

Efficiency-Driven Models as Prime Movers for Enhanced Patient Healthcare Experience Compared to Financial Gain Models

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In the ever-evolving landscape of healthcare, the quest for an enhanced patient healthcare experience is central to improving overall outcomes and satisfaction. Two predominant models, namely efficiency-driven models, and financial gain models, shape the strategies adopted by healthcare providers. This article aims to explore the impact of these models on patient care, elucidating the advantages and challenges associated with each.

1. Efficiency-Driven Models in Healthcare

Efficiency-driven models prioritize the optimization of healthcare processes, resources, and workflows to deliver timely, cost-effective, and high-quality care. These models focus on leveraging technology, streamlining operational procedures, and maximizing the use of available resources to enhance overall system performance.

Successful implementation of such a model comes from Saudi Arabia's experience of the programme called: **Ada'a**. Ada'a is an Arabic word, meaning **'Performance.'** launched in 2017 by the Saudi Ministry of Health (MOH). It is a program for performance management of healthcare services that paves the way for achieving the health goals of the Saudi Vision 2030. It was mandated to raise the levels of productivity, efficiency and quality of performance in healthcare services through: Monitoring performance of healthcare facilities in operations and services provision and reporting on it. Driving operational focused improvements utilizing Lean, six-sigma & PDSA methodologies and change management within healthcare facilities. Developing skills of the healthcare workforce and instil a culture of continuous quality improvement [1].

This program with an institutional identity, aims to improve operational performance of healthcare service delivery, quality of healthcare services, increase access to healthcare services, reduce

healthcare wastes, adopting Lean Management in healthcare, support the capabilities and knowledge of work teams at all levels and improvement in patient experience while receiving care and improve patient satisfaction and outcomes. Starting with 33 MOH hospitals, 3 domains and 10 KPI's in 2017, the program has impressively moved on to encompass 291 MOH hospitals, 110 private hospitals, 2650 primary healthcare centres, 20 domains and 207 KPI's in 2023, encompassing General Health, critical care and Mental Health. It involved about 3000 improvement projects in these healthcare centres [2]. The program has grown to be one of the most organized and helpful programs, one of the biggest programs for managing performance and change, and a trailblazing model for its use at the local, regional, national and international levels.

Efficiency in healthcare is crucial for ensuring timely access to quality services and optimal resource utilization. Research indicates that standardized performance measurement is associated with improved efficiency and reduced length of stay in Emergency department. Compared to 2019, the ED length of stay was notably shorter by 28.5% in 2020 and by 44.2% in 2021 [3]. The median length of stay in the ED had a statistically significant decrease from 2019 to 2021; from 82 min in 2019 to 71 min in 2020 and 57 min in 2021 ($p < 0.001$); the trend test was also significant ($p < 0.001$). The reduction in the length of stay in ED is a reflection of substantial reduction in the sub-KPIs collected through the Ada'a program, namely, door to doctor, doctor to decision, and decision to disposition [3]. By implementing performance metrics related to emergency care, healthcare providers can identify bottlenecks, streamline processes, and allocate resources effectively, leading to a more efficient and responsive system.

Moreover, the program encourages the adoption of technology, such as electronic health records (EHRs) and telehealth solutions

(using telemedicine services decreases the number of patients who intend to visit the ED) [4], to further enhance efficiency. Electronic systems contribute to streamlined information flow, reduced administrative burdens, and improved communication among healthcare professionals, positively influencing overall system efficiency [4].

Integration of technology is a key facet of efficiency-driven models, with Electronic Health Records (EHRs), telemedicine, and data analytics playing pivotal roles in transforming healthcare delivery [5]. Studies consistently highlight that technology-driven efficiencies contribute to improved patient outcomes, reduced wait times, and an overall improvement in the healthcare experience [6].

Furthermore, efficient healthcare systems are associated with reduced healthcare costs. By minimizing waste, preventing unnecessary procedures, and optimizing resource utilization, efficiency-driven models contribute to financial sustainability without compromising patient care [7]. The potential cost savings can then be reinvested into improving patient amenities, staff training, and infrastructure enhancements, ultimately enhancing the patient healthcare experience [8].

1.1 Financial Gain Models in Healthcare

Financial gain models, on the other hand, prioritize revenue generation and profitability as primary drivers of healthcare delivery. These models often involve strategies such as maximizing patient volume, increasing service fees, and implementing measures to boost the bottom line. However, the pursuit of financial gain can present challenges to patient care and satisfaction.

1.2 Balancing Efficiency-Driven Models and Financial Gain for Enhanced Patient Healthcare Experience

The challenge lies in striking a balance between efficiency-driven models and financial gain models to achieve a healthcare system that is both economically viable and patient-centered. Research suggests that a focus on efficiency, when aligned with patient needs, can lead to improved financial outcomes [9]. By embracing cost-effective measures and optimizing resource allocation, healthcare providers can enhance efficiency without compromising the quality of care.

Value-based care models provide a potential solution by aligning efficiency and financial sustainability with patient-centered care principles [10]. In value-based care, reimbursement is linked to patient outcomes, encouraging healthcare providers to prioritize preventive care, patient education, and overall health improvement.

1.3 Impact on Patient Healthcare Experience

Efficiency-driven models, when effectively implemented, have a positive impact on the patient healthcare experience. Improved communication, reduced waiting times, and personalized care

contribute to enhanced patient satisfaction. Additionally, the integration of technology and streamlined processes can empower patients, giving them more control over their healthcare journey [11].

Conversely, financial gain models, if not carefully balanced, can have adverse effects on the patient experience. A study found that profit-driven healthcare often leads to increased healthcare disparities, with underserved populations experiencing decreased access to quality care [12]. This can result in negative patient experiences, eroding trust in the healthcare system.

2. Challenges and Considerations

Implementing efficiency-driven models as prime movers for an enhanced patient healthcare experience, in comparison to financial gain models, presents several challenges and considerations. One primary challenge is the potential for resistance to change within healthcare systems. Efficient models often require significant organizational restructuring, technological integration, and shifts in workflow, which can be met with resistance from healthcare professionals accustomed to established practices. Additionally, the initial costs associated with adopting new technologies for efficiency may pose financial challenges for healthcare institutions, particularly those operating within constrained budgets [8]. Furthermore, ensuring that efficiency-driven strategies align with patient needs and preferences is essential to avoid potential negative impacts on the overall healthcare experience [9]. Balancing financial sustainability with patient-centered care remains a delicate task, requiring thoughtful consideration of these challenges for successful implementation.

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