

Porsche Consulting survey

24/05/2016 Prompt treatment without the inconvenience of long waits is of major importance to in-patients at hospitals. Forty-two percent of respondents in Germany would favor hospitals with good organization.

One in three would travel up to 50 kilometers from their homes for a hospital with this feature. That is the result of a recent survey by the Porsche Consulting management consultancy. The time factor is the second-most important selection criterion, surpassed only by the hospital's medical expertise. Eighty-two percent of respondents place the highest priority on treatment by physicians with exceptionally good reputations in their respective fields.

People awaiting hospital treatment rely on recommendations from their specialists (67.8%) and their GPs (48%), as well as on personal experience of family and friends (43.8%). These sources are accorded more weight than information acquired from the Internet (18.3%) or media reports (10.9%). The greatest negatives reported by those with in-patient experience within the past five years are overworked nursing staff (37.8%) and overworked doctors (27.2%). This is related to poor coordination among the staff in general, which involved disadvantages for 23 percent of the patients.

Poor in-patient experience leads people to avoid these hospitals: 73.6 percent of respondents would select a different hospital with a better reputation for future treatment. Many are even willing to pay surcharges for good quality and greater comfort, beyond what is covered by their insurance. The top priority here is a private room: 38.2 percent would pay for peace and privacy. One in five would also be willing to pay a supplement for better nursing care. By contrast, only 14.7 percent consider a supplement for guaranteed treatment by medical department heads to be worthwhile.

Not only the patients who suffer, but also doctors and nurses

"The results indicate that hardly anyone doubts the outstanding quality of medical care at German hospitals," says Dr. Roman Hipp, the Porsche Consulting partner in charge of the healthcare sector. “But people do feel poorly served by the organizational processes. And they are concerned about excessive workloads for the personnel." His prognosis: “Competition among hospitals will increase. This is because patients are attempting to avoid those with poor reputations, and are even willing to pay extra to be treated at those that are better organized."

Based on his consulting experience, Hipp observes that weaknesses in organization and management are tolerated far too long, and once identified are not addressed quickly or intensively enough. “If the staff is already spread too thin, organizational problems at peak periods can bring hospitals to the point of collapse. And it's not only the patients who suffer, but also the doctors and nurses." Intelligent restructuring of typical care and treatment processes can markedly improve this situation, as Porsche Consulting's experts have shown in more than 100 projects.

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