of the formulation of these procedures. Through the Departmental Meetings and the improvement of vertical and horizontal communication in the Department all relevant obstacles were overcome.

9) Main sources of inspiration behind the case

Generally, “quality” is an umbrella for a continuous process of staff and organizational development. Quality in Health Care can be defined as ...meeting the customer requirements at the lower cost involving customer quality, professional quality and process quality. Having this aspiration in relation to the vision of the Dental Services and the continuous advances in dentistry and the increasing demands of the public as well as the intrinsic factor leading to the motivation of the employees we came to the conclusion that this initiative was a must.

10) The most important lesson learned

The department believes all patients managed within the Dental Services will receive professional dental care from experienced and highly motivated staff who will design the care provided, where possible, to meet each individual patient need (research and evidence based clinical care). The development of protocols will contribute to the effort of the Ministry of Health of Cyprus to offer upgraded dental care to the public.