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## **Editorial**

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Iga Rudawska

University of Szczecin,  
Ul. Mickiewicza 64,  
71-101 Szczecin, Poland  
E-mail: [igita@wneiz.pl](mailto:igita@wneiz.pl)

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Most countries are under constant pressure to review and rebuild their healthcare systems. While the set of reform patterns varies among countries, the interest in changes has spread to encompass nearly every dimension of present-day arrangements. A central problem of this expanding reform process has been the long learning circle. It typically requires several years from the implementation of a particular initiative before it is possible to assess its impact. The greatest pressure for change has been the increased role of the managerial approach to the provision and, in some countries, the founding of healthcare. A number of market-style mechanisms have been applied to different sub-sectors of the health system and on different levels of health systems. Effective management of both healthcare system at macro-level and healthcare providers at micro-level seems to be the biggest challenge for the most countries.

The papers in this special issue cover a broad range of spectrum. They are drawn from a set of different healthcare sectors, but mainly address the economic and managerial trends emerging in healthcare industry. In the collection of nine cases the authors discuss how to manage healthcare for social and economic profit and how marketing professionals attempt to balance in practice these sometimes contradictory dimensions and discourses to achieve market success.

First three cases cover the methodological aspects of measuring the patients' perception of healthcare service delivery. I. Rudawska and A. Sagan apply the additive measurement model with latent variables into the analysis of customer preferences' structure. The patient choices refer, in this case, to ambulatory healthcare market in Poland. Furthermore, G. Singh uses in his study the functional and psychological dimensions of customers' perception and satisfaction as the basis for formulating a strategy for hospitals in Fiji. Next, S.W.S.B. Dasanayaka, G.S.P., Gunasekera and G.D. Sardana apply SERVQUAL model in order to identify service quality of healthcare delivery of public sector hospitals in Sri Lanka and to assess the quality determinants of healthcare delivery.

Next four papers represent managerial approach toward healthcare service providers and report on the case studies research conducted in different healthcare settings. First, C.H. Nodari, P.M. Olea, E. Dorion and E.A. Severo present a multi-case study of the innovations in primary care in Brazil, classifying them in product, process, marketing and organisational innovations. Their work suggests that there is an institutional environmental of constant changes, simulating health and more equitable human development conditions toward a better public health management strategy. Next, M. Saunila, J. Ukko, P. Rusila and H. Rantanen aim to find the special challenges that healthcare organisations face when designing the information and performance measures.

Their paper contributes to the up-to-date discussion about performance measurement and management in healthcare services. Next two papers apply network approach towards healthcare services delivery, both in B2C and B2B context. J. Myllärniemi and N. Helander present value network analysis based on two case studies from Finland. They argue that such approach increases the understanding of the actors, value functions and value creation potential of a healthcare system. Next, J. Myllärniemi, J. Okkonen, J. Paavilainen and V. Vuori discuss the phenomenon called negative competition based on the comprehensive case study conducted in a healthcare co-opetition network. They investigate how a public-private co-opetition setting steers the patient flow and changes the production of healthcare services.

The next paper applies marketing philosophy to healthcare settings. N. Draskovic and A. Valjak provide the insight into Croatian public healthcare from the social marketing perspective. Based on primary research finding, their study provides an overview of the implementation of basic social marketing principles within the Croatian public healthcare system.

The last paper covers the issue of decision-making process on the pharmaceutical market in Germany. S. Dankers and R. Vieira focus on a decision model that transforms basic information input into a decision tree. They argue that the use of decision modelling tools can improve the quality of pricing decisions.

I hope that the variety of the topics which covered in this special issue you will find interesting and beneficial.