Point-Counterpoint: Hospital Scorecards and Quality

The Quality Colloquium at Harvard
August 22, 2005

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Major Points

- Measurement can be important
  - Quality improvement
  - Consumer choice
  - Accountability/financial incentives
- What is ‘acceptable imperfection’ may depend on the use of measurement
- At this stage of development, there are many potential concerns
Concern #1: Hype Exceeds Reality

• Even the famous are seduced

Who is left to critique when the top academic hospitals are co-opted?
Concern #2: Accuracy

- Many measures lack accuracy

For example:

AHRQ Failure to Rescue measure fails to identify the right patients > 50%
Concern #3: Discrimination

- Groups not homogeneous in performance

Red Sox lead the league in batting average and Pirates trail all teams

Not all Red Sox batters are better than all Pirate batters
Problem #4: Proprietary Methods

- Hard to trust what you cannot see

Many organizations use proprietary methods to profile hospitals.
Problem #5: Validation

- Lack of validation of secondary sources

Many measures are based on secondary data sources that have not been validated
Problem #6: Statistical Approach

Many systems do not employ appropriate methods

For example:

Hard to tell if differences are due to chance.
Problem #7: Reporting

- Too simplistic or too complex

Do consumers really understand the nuances?
Questions

• How good is good enough?
• What are appropriate measures?
  - Structure
  - Process
  - Outcome
• How can we help provide patients the information they need?
Thoughts

• As measurement has consequence, we must acknowledge the potential for both beneficial and adverse consequences
• Who will grade the graders?
• The need for standards