

## Hospital Capacity Planning - How do approaches differ in Switzerland (and abroad)?

### Background and research topic

The supply side of the hospital sector is subject to strong public regulation. In Switzerland, prices for most inpatient services are fixed using so-called diagnosis related groups (DRGs). In addition, each canton is responsible for its own hospital capacity planning, i.e., fixing the type and quantity of services (or capacity) hospitals can offer. In this process, cantons assign so-called treatment assignments granting a hospital the right and obligating it to treat a certain patient group or provide a certain procedure, e.g., radical prostatectomy.

Starting with a major reform in Zurich in 2012, cantons have adopted so called treatment-, need-, and quality-based hospital capacity planning methods. In this context, “treatment-based” means that the medical planning level is quite detailed clustering relatively homogeneous patient groups that treatment assignments are granted for. Likewise, “quality-oriented” means that cantons issue quality requirements that need to be fulfilled by a hospital to be eligible for treatment assignment. In addition, the number of issued treatment assignments should match the number of patients in need for care forecasted by the canton, i.e., “need-based” hospital capacity planning.

While 24 out of 26 cantons have adopted this new methodology, there are differences in the exact specifications of each planning dimension, i.e., the grouping of treatments, the calculation of (future) need for care, and the setting of quality requirements. So far, there is no overview of what these differences are and what their magnitude is. Generally, these specifications should match hospital capacity planning goals, i.e., high-quality, accessible, need-tailored inpatient service provision by efficient, profitable hospitals.

### Methods and research goal

Firstly, literature review on hospital capacity planning in general should be conducted. Secondly, to identify differences in the hospital capacity planning methods used in Switzerland, desk research scouting the websites of selected cantons is needed. Finally, findings need to be comprised in meaningful tables and figures to compare and evaluate different approaches. In addition, expert interviews with hospital capacity planners from different cantons might be needed to validate and to complement findings from desk research and literature review. Moreover, possibly for a master thesis, in international comparison with approaches from two to four other countries should be added. The goal of this research is to inform hospital capacity planners in Switzerland and abroad about what approach is most suitable to reach hospital capacity planning goals in different regional contexts.

If you are interested in and/or have questions about the above-mentioned topic and you would like to write your bachelor or master thesis with our chair, we look forward to hearing from you (please contact [Justus.Vogel@unisg.ch](mailto:Justus.Vogel@unisg.ch)). You can also propose your own research topic, and we will be happy to advise you. Generally, we can supervise all students of medicine (Joint Medical Master), business administration, economics, and international affairs.

We look forward to receiving your exposé with a proposal for a concrete research question, methodology and approach!