How do private hospitals perform -compared to public hospitals- regarding efficiency, accessibility and quality of care in EU context?

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¹Radboud university medical center, Scientific Institute for Quality of Healthcare (IQ healthcare), Celsus academy for sustainable healthcare, Nijmegen, Upcoming: Eurofound (2016/2017), The role of the private sector in delivering hospital services, Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

Objective
This review scrutinizes the consequences of the involvement of private hospital providers regarding efficiency, quality- and accessibility of services in the European Union (28)

Material & Methods
Method: Systematic literature review

- Population: private non-profit, private for-profit or public-private partnership
- Intervention: Privatization as a process or exposure to private hospital services
- Context: member states of the European Union (28)
- Method: empirical research , no descriptive analysis

Articles screened = 2017

Articles included in review = 30

Results

Quality of care
The overall outcome was relatively mixed. The results differ between finding a negative (7 art.), positive (4 art.) and no significant relationship (1 art.). Note that various different indicators were used.

Accessibility
The outcomes and indicators are rather specific. Nevertheless, the lion’s share of the articles raise concerns regarding accessibility of private hospitals; Especially, users from higher SES seem to have better access to private hospitals.

Efficiency
Figure1. Efficiency findings: number of articles.

Private hospitals compared to public hospitals

The institutional framework (i.e. reimbursement system) , methodology and research design seem to influence the different findings.

Takeaway message:
- Context seem to matter more than ownership.
- Methodology and research design (especially the indicators used) cause divergent results.

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Abbreviations
DE= Germany  NFP= Not For Profit hospitals
IT= Italy  FP= For profit hospitals
AT= Austria  art.= articles