

ASSESSING PRIMARY CARE FOR MORE PERFORMANT HEALTH SYSTEMS

Opinion by the Expert Panel on Effective Ways of Investing in Health (EXPH)

Why assess the performance of primary care?

- Strong primary care can contribute to **strengthening the overall health system's performance** by providing affordable and accessible care; coordinating care; and by reducing avoidable hospital admissions.
- **Given the complexity of primary care, measuring its performance is a challenge** involving reflexions, such as: who has access to primary care services? How are providers of primary care organised? How are resources managed in the system? A sound methodology helps address these elements as **interrelated components** and leads to unprecedented results benefitting all actors of primary care.

How to assess the performance of primary care?

- Based on the main characteristics of primary care, the expert panel proposes a performance assessment model based on **specific indicators**. The panel identified **10 dimensions** for each of which it proposed **comparative key-indicators and descriptive indicators**. To guarantee that they can be applied to each health system, these indicators need to be **coherent** and follow the same criteria.

DIMENSIONS		→	INDICATORS	
What are the main characteristics of PRIMARY CARE?			Example of questions HELPING assess primary care PERFORMANCE	
1	Primary care is universal and accessible to everyone		How many people are insured for primary care costs?	
2	Primary care relies on integrated care models		Do GPs carry out health promotion ?	
3	The patient is at the centre of primary care (person-centeredness)		Do patients trust their nurse or GP?	
4	Primary care is an integral part of the community and provides comprehensive services		Is palliative care at home organised?	
5	Primary care is delivered by a team of professionals qualified to address a majority of personal health needs		How many patients over 60 are vaccinated against the flu ?	

	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS
	What are the main characteristics of PRIMARY CARE ?	Example of questions HELPING assess primary care PERFORMANCE
6	Patients and informal caregivers are involved in primary care	How many informal caregivers receive support from primary care ?
7	Primary care permits coordinating patients' care and referring them to other services	Do patients need a referral to see a specialist ?
8	Primary care is ensured continuously throughout people's lives	Is access to GPs and pharmacy services guaranteed 24/7 ?
9	Primary care is well organised and planned to provide accurate , timely and good-quality care	Are there regular quality-control audits?
10	A good planning and support of primary care workforce is essential (human resources)	How many hours per week do the GPs, nurses and social workers work ?

What next ?

- This model can help **monitor the achievement** of a health system and serve to **identify opportunities for improvement**.
- The opinion will feed in the report on tools and methodologies to assess the performance of primary care of the Member-States-led **Expert Group on Health Systems Performance Assessment** later in 2018.

The expert panel also encourages the development of a **coherent performance assessment** of primary care through:



- The **voluntary cooperation** between Member States in the exchange of best practice.
- The development of proper incentives boosting **professionals**: it is the primary care workforce that guarantees the success of primary care
- The collection of **patient-centred data**: through new technologies that allow collecting information about quality of life, patients' experiences and outcomes, data can systematically be collected **directly from users**.



About the Expert Panel on Effective Ways of Investing in Health

The Expert Panel's mission is to provide sound and independent advice in the form of opinions in response to questions (mandates) submitted by the Commission on matters related to health care. The opinions of the Expert Panel present the views of the independent scientists who are members of the Expert Panel. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

For more information and to read the opinions in full:

https://ec.europa.eu/health/expert_panel/home_en