



THE P.I.C.E.N.U.M. STUDY: MEASURING AND COMPARING CLINICAL AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCES IN GENERAL PRACTICE.

Paolo Misericordia (*Staff of PICENUM study*)

Since 2003, in the Ascoli Piceno province, a group of General Practitioners (GPs) is involved in an initiative of clinical audit; this process was started after selection of a panel of accredited Performance Indicators, which was applied periodically to the data drawn-out from the practice databases, about the management of chronic conditions.

The Performance Measures analysis showed a gradual positive change, demonstrating the effectiveness of audit on quality improvement.

The study, named P.I.C.E.N.U.M. (*Performance Indicators Continuous Evaluation as Necessity for Upgrade in Medicine*), reached its 6th life year, has been involved 50 GPs that have been able to consult directly, in a Website, the own performance measures to comparison with those of the colleagues (clearly in anonymous person) and with the relative averages.

The experience matured in the years with the P.I.C.E.N.U.M. study evolution has concurred to propose one and a widening of the plan.

Since 2007 P.I.C.E.N.U.M. study is inserted among the initiatives of the *Centro Studi* of the *Federazione Italiana dei Medici di Medicina Generale* (FIMMG) from where it is proposed to the Italian General Practitioners with a dedicated Software, "PICENUM SW", available online from the Home Page of the official website of FIMMG (www.fimmg.org); through this software the GPs can insert the data about own professional activity, drawn-out from practice databases.

The Software combines the inserted numerical data, constructing automatically and in real time the Performance Measure (i.e. "Percentage of diabetic patients with HbA1c test in the last year") showing it in a diagram graphic where analogous values produced from other colleagues appear.

In this way, every GP can make benchmarking activity, condition recognized to be particularly effective in the improvement processes; in this diagram it is possible to proceed moreover to the comparison with a average data and with a Reachable Level of Performance (LRP), a "realistic" standard value, calculated on the basis of the available data.

In the same Software it is possible to collect the data subsequently, allowing to user to perceive the variations of its behavior during the time (comparison with previous surveys) and being invited to a modality of systematic audit strongly oriented to the improvement.

In the Website www.picenumstudy.com, the details of the study, its background and the literature that accredits the Indicators panel are described; here is reported also a set of utilities in order to facilitate the extraction of the data from the practice databases.

Therefore the PICENUM study is proposed to become the “Km counter” of the General Practitioner that wants to estimate the own “speed”, having references in the other colleague's “going”. Measuring the activities, confronting the data, improving the performances, monitoring the changes; like this they could be summarized the contents of the our study.

The Primary Care, with its usual operating mode, it can easily be part of the research studies, using the daily data collected in the practice electronic databases, containing a most remarkable size of epidemiologic information and very interesting details of the various care processes, constituting probably the richest data bank of sanitary data, continuously updated and available.

The software “PICENUM SW” becomes part in such context like one instrument in a position to facilitating and favoring the development of these initiatives: making available a ductile electronic tool, effective and easy accessible to recording, aggregating, elaborating the data and to consecutive presentation of the results; this resource could be found particularly effective for work projects, regional or local, based on the data reports from the General Practice, collected following qualified strategies for the evaluation of the care processes.

The PICENUM study can be seen as an opportunity for professional growth for a modern General Practice, central protagonist in the clinical governance systems, that it must be equipped of instruments that allow the monitoring of the processes and the activities outcomes, in order to find the qualities but also in order to perceive of the eventual limits and above all to appreciate of the favorable improvements.