

Background

In times of economic crisis, with important consequences on health care, alternative solutions are required to reduce the length of hospital stay and the health expenditure. It is necessary to identify possible variables in order to hypothesize strategies to reach this objective. The Shared Decision-Making (SDM) is an approach based on shared clinical choices between the physician and the patient. The aim of the present work is to perform a cross-sectional study in order to investigate the impact of SDM on the length of hospital stay and the health expenditure.

Methods

The patients were selected after admission to clinical and surgical units at the Rivoli Hospital (Piedmont, Italy). Data were collected through a questionnaire and the Hospital Discharge Register. Statistical analyses were performed using t-test and chi-square test. Significance level was set at $p=0.05$.

Results

In the sample analyzed ($N=178$; 86 males and 92 females; 20–94 age range) 51% were married, 5% graduate and 59% have already been hospitalized to treat the same disease. General health status was reported as positive by 61% of the patients. The women ($p=0.04$) and the young people ($p=0.04$) are more inclined to share clinical choices. In patients (38.2% $N=68$) who declared to refrain from medical decision the average length of stay and health expenditure were 14.25 days (Standard Deviation (SD): ± 10.64) and 2747.94 euro (SD: ± 2050.62 euro) respectively. Otherwise, the average length of stay and health expenditure were 13.84 days (SD: ± 13.95) and 2981.45 euro (SD: ± 1576.95 euro) in the sample supporting to SDM ($N=110$ 61.8%). However, using t-test, this difference is not statistically significant ($p=0.831$ e $p=0.423$).

Conclusions

A model of care, based on the SDM, seem to have no impact on the length of hospital stay and the health expenditure. At European level, further studies are needed to address this critical issue

Key messages

- Alternative solutions are required to reduce the length of hospital stay also maintaining the quality of health services
- A model of care, based on the SDM, seem to have no impact on the length of hospital stay and the health expenditure

The impact of Shared Decision Making on the length of hospital stay and the health expenditure

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