Abstract

Objective. A retrospective evaluation of waiting times for elective procedures was conducted in a sample of Mexican public hospitals from the following institutions: the Mexican Institute for Social Security (IMSS), the Institute for Social Security and Social Services for Civil Servants (ISSSTE) and the Ministry of Health (MoH). Our aim was to describe current waiting times and identify opportunities to redistribute service demand among public institutions. Materials and methods. We examined current waiting times and productivity for seven elective surgical and four diagnostic imaging procedures, selected on the basis of their relative frequency and comparability with other national health systems. Results. Mean waiting time for the seven surgical procedures in the three institutions was 14 weeks. IMSS and ISSSTE hospitals showed better performance (12 and 13 weeks) than the MoH hospitals (15 weeks). Mean waiting time for the four diagnostic procedures was 11 weeks. IMSS hospitals (10 weeks) showed better average waiting times than ISSSTE (12 weeks) and MoH hospitals (11 weeks). Conclusion. Substantial variations were revealed, not only among institutions but also within the same institution. These variations need to be addressed in order to improve patient satisfaction.

Keywords

Waiting lists, health system, utilization, consumer satisfaction, quality control.