Reviewer’s report

Title: The Impact of Accreditation of Primary Healthcare Centers: Successes, Challenges and Policy Implications as Perceived by Healthcare Providers and Directors in Lebanon

Version: Date: 19 November 2013

Reviewer: Marie-Pascale Pomey

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Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract
In the abstract, it would be relevant to add a word:
“Results: The scales measuring Management and Leadership had the highest mean score followed by Accreditation Impact, Human Resource Utilization, and Customer Satisfaction. Regression analysis showed that Strategic Quality Planning, Customer Satisfaction and Staff Involvement were associated with a perception of higher Quality Results.”

Introduction
It would be interesting to describe more precisely the structure of the PHC center including if physicians practice alone or group of physicians with nurses, etc.
Is it possible to have the timeline of the different initiatives?
“Findings from a readiness assessment of PHC centers in Lebanon to implement accreditation standards revealed that PHC centers were at the early stages of preparation for accreditation. They lacked quality improvement plans and did not regularly review evidence-based guidelines or identify and monitor outcome measures or indicators. Moreover, most centers lacked a system for incident and accident reporting and did not complete a summary of care provision in the client’s record [16].

Given this lag in quality regulations and capacity at PHC centers in Lebanon, an incremental approach to implementing accreditation standards was undertaken starting with implementing accreditation in 25 centers in 2012, followed by evaluation and refinement of the process, and then scale-up. These 25 PHC centers were selected based on their large size, coverage as well as the representation of all the PHC centers in the country with regards to the services they provide and their distribution across all the geographic regions.”

Methods
“This study was conducted in 2012; several months after the centers completed the accreditation survey.” Could you precise when the accreditation survey was done?
“A total of 20 centers participated in both components of the study, three centers
participated in the survey only, and two centers participated in the semi-structured interviews only.” Could you explain why some centers did not take part in data collection?

Quantitative results

It would be relevant to precise that the Quality Results are perception results and not indicators that are monitored.

“Results of the linear model indicated that the score on Quality Results increased by 0.297 (p-value = 0.003) for every unit increase in the score on Strategic Quality Planning. An increase of 0.412 (p-value = 0.008) in Quality Results was also observed for every unit increase in the score on Customer Satisfaction. Quality Results also increased by 0.309 (p-value = 0.004) for every unit increase in Staff Involvement in Accreditation (Table 4).”

It would have been interesting to discuss the implication of ACI in the intervention.

Data Analysis

In this section, it has not been mentioned that the presentation of percentages in the results section was made possible by counting the number of times each concept or idea was cited during interviews.

“Thematic analysis was used for the analysis of interviews. The findings were first coded and brought together in a spreadsheet to better manage the data. Open coding was conducted first, where findings were broken into chunks that relate to different concepts or ideas. Axial coding was then conducted, which involves organizing the emerging concepts into themes. Themes were pre-identified based on the study objectives and interview questions.”

Results

Qualitative results

Could you tell us the reasons why three directors did not participate in the interviews?

“Out of the 25 directors that were approached, 22 directors participated in the semi-structured interviews.”

Discussion

A discussion about the context and the implication of Accreditation Canada International could have been done considering these two sentences:

“Additionally, some directors reported that some accreditation standards are not fully applicable to the context of PHC centers in Lebanon (32%), as one director indicated”

“Some directors suggested that local experts should be involved in conducting the accreditation survey and the financial resources that would otherwise be used to employ foreign surveyors could be invested in improving the delivery of services (18%), as one director suggested”

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.