

AEMH Statement on quality improvement in hospitals

(adopted unanimously at the 52nd AEMH Plenary Meeting, Verona, September 10, 1999)

Medical, ethical and moral principles oblige the physicians to guarantee optimal standards in total medical care for their patients. Especially in times of diminishing economical resources with difficulties to master cost increases due to improved sophistication in medical care and increased patient expectations, a reliable quality management in health care is fundamental.

The measure to achieve this quality should be appropriate. This means that the advantages, risks, benefits and expenses have to be balanced carefully.

In the hospital the interdisciplinarity of quality management deserves special attention.

The effectiveness of quality improvement programs should be subject to evaluation and quantification. These programs should not end as administrative worthless actions, and their costs should stand in a proportionate relation to the achievable benefit. Evaluation should be based on standards or guidelines made by the medical profession.

Long-standing experience with quality improvement systems implemented from the top (top-down), has proven its demotivating character for those involved. Systems developed from the involved staff themselves (bottom-up) have turned out to be highly motivating and successful.