



## SPECIAL ARTICLE

# Quality management, a directive approach to patient safety<sup>☆</sup>



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**Abstract** Nowadays the implementation of effective quality management systems and external evaluation in healthcare is a necessity to ensure not only transparency in activities related to health but also access to health and patient safety. The key to correctly implementing a quality management system is support from the managers of health facilities, since it is managers who design and communicate to health professionals the strategies of action involved in quality management systems.

This article focuses on nursing managers' approach to quality management through the implementation of cycles of continuous improvement, participation of improvement groups, monitoring systems and external evaluation quality models (EFQM, ISO).

The implementation of a quality management system will enable preventable adverse effects to be minimised or eliminated, and promote patient safety and safe practice by health professionals.

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### PALABRAS CLAVE

Enfermería;  
Gestión de la calidad;  
Seguridad del  
paciente

### Gestión de la calidad, un enfoque directivo para la seguridad del paciente

**Resumen** Hoy en día resulta imprescindible la implementación de sistemas de gestión de calidad en el entorno sanitario, sin embargo esto no es posible sin el apoyo de las direcciones de los centros sanitarios, puesto que son estas las que deben diseñar y trasladar las estrategias a los profesionales sanitarios.

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En este artículo se ha planteado el presentar la gestión de calidad desde las Direcciones de Enfermería, centrándose en las aplicaciones del ciclo de mejora continua, constituir grupos de mejora, implementar sistema de monitorización y la aplicación de modelos externos de calidad (como EFQM o ISO).

Todo lo anterior y su implementación, redundará en la seguridad del paciente puesto que un adecuado sistema de gestión de calidad permitirá eliminar, reducir y mitigar los resultados adversos evitables, generados como consecuencia del proceso de atención, además de promocionar las prácticas seguras.

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## Introduction

The introduction and development of care models are not possible unless there is a firm commitment to continuous healthcare improvement by the different health centre administrators and management bodies. Commitment and clear leadership from the management team is key.

Nursing management bodies must increase and promote professional advance and the improvement of healthcare in addition to nursing team care. This advance is built upon three foundations: training, research and healthcare quality.

The introduction of a care quality model is only possible with the support, involvement and participation of nurse management teams. These teams are able to reach and involve the highest number of professionals and subsequently communicate the strategy of quality as a philosophy of healthcare from management to the entire care team.<sup>1</sup>

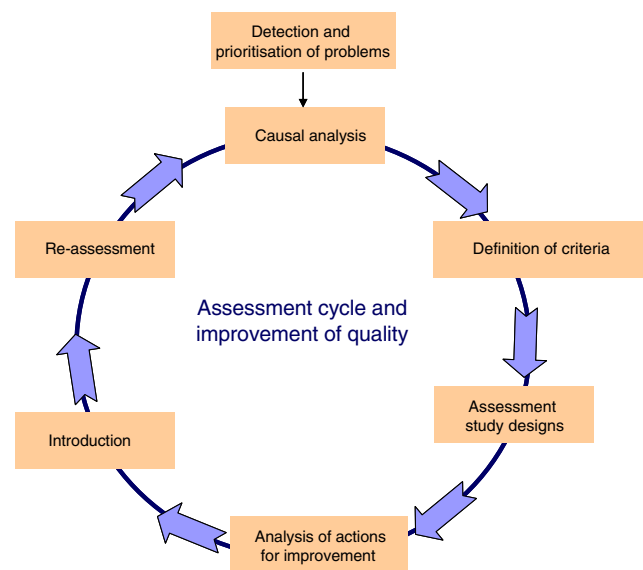
Patient safety is one of the main dimensions of healthcare. As a transverse element it affects the whole organisation and all of its members. It is a highly relevant issue and is one of the clinical and professional aspects with the highest institutional and professional support.

The nurse's role in patient safety is essential, since the majority of strategies and assessments, whether indicative or practical, have a direct affect on nursing care.

## Nursing management and healthcare

All care models incorporate leadership as an essential element for excellence in healthcare. With regards to nursing care and its importance, firm leadership must come from nursing management so that management of quality is in keeping with the care models. It is an undeniable fact that nursing professionals are the frontline providers and therefore continuous improvement of their processes and procedures will enhance both patient care and safety.

Managing care from nursing management must include the different parts of the process: (1) application of the assessment cycle and quality improvement, (2) formation of improvement groups, (3) monitoring systems and (4) application of external quality models (EFQM, Joint Commission International, ISO, etc.).



**Figure 1** Cycle of assessment and continuous improvement of quality.

## Quality assessment and improvement

The key in quality management is the introduction of the continuous improvement cycle (Fig. 1).

It is of note that assessment methodology and improvement in quality is based on the follow-up of assessment cycle steps and an improvement in quality, i.e.: identify and prioritise problems, analyse reasons, design and introduce an intervention, assess change in the results.<sup>2,3</sup>

- Identify and prioritise problems.

For detecting opportunities for improvement, different methodological elements could be used, the sources of which would be: (i) the professionals themselves (brainstorming technique, group technique, flow diagram, surveys, direct observation); (ii) external clients (opinion studies, satisfaction studies, demands, focus groups, interviews); or (iii) information systems (monitoring studies).

Prioritisation may be put into place by measuring which item to start working on first, or using the Delphi method.

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