

Do physicians or patients' hospital choices depend on health care facilities' quality?

A French study.

Myriam Lescher^{1,2,*}

Do not cite or quote

Abstract.

In 2013, the French National Health Authority (HAS) created a public information portal (Scope Santé) broadcasting objective notes of quality of care for healthcare professionals but especially for French patients, allowing them to make informed choices. Still, the economic literature has shown that patients rarely refer to technical information to discriminate hospitals. Assuming that patients make their decisions on the basis of indirect channels of information conveyed by their doctors or their own subjective appraisal, the central question is to know if both type of choices' initiators (healthcare professionals or patients themselves) convey information about quality as defined by the French authorities, before and after the dissemination of quality measures. Using a unique dataset of hospital stays in 2012 and 2014, and overcoming sample selection issues, we found that healthcare professionals and patients do not value the same information when making hospital choices: doctors are referring patients to better quality hospitals whereas the latter do not choose the "best" facilities when making their choice alone. Still, reputation is highly correlated with quality measures as defined by the HAS. The publication of quality measures did not significantly change our results, it may not have been sufficient to enhance quality competition but it could have reinforced patients' empowerment.

Key words: Hospital choice, Hospital quality, Quality and Safety Indicators, GP's advice, Hospital reputation

JEL Codes: D12, D80, I18, C34

1. LIRAES (EA 4470), Univ. Paris Descartes, Sorbonne-Paris-Cité.

2. IRDES (Institute for Research and Information in Health Economics), Paris.

* myriam.lescher@etu.parisdescartes.fr LIRAES (EA 4470). 45 rue des Saints Pères, 75006, Paris