Transparency and Accountability of the General Health System in Cyprus

ABSTRACT

The Cyprus Integrity Forum would like to recommend that under Policy Axis (1) of the Recovery and Resilience lans with the thematic area of Public health would like to carry out a research to review the second objective which aims to look at the improvement of the quality of the medical services within the health system. The Cyprus Health System in Cyprus is relatively new, yet a number of issues have arisen in the recent months that question the quality of services provided by the medical practitioners and the health clinics e.g. see the recent incident of the 8 patients who have had a simple cataract operation and some of them ended up losing their eyesight[[1]](#footnote-1). Thus, in this survey Cyprus Integrity Forum aims firstly to map out the state of play and state of practice as far as the quality of the health service is concerned. Secondly, recommendations will be made for improvement of the quality of the health service within the budget of the system in an effort to ensure transparency and accountability.

INTRODUCTION

All medical practitioners pledge that they will comply with the Hippocratic Oath by swearing that:

*“I will respect the hard-won scientific gains of those physicians in whose steps I walk, and gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow.*

*I will apply, for the benefit of the sick, all measures [that] are required, avoiding those twin traps of overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism.*

*I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy, and understanding may outweigh the surgeon's knife or the chemist's drug.*

*I will not be ashamed to say "I know not," nor will I fail to call in my colleagues when the skills of another are needed for a patient's recovery.*

*I will respect the privacy of my patients, for their problems are not disclosed to me that the world may know. Most especially must I tread with care in matters of life and death. If it is given me to save a life, all thanks. But it may also be within my power to take a life; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humbleness and awareness of my own frailty. Above all, I must not play at God.*

*I will remember that I do not treat a fever chart, a cancerous growth, but a sick human being, whose illness may affect the person's family and economic stability. My responsibility includes these related problems, if I am to care adequately for the sick.*

*I will prevent disease whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to cure.*

*I will protect the environment which sustains us, in the knowledge that the continuing health of ourselves and our societies is dependent on a healthy planet.*

*I will remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those sound of mind and body as well as the infirm.*

*If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy life and art, respected while I live and remembered with affection thereafter. May I always act so as to preserve the finest traditions of my calling and may I long experience the joy of healing those who seek my help.”*

However, there have been many media reports in the last twelve months advocating that the newly formed Health System in Cyprus lacks transparency, accountability, quality and sustainability. Thus, Cyprus Integrity Forum will undertake research to map out the health system in Cyprus and make suggestions that will improve the current system and ensure that the patient receives the highest quality of health which is also cost effective.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are the services provided by the Health System in Cyprus (GESY) of high quality and comparable with other countries in Europe that rate highly in this area?
2. Is there quality control as far as the health service providers?
3. Are there internal controls to ensure transparency and accountability as far as the health service provider is concerned?
4. Are there internal controls to ensure transparency and accountability of the health center/clinic/hospital.
5. Is the self-regulation of the health provider and the health center/clinic/hospital transparent and sufficient?

METHODOLOGY.

Initially the research team will carry out a literature review, including all relevant legislative measures to map out the health system and its quality in Cyprus.

Secondly a questionnaire will be formulated which will be administered to all stakeholders involved. The group of stakeholders to be surveyed are:

* Staff working in the Attorney General, Auditor General, Health Insurance Organization of Cyprus,
* The Administrators of ten private Hospitals enrolled in GESY,
* The Administrators of two private Hospitals not registered in GESY,
* 50 general practitioners (Family Drs) registered in GESY; 50 specialists registered in GESY and 20 specialists not registered in GESY
* 100 randomly selected individuals (Lawyers, accountants, university personnel, businessmen, journalists, students).

Once the findings are analyzed, two focus groups will be established to discuss the findings and identify the policy implications. The focus groups will comprise of academics from medical schools in Cyprus and overseas as well as medical practitioners outside Cyprus.

RESEARCH TEAM:

The research team is under the auspices of the Cyprus Integrity Forum, headed by Dr. Stelios Hadjichristofis, a medical practitioner, and Mrs. Elena Tanou who is an established entrepreneur, not associated with the medical profession, both are Board members of the Cyprus Integrity Forum. A research assistant will be appointed to work full time on the project. A financial manager will be appointed as a consultant. In addition a number of other external consultants will be appointed as needs arise. The Cyprus University of Technology will support the research team to review and provide the quality assessment of the methodology and the deliverables.

1. https://cyprus-mail.com/2020/10/19/eight-eye-patients-infected-during-surgery-face-losing-most-of-their-sight/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)