

Quality of care: patient safety

The Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on quality of care: patient safety;¹

Concerned that the incidence of adverse events is a challenge to quality of care, a significant avoidable cause of human suffering, and a high toll in financial loss and opportunity cost to health services;

Noting that significant enhancement of health systems' performance can be achieved in Member States by preventing adverse events in particular, and improving patient safety and health care quality in general;

Recognizing the need to promote patient safety as a fundamental principle of all health systems,

1. URGES Member States:

(1) to pay the closest possible attention to the problem of patient safety;

(2) to establish and strengthen science-based systems, necessary for improving patients' safety and the quality of health care, including the monitoring of drugs, medical equipment and technology.

2. REQUESTS the Director-General in the context of a quality programme:

(1) to develop global norms, standards and guidelines for quality of care and patient safety, the definition, measurement and reporting of adverse events and near misses in health care by reviewing experiences from existing programmes and seeking inputs from Member States, to provide support in developing reporting systems, taking preventive action, and implementing measures to reduce risks;

(2) to promote framing of evidence-based policies, including global standards that will improve patient care, with particular emphasis on product safety, safe clinical practice in compliance with appropriate guidelines and safe use of medicinal products and medical devices taking into consideration the views of policy-makers, administrators, health-care providers and consumers;

¹ Document A55/13.

- (3) to support the efforts of Member States to promote a culture of safety within health care organizations and to develop mechanisms, for example through accreditation or other means, in accordance with national conditions and requirements, to recognize the characteristics of health care providers that offer a benchmark for excellence in patient safety internationally;
- (4) to encourage research into patient safety, including epidemiological studies of risk factors, effective protective interventions, and assessment of associated costs of damage and protection;
- (5) to report on progress to the Executive Board at its 113th session and to the Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly.

Ninth plenary meeting, 18 May 2002
A55/VR/9

= = =