
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Integrated care as a competitiveness factor of the ambulatory health care units

ICIC20 Virtual Conference – September 2020

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Introduction

In the most developed countries, the healthcare sector amounts from 7 to even 17% of GDP, which makes it one of the largest sectors of the economy. At the same time, health needs, associated with the process of aging, are still growing. It leads to an increase in the number of new healthcare units and at the same time to increased competition in the market. The issue of competition in healthcare is more complicated than in other sectors of the economy. The services provided on the healthcare market have their specificity which comes from the fact that they save human life and health. Therefore, the healthcare market is specific and different from the typical free market, and the competitiveness of enterprises operating in it is strongly dependent on the healthcare sector determinants. The special role in achieving a competitiveness advantage at the market plays integrated care.

Theory/Methods

The aim of the study was to identify the competitiveness factors of the ambulatory healthcare units in Poland, including analysis of the role of integrated care. In the research process, literature analysis in the fields of competition theory and determinants of the healthcare system was conducted. The empirical research in the form of case studies for selected by purposeful sampling method, healthcare units was carried out.

Results and discussion

The obtained cognitive results relate to the definition of the competitiveness of the healthcare unit, which includes the quality and innovativeness of the offered healthcare. All selected companies notice the need for cooperation and undertake the cooperation with competitors in order to meet the population health needs in the region. All of them implement integrated care, but in different ways. The study also includes recommendations of good management practices, which, as the research results show, are the most effective in the use of intangible resources in the field of integrated care.

Conclusions and lessons learned

To conclude could be said, that the main motive of competing ambulatory healthcare units is the implementation of a specific mission, which is to serve the patient and care for the health of the population. This could be done using a tools of intergrade care concept, which should base on intangible resources. It is also important, that the sectoral conditions significantly affect competitiveness of the healthcare units. The

final competitiveness factors of the ambulatory healthcare units were presented on author's model-based conceptualization.

Suggestions for future research and limitations

As a limitation could be mentioned the qualitative type of the research. The significance of the study matter seems to be so important that it is justified to continue research aimed at analyzing the competitiveness the ambulatory healthcare units as part of quantitative research on a representative sample.