

Measuring Health Systems Performance

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Measuring Health System Performance: A Research Agenda

- **Cost containment and quality improvement in health care**
- **Using Cross-National Information in Domestic Policy**
- **Problems of Measurement**
- **Problems of policy making**

Specific Research Aims

- Contributing to the conceptual and technical development of quality and outcome indicators of health system performance.
- Investigating the link between performance measurement and performance improvement.
- Building academic expertise in the measurement of health system performance to contribute to the growing international interest in this subject.

Research questions

- PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND POLICY

- What impact does comparative performance assessment have on decision-making and policy development?
- What evidence is there of the link between the expansion in performance assessment and policy change?
- How do policy makers utilize analyses of comparative performance in the process of evaluating policy alternatives?

Research questions

- DIAGNOSTIC INDICATORS

- Is it possible to define a small number of, or composite, ‘diagnostic’ indicators of service and/or clinical quality as proxies for the wider array of possible indicators?
- How would individual indicators be weighted in such an index?
- Is it possible to build a ‘balanced scorecard’ or a ‘maturity matrix’ of health systems performance in the UK that enables UK health system performance to be compared and assessed over time?

Research questions

● INPUT-OUTPUT RELATIONSHIPS

- What is nature of the relationships between indicators of resource input and indicators of health outcome?
- What can be inferred, for example, about the performance of health systems, from comparisons of expenditure, real resources and population health?
- Is it possible to develop robust statistical models of such relationships that enable resource needs to be estimated in individual health systems now and in the future?

Research questions

- IMPROVING PERFORMANCE BY MEASURING PERFORMANCE
 - Does the measurement of health system performance improve performance?
 - Do health care organizations use indicators of relative performance to change individual and organizational behaviour in order to secure higher levels of performance?
 - What techniques and tools can help link performance assessment and performance?
 - What are the incentives to act on performance data?

Research Questions

- BENCHMARKING PERFORMANCE

- How can ‘benchmarks’ of health system performance be set?
- Is this analogous to the problem of target setting? How difficult should it be to be hit the target?
- Does the setting of benchmarks and targets create perverse incentives that distort performance?
- Is the publication of performance against benchmarks a ‘carrot’ or ‘stick’?

Research questions

- POLITICAL LEVELS AND MEASUREMENT
 - Are intra-system differences in performance greater than inter-system differences in performance?
 - How do ‘sub-national’ health systems perform in comparison to similar systems in other places (e.g. deprived urban areas)?

Research questions

- **PATIENT ASSESSMENTS OF PERFORMANCE**

- Can patient defined views of quality be built in to comparative assessments of system performance?
- Do current policy directives to involve patients and the public in decisions about health systems need to be based on a sounder knowledge base?
- Can emerging techniques for capturing patients' views within any one health system be extended to indicate aspects of best practice for comparisons across systems?
- How should information about health systems performance be presented to the public?

Research questions

- KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND POLICY LEARNING
 - How is learning and knowledge about health system performance measurement transferred between health systems?
 - Can the link between comparative analysis and learning be improved?
 - How can we avoid ‘foreign’ evidence falling victim to the perception of ‘domestic’ policy makers and instead make greater use of evidence and evaluation?