

**The first WHO Meeting of the Minds  
on Quality of Care  
Athens, Greece**



# **Compilation of good practices on Quality of Care and Patient Safety**

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## ABSTRACT

The WHO Centre of Excellence for Quality of Care and Patient Safety, recently established in Greece, envisions to decisively improve quality and patient safety, as inspired by the European Programme of Work (EPW) 2020-2025. The creation of this office, and the subsequent coordination of the 1st WHO “Meeting of the Minds on Quality of Care” brings about the ideal opportunity for the generation of innovative dialogue, creative thinking and forward-looking policies that place quality of care at the centre of health and wellbeing, ensuring that no one is left behind. The 1st WHO “Meeting of the Minds on Quality of Care” will serve as the ideal forum for discussions on quality of care that requires transparency, innovation and accountability for the effective transformation of health systems, health promotion and protection cultures. By promoting the share of knowledge in the format of case studies describing relevant innovations that have shaped the way quality is conceived and delivered across healthcare systems, the WHO Centre of Excellence for Quality of Care and Patient Safety aims to build the basis for conversation and collaboration that will deliver concrete, action-oriented proposals and garner high-level political commitment to place quality of care at the centre of achieving Universal Health Coverage in the WHO European Region Member States and beyond.

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## Disclaimer

This document compiles good practices produced and submitted by the experts participating in the Meeting of the Minds on Quality of Care prior to the event in order to build the essential basis for fruitful discussions. The contributions of each individual participant have not been edited or modified by the WHO Europe team. Therefore, this compilation of good practices does not necessarily reflect the views of the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe.

# Background

The European Programme of Work 2020-2025 “United Action for Better Health in Europe” and the Sustainable Development Goals, place an emphasis on achieving Universal Health Coverage by ensuring that provided health services are of enough quality to be safe, effective and accessible. Positive health and wellbeing outcomes as well as the sustainability of health systems can only be achieved with a robust human-centred and value-based approach carefully planned, implemented and evaluated.

The WHO Centre of Excellence for Quality of Care and Patient Safety, recently established in Greece, envisions to decisively improve quality and patient safety, as inspired by the European Programme of Work (EPW) 2020-2025, brings about the ideal opportunity for the generation of innovative dialogue, creative thinking and forward-looking policies bringing quality of care to the centre of health and wellbeing, leaving no one behind.

## Framing quality of care in 21st century

Quality of care is the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes. It is based on evidence-based professional knowledge and is critical for achieving universal health coverage. As countries commit to achieving Health for All, it is imperative to carefully consider the quality of care and health services. The Sustainable Development Goals urge countries to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC), including financial risk protection and access to *quality* essential health care services.

Therefore, there is no doubt that quality has been a concern for health systems and their leaders since long ago. In that context, several commissions, task forces and expert groups have reflected upon such challenge and possible ways to address it. Actually, there are a multitude of already well-established frameworks aiming to help institutions improving health care quality. Most of these, and the WHO itself are confluent in the core need for health care to be:

- *Safe*: avoiding injuries to patients from the care that is intended to help them.
- *Effective*: providing services based on scientific knowledge to all who could benefit, and refraining from providing services to those not likely to benefit.
- *Patient-centred*: providing care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs, and values, and ensuring that patient values guide all clinical decisions.
- *Timely*: reducing waits and sometimes harmful delays for both those who receive and those who give care.
- *Efficient*: avoiding waste, including waste of equipment, supplies, ideas, and energy.
- *Equitable*: providing care that does not vary in quality because of personal characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, geographic location, and socioeconomic status.
- *Integrated*: providing care that makes available the full range of health services throughout the life course.

However, the reality in many settings of the WHO European region is that providing quality care remained a significant challenge, and inadequate quality results in avoidable mortality, human suffering and significant economic losses. HealthCare quality disparities were indeed a source of inequity in the region.

## COVID-19: the great disruptor

The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent crisis have set the necessity of resilience and services' preparedness, as a priority of National Health Systems across the European Region and beyond. Issues like fragmentation, poor continuity of care, underuse of services, deficits in resources' use, suboptimal effectiveness, and patient safety have only been exacerbated in the last twenty months.

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended nearly every aspect of healthcare delivery. It triggered the development and implementation of several unprecedented solutions to promote healthcare quality.

With the onset of COVID-19, healthcare delivery organizations around the world were collectively faced with one primary challenge: How to effectively deliver quality healthcare to all patients, regardless of the entry point into the system, while protecting the well-being of patients and the healthcare workforce.

As health systems navigate challenges created through risk of exposure for patients and caregivers, rapidly changing regulatory paradigms and significant financial burden, innovations improving all the dimensions of quality of care popped with the promise of changing the status quo. It is now time to make sure all the developments made over the last two years are properly documented, shared and discussed at the international level. This way, the WHO Centre of Excellence for Quality of Care and Patient Safety will be creating a platform that shall amplify and multiply the innovations that take quality of care to the next level.

## Meeting of the Minds on Quality of Care

The 1st WHO Meeting of the Minds on Quality of Care will serve as the ideal forum for discussions of quality of care that require openness, transparency, innovation and accountability for the transformation of health systems, health promotion and protection cultures. This Meeting aims to deliver concrete, action-oriented proposals and garner high-level political commitment to place quality of care at the centre of achieving Universal Health Coverage in the WHO European Region Member States and beyond.

## Objectives

The meeting objectives are to:

- Present innovation, cutting-edge case studies, tools and good practices in the fields of quality of care and patient safety including digital health services, enabled by Artificial Intelligence and Big Data analytics.
- Identify essential actions to foster partnerships, stakeholder's engagement and the establishment of supportive collaboration and mutual learning networks in the area of quality of care.
- Share Member States' experiences with regards to healthcare services' response during the COVID-19 pandemic related to quality of care and patient safety.
- Bring the patient perspective of quality to the frontline and enhance patient-informed involvement and shared decision making in healthcare.
- Stimulate a new era in the development, implementation and evaluation of evidence-based National quality of care plans incorporating preconditions and limitations, clinical governance and incubating innovative quality management tools.

## About the good practices

All the participants of the 1st WHO *Meeting of the Minds on Quality of Care* were asked to submit a written version of the good practices or case studies they shall be presenting at the event. Good practice briefs are used to inspire action by enabling cross-country exchanges of experiences and learnings during the event.

They will be included after review in the Compendium of good practices on quality of care and patient safety and will inform the development of the roadmap for implementation or framework for action of essential actions to improve quality of care, raise awareness and increase stakeholders' involvement. Additional use for communication purposes is foreseen before, during and after the Meeting of Minds conference.

The topics selected and reported in these good practice briefs fit into one of the five following themes that reflect the core priorities of quality of care and patient safety:

1. Innovation, cutting-edge tools and good practices in the fields of quality of care and patient safety including digital health services.
2. Essential actions to foster stakeholder's engagement and the establishment of supportive collaboration and mutual learning networks in the area of quality of care.
3. Member States' experiences with regards to healthcare services' response during the COVID-19 pandemic related to quality of care and patient safety.
4. Patients' perspective of quality, enhanced patient-informed involvement and shared decision making in healthcare.
5. Development, implementation and evaluation of evidence-based National quality of care plans incorporating preconditions and limitations, clinical governance and innovative management tools.

## Theme 1. Innovation, cutting edge tools and good practices in the fields of quality of care and patient safety including digital health services

Over the last decades, solid evidence has been found between patient safety and quality improvement programmes and positive impact on clinical outcomes and health status of people and communities. The Sustainable Development Goal 3 aims at achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by ensuring that health services are of sufficient quality to be safe, effective and accessible. Positive health outcomes and sustainability of health systems cannot be achieved unless a robust person-centred and value-adding approach is carefully planned and implemented, at every level of health service delivery.

Organizational innovation in health service delivery encompasses behaviours, routines, and working modalities that are discontinuous from previous practice and directed at improving health outcomes, equity, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, or users' experience, and which are implemented by planned and coordinated actions. These innovations generate actionable knowledge and include initiatives and methodological frameworks such as patient experience design, networks of excellence or evidence-based care bundles.

Digital innovation differs from political, educational and social innovation, and it is strongly connected to the change of cultures and organization of health systems and services. Understanding the importance of digital innovation in support of UHC was acknowledged in the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly resolution (WHA67.23). Mobile health applications that enable telemonitoring or encourage behavioural change and self-management, or clinical decision support systems and prediction models that guide diagnosis and treatment are examples of data-driven digital health innovations that can improve quality of care.

The following good practices describe current development and practical applications of technology-enabled health services innovations from prevention to palliative care contributing to improving quality of care and patient safety.

## Theme 1 Good practices

1.1 **'At Scale' General Practice as a Sustainable model for Innovative, High-Quality care in the UK**

Holmes M, Patel-Campbell T, McEvoy J

Haxby Group, United Kingdom

1.2 **Application of Tele-Mental Health during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Fountoulakis K N

Department of Psychiatry, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

1.3 **ExerGames with electromyography over Intelligent Platforms (UbiTheraPlay)**

Johnson G, Politis C

Kingston University London and UbiTech, United Kingdom

1.4 **Optimal scheduling rules for elective care to minimize years of life lost during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic**

Miraldo M, D'Aeth J C, Ghosal S, Grimm F, Haw D, Koca E, Lau K, Moret S, Rizmie D, Deeny S R, Perez-Guzman P N, Ferguson N, Hauck K, Smith P C, Wiesemann W, Forchini G

Department of Economics and Public Policy & Centre for Health Economics and Policy Innovation, Imperial College Business School, Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom

1.5 **Boost your patient safety and patient experience in 10 minutes per day**

Van Der Heijde R

Patient Experience Association, The Netherlands

1.6 **Dioscope: a digital tool to speed up health workforce real-life training**

Pessoa-e-Costa T, Peliteiro M, Cruz-e-Silva D

Nova Medical School, Nova University, Lisbon, Portugal

1.7 **Solving the global medical education need: Accelerated digital health learning on mechanical ventilation for SARS-Cov-2**

Davids J, Ashrafian H, Darzi A

Institute of Global Health Innovation, Imperial College of London, London, United Kingdom

1.8 [Development of prescription e-protocols for medicines \(PePM\) and integration on the Greek National e-Prescription System](#)

Thireos E, Karanikas H, Papadakis M

Athens Medical Society, Greece

## Theme 2. Partnerships, stakeholders' engagement and establishment of supportive collaboration and mutual learning networks in the area of quality of care

Engaging stakeholders and establishing partnerships are priority actions for the development of quality strategies. These collaborations are especially relevant for continuous quality improvement and patient safety when they involve health professionals from different areas or functions, including frontline clinicians, health workers and managers, patients and citizens.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the value of learning networks as a way for health professionals to share expertise and experience while working together to address a common goal. As stated by WHO, building up shared knowledge networks strengthens national institutions, policies and mechanisms to improve quality of care, accelerates and sustains implementation of interventions for improvement, facilitates learning and generates new evidence on quality of care.

The following good practices describe experiences regarding the positive outcomes of the engagement of different stakeholders in order to trigger, speed up and multiply the impact of innovations on quality of care.

## Theme 2 Good practices

2.1 [\*\*The power of networks to improve care: The CLICSS campaign in Latin America to reduce CLABSI. The Goodbye Bacteraemia Initiative\*\*](#)

Garcia-Elorrio E

Latin American Consortium for Innovation, Quality and Safety in Health (CLICSS), ISQua, Institute for Clinical Effectiveness and Health Policy

2.2 [\*\*Sharing learning to improve patient safety\*\*](#)

Hughes H

Patient Safety Learning, United Kingdom

2.3 [\*\*The Use of Scale and Collaboration to Deliver Sustainable Family Medicine in the City of York, United Kingdom\*\*](#)

Holmes M, Ruff M, Kimberling D, Ali Z, Hartley D, Phillips M and Judge B

Haxby Group, United Kingdom

2.4 [\*\*Building on the methods and results of the joint action PaSQ\*\*](#)

Garel P

HOPE – European Hospital and Healthcare Federation

2.5 [\*\*Coproduction of healthcare service: adolescents with type 1 diabetes \(Sweden\) and International Bowel disease IBD-Qorus \(USA\)\*\*](#)

von Plessen C

International Coproduction of Health network (ICoHN)

2.6 [\*\*Preventing violence against nurses: “We are not safe, unless we are all safer”\*\*](#)

De Raeve P

European Federation of Nurses (EFN)

2.7 [\*\*Essential actions to foster stakeholder’s engagement and the establishment of supportive collaboration and mutual learning networks in the area of quality of care\*\*](#)

Delgado P

Institute for Healthcare Improvement

2.8 [Twining partnerships for improvement](#)

Syed S, Neilson M

Quality of Care Unit, WHO Headquarters

## Theme 3. Response during COVID-19 pandemic related to quality of care and patient safety

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, health services have strained to cope with the clinical and social consequences of the disease spread. Global solidarity, collaboration and efforts at medical, scientific and political levels have been deployed to support health system resilience. The pandemic response required the involvement and close cooperation of a variety of stakeholders to speedily plan and implement cross-sectoral policies, allocate resources, using multiple communication channels to protect and care for people and communities.

Unsurprisingly, the pandemic meant that health services had to reach surge capacity while continuity of care proved to be a great challenge in terms of access to services, screening, diagnosis and treatment. Vulnerable populations like complex chronic patients and/or the financially disadvantaged were disproportionately affected. Swift adaptations and reforms of health services were essential to manage public health needs and continue to be necessary to address backlogs.

The following good practices describe lessons learned by health systems in light to ensure quality of care and patient safety in exceptional circumstances and increase operational preparedness for the future.

## Theme 3 Good practices

### 3.1 [R-MAPP: Remote consultation on malnutrition in the primary care practice](#)

Chourdakis M

School of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece; Hellenic Society for Medical/Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (GrESPEN); European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN)

### 3.2 [Primary care at the forefront: pandemic response and evidence-based actions to improve quality of care](#)

Anastasaki M, Papadakis S, Lionis C

Clinic of Social and Family Medicine, Greece

### 3.3 [Transforming primary health care during the pandemic in Slovenia](#)

Džakulin VP

European Union of General Practitioners (UEMO)

### 3.4 [Tackling COVID-19 through a national evidence-based telehealth approach](#)

Fonseca VR

Department for Healthcare Quality, Directorate-General of Health, Portugal

### 3.5 [Using telemedicine for perinatal mental health services during Covid-19 pandemic](#)

Kurimay T

Buda Family Centred Mental Health Centre, Hungary

### 3.6 [Breakthrough Collaborative to Improve Quality in Healthcare in Portugal: the case of an initiative to reduce of hospital-acquired infections](#)

Sousa P

National School of Public Health, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa; WHO Collaborating Centre for Education, Research and Evaluation of Safety and Quality in Healthcare, Portugal

3.7 [Timely access for treatment of acute coronary syndrome in Russia: the role of geographic constraints](#)

Timonin S

International Laboratory for Population and Health, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, UK

3.8 [Innovation and Spread - increasing the rate of introduction of clinical innovations in a health service](#)

Woodhead T

Patient Safety West of England AHSN, UK

3.9 [A Strategic Communication Plan: addressing the new information needs in the context of COVID-19](#)

Moreira R N, Araújo F

Centro Hospitalar e Universitário de São João, Porto, Portugal

3.10 [Intensive Care Medicine Management during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Pereira N, Araújo F

Centro Hospitalar e Universitário de São João, Porto, Portugal

3.11 [Quality improvement to support COVID-19 response and recovery](#)

Syed S, Neilson M

Quality of Care Unit, WHO Headquarters

## Theme 4. Patients' perspectives on quality: enhancing patient-informed involvement and shared decision making in healthcare

Patient engagement is a critical component of high-quality, integrated and people-centred health services. As equal partners in healthcare decision making, patients are encouraged to take an active role in prevention and self-care activities and participate in healthcare treatment processes. Healthcare interventions such as providing health education to patients and families, facilitating access to information and feed-back regarding their diagnosis and treatment and involving them in health service design and policy making are essential for safe and quality services.

Empowering patients in shared decision making is a sign of valuing humanity of recipients of care and adopting such policies is a manifestation of equity and accountability in healthcare systems. The active role of patients and their families in health care minimizes adverse events and medical errors and has been associated with improved treatment outcomes and satisfaction. Patient participation in health affairs is considered among people's civil rights and should be prioritized by healthcare systems.

The following good practices bring on board different approaches to increase the role of patients in decision making and in the development of a culture of quality and safety.

## Theme 4 Good practices

### 4.1 [National Learning Network for Good Patient Care Pathways](#)

Vege A

Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Norway

### 4.2 [Person-Centred Care Systems from theory to practice](#)

Berntsen GR, Chetty M, Ako-Egbe L, Yaron S, Phan P, Curran C, Castro I, Canfield C, Lachmann P

International Society for Quality in Health Care

### 4.3 [External evaluation as a vehicle to spread good practice of person-centred care](#)

Engel C

International Society for Quality in Health Care

### 4.4 [The Intermediate Care Project: improving outcomes for patients who receive intermediate care services in Northern Ireland](#)

McArdle C

NHS England, United Kingdom

### 4.5 [Putting the patient and patient health behaviour at the centre of care: towards the development of behavioural care in primary care experiences from Crete, Greece](#)

Papadakis S, Anastasaki M, Lionis C

Clinic of Social and Family Medicine, Greece

### 4.6 [Structural reconfiguration of health care trusts: four actions to control efficaciously the diffusion of communicable diseases](#)

Locati F

Health Care Trust Bergamo East, Bergamo, Italy

### 4.7 [Caring for deaf and hard-of-hearing patients: a multi-modal approach](#)

Wolf J

The Beryl Institute, Texas, USA

4.8 [Improving Quality of Life of Older Adults Living with HIV](#)

Cascio M

HIV Outcomes Steering Group / European AIDS Treatment Group Quality of Life Programme

4.9 [The Core of Patient Experience Strategy: Fear Reduction](#)

Van Der Heijde R

Patient Experience Association, The Netherlands

4.10 [Text Messaging Emergency Department: a New Way of Communication With Patients' Families](#)

Pereira N, Araújo F

Centro Hospitalar e Universitário de São João, Porto, Portugal

## Theme 5. Implementation and evaluation of evidence-based national quality of care plans/initiatives

In response to current healthcare quality challenges, health policies and programmes including national quality strategies, quality assurance systems, evaluation frameworks, and review of clinical practices need to be based on existing scientific evidence and effectively deployed at all levels of care. Implementation of national quality of care plans are resource intensive and require continuous monitoring to achieve targets and anticipate and mitigate risks.

Evaluating quality improvement programmes can provide decision-makers with research-based guidance on how to better design and streamline implementation. Advances in data sciences come handy to improve both design, deployment, monitoring and evaluation of quality strategies and its links to health outcomes and efficiency gains.

The following good practices provide insights on how health systems can improve implementation and evaluation of national quality policies based on scientific evidence and available health information systems.

### Theme 5 Good practices

#### 5.1 [Steps by Member States towards national quality planning](#)

Shaw C

Independent Adviser on Health Care Quality

#### 5.2 [Improving quality of care and patient safety in Greece and internationally](#)

Kaitelidou D

Agency for Quality Assurance in Health, Greece

#### 5.3 [Strengthening and improving quality of Primary Care services in Greece](#)

Fragkoulis E

Greek Union of General Practitioners, Greece

#### 5.4 [The Sustain Project: Sustainable tailored integrated care for older people in Europe](#)

Valiotis G

European Health Management Association

- 5.5 [\*\*Governance, Risk and Compliance: an integrated, holistic approach to organisation-wide governance, risk and compliance\*\*](#)  
Chaouali M  
Hospital Quality & Patient Safety, WHO/Europe
- 5.6 [\*\*Technical support in strengthening the quality assurance framework in the Republic of Moldova\*\*](#)  
Grbic M  
WHO Country Office in the Republic of Moldova
- 5.7 [\*\*Development, implementation and evaluation of evidence-based National quality of care plans in England\*\*](#)  
Ramanuj P  
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust, United Kingdom
- 5.8 [\*\*Multi-level planning for quality of care\*\*](#)  
Syed S, Neilson M  
Quality of Care Unit, WHO Headquarters
- 5.9 [\*\*Quality improvement through data and appraisal: the national programme for assessment of healthcare quality in Germany\*\*](#)  
Grüning T  
Quality of Healthcare, Transplantation Medicine & Mental Health, German Hospital Federation, Germany
- 5.10 [\*\*Updating Hospitals' Emergency Preparedness Operational Plans\*\*](#)  
Fanou A  
Quality Assurance and Patient Safety, Agency for Quality Assurance in Health, Greece