The European Quality Control Organization defines the Quality of life as being “the total of factors and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its abilities to satisfy a given need”.

This means that the quality of life results from the combined actions of many elements, the medicine being one of the most important ones. The organization and management of the health care system can lead to an improvement in the quality and prestige medical services, or they can also - by ignorance - block or waste the efforts of people and structures that support the system. The medical scientific research, the fast-track technological progress, the permanent concern for functional recovery and rehabilitation, for prophylaxis, for increasing the life expectancy, they all go together in building up the central axis of a modern, well organized and performant health care system. A well managed health care system provides contentment. The only ones authorized to judge this effect are the beneficiaries of the medical services or, in other words, the patients.

In his direct interaction with the patient and the community, the health care system must provide services and attention according to its own promises, patient’s needs and expectations. Judged by their own performances, the health care systems can be classified in wanted, accepted (in case of need) or rejected by the patients.

All the anxiety and restlessness, that overlook our contemporary health care system, have determined me to meditate upon the activities care in Romanian hospitals.

The hospital is the main echelon of medical aid. It is the right place to observe and evaluate the quality of medical services and their effects upon the wellbeing of patients. In order to accomplish this fundamental role, the hospital must have three elements, each one very well defined, but all merged together as a team work. The team’s members are the doctors, the nursing and care giving personnel and the management department. The hospital is a conglomerate of medical departments and services which work together in a very complicated way and have a very fast moving rhythm. The chiefs of hospital’s departments and the hospital’s management team must, in order to maintain the high standards of medical services, to avoid letting their activity to become limited or routine.

An intelligent management must promote these tendencies. The manager, who is cut for his job, will be devoted to the idea that he was handed over with the management of one of the most difficult and complicated professional teams. The final result of his job, the hospital’s value and high reputation, will be appreciated on the following criteria: the hospital’s structure (meaning its departments and provided services), the final quality of the medical service and the quality of economic and professional indicators.

The structure of any hospital is organized following a standard. The standard includes: all the scientific and technical means available, the size and
performance of the medical staff, the state and functionality of the building and medical or paramedical equipments, the management and financing of hospital’s services and personnel.

Nowadays, everybody is involved in passionate debates about establishing standards and we continuously try to reach them. It is important to mention that establishing a standard of activity is not about value or performance. It represents the minimal condition for the good functioning of a hospital, not the target. The target begins at the standards and develops, including everything that modern medicine can perform to improve the quality of patient’s life, beginning with basic prophylaxis up to organ transplantation.

A standard in activity can be established, imposed, controlled, while the performances and results depend exclusively on the medical staff’s good training, proficiency and devotion. The managerial intelligence and quality devotion can influence decisively the hospital’s performances. Unfortunately for our health care system, this kind of managerial abilities are only seen sporadically.

The final quality of the medical service is provided by all the actions and maneuvers prosecuted or overlooked during a medical process. This is why I must mention some of the rules for a good team work: the intervention’s promptness, the algorithm of medical gestures that must be performed, delays, confusion, accidents and incidents that should be avoided, patient’s wishes and expectations and, of course, a good coordination in unforeseeable cases.

The elements that contribute in delivering high quality medical services are: specific clinical practice guidelines, professional audit process and a very good interdisciplinary collaboration.

The clinical practice guidelines consist in a set of rules and actions to be taken or avoided in a certain pathological case. These guidelines are establishing norms which, fulfilled or excepted, are giving the possibility of correct judgment during the medical practice.

The medical audit process has the role of debating procedures and professional activities, in formal or informal sessions. This is when are established the clinical practice guidelines, the components and distribution of medical assistance in a hospital, department or even in the entire health care system.

Medical intercommunication and the time needed to be accomplished

The majority of medical mistakes and breakdowns are caused by the lack of time for interdisciplinary communication and consultation or by lack of communication with the health care system’s components and representatives.

All the results of a hospital’s activity, seen in the light of these few fundamental elements shortly described above, come together in what managers are describing as “outcome quality”. The “quality outcome” can appreciate:

- the way of using the hospital’s structures and capital resources;
- the achievement of all quality and performance indicators;
- the hospital’s prestige, the patient’s satisfaction and willingness to return for other health care services to the same hospital;
- the way that hospital’s financial resources are used and the future economical needs.

Outcome quality eases the manager’s task in differentiating performance by standards. It provides help for correctly financing the amount and quality of the services provided by the medical staff, and it creates the possibility of constantly improving the quality of health care services providing wanted and demanded services and decreasing the poor quality ones which are accepted only because they’re needed.