

Accreditation Model for Local Health Trusts – a case study

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to design an accreditation model for Primary HealthCare units - Local Health Trusts - according to the guidelines of the Portuguese Health Plan and of the National Accreditation Plan. This model is an adaptation of the model from *Agencia para la Calidad Sanitaria de Andaluzia* (ACSA), in order to properly address the specificities of Local Health Trusts.

Design/methodology/approach: A literature review was complemented with observation and analysis of the usual working methods in the Western Oporto Health Trust.

Findings: The National Model for Accreditation of HealthCare Institutions is not easily nor directly applicable to Local Health Trusts since these include not only clinical management units but also non-clinical administrative units. The model under development incorporates the ISO 9001 and EFQM principles, widely accepted regarding organizational management. The success of the application of this model is highly dependent on the ability of public Primary HealthCare organizations to deal with potential problems like resistance to change, lack of leadership and inadequate people management and involvement.

Originality/value – The present study is expected to contribute to boost the gradual and systematic transformation of UCSP (traditional Health Centers) into USF (Family Health Units), and also to encourage the remaining functional units and services to embrace quality management and continuous improvement as key elements of their own identity, leading Local Health Trusts, Primary Care and HealthCare in a global perspective towards sustainability.

Keywords: quality management, accreditation, public healthcare system, health clusters