

**Potentials of Sustainability of Quality Primary Health Care Services  
within the Framework of the National Accreditation Program**

**Thesis**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of MD Degree in Public Health**

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**2009**

# مقومات إستمرارية جودة خدمات الرعاية الصحية الأولية في إطار برنامج الإعتماد القومي

رسالة مقدمة من

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توطئة للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه في الصحة العامة و طب المجتمع

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2009

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## Abstract

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The accreditation program is addressing the quality of performance of primary health care (PHC) facilities, within the Health Sector Reform Domain. This study aims to reach learned lessons to suggest recommendations for sustainability of quality PHC services through accreditation program. The study is a health system research that used quasi-experimental/ time series analysis- test and control group design. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. In-depth interviews and FGDs were done with the Ministry of Health (MOH)-HQ staff, and the staff members at the health district level as well as the service providers at the accredited PHC facilities. At the PHC facilities levels, operations research was done to assess the trend in the quality standards, PHC services output, and client satisfaction in the accredited rural family health units (ARFHUs) versus non-accredited rural health units (NRHUs). Findings of the study showed the presence of potentials for sustainability of quality PHC services through accreditation program due to political and institutional support. However, there are challenges for financial and demand sustainability. At the operational-health facility level, the articulation of accreditation with different policies related to family medicine, incentives, and cost-sharing as well as the dual implementation of vertical and family medicine programs across PHC facilities within the same district limit achievement of intended improvement in the quality of PHC services through accreditation program. The study recommended continuous political and financial support as well as community involvement as partners in the accreditation of PHC facilities.

### **Key Words:**

Accreditation program- Sustainability – Quality – Primary Health Care, institutional sustainability, political sustainability, sustainability of demand, Health Sector Reform, community involvement, cost-sharing, family medicine

**I would like to dedicate this work to;**

**My mother and my father**, who have guided me throughout all phases of my life. They always share with me the most important lessons of a successful past. Thank you for your love, faith, guiding example and gentle encouragement.

**My husband**, who's always supports and helps me.

**My son**, who's always prays for me.

## Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I am thankful to God, for without his grace, this work would never have been accomplished.

My deepest gratitude and appreciation to **Professor Dr. Madiha Said Abdel-Razik**, Professor of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University, for her continuous encouragement and guiding in each step in this work. Without her endless effort, patient understanding and support, the study wouldn't have come to light. My feeling of gratitude and obligation for her generous help and care will endure throughout my life.

I am deeply indebted to **Research Professor Dr. Samia Abdel-Razak**, Research Professor of Public Health, National Research Center, for her support, guidance and supervision.

I am grateful to **Professor Dr. Maha El-Rabbat**, Professor of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University, for her advice and supervision.

I would also like to express my heart-felt gratitude to **Professor Dr. Hanaa Abdullah**, Professor of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University, for her help, guidance and support during the various phases of this work. Thank you very much.

My profound thanks to **Ass. Research Professor Dr. Amany Tawfik**, Assistant Research Professor of Public Health, National Research Center, for her help and advice.

I must extend my appreciation to all **QI Directorate–MOH–HQ and Al-Badrasheen Health District Officials**, participated in the in-depth interviews and FGDs, for their help.

I must also extend my appreciation to all **the studied health units' service providers and clients** who kindly agreed to participate in the study.

Special thanks for my Community Medicine Research Department staff and colleagues in National Research Center for their kindness and support.

***Ghada Abd-Rabbo***

# Contents

	<u>Page n.</u>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Aim of the Study.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Review of Literature.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Chapter I: Primary Care Evolution .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Guiding principles of health sector reform program.....	9
Primary Health Care in Egypt .....	10
The objectives of the health sector reform program in Egypt.....	16
Categories of the health sector reform program in Egypt .....	19
Family health model in Egypt .....	20
District Provider Organizations in Egypt.....	25
Family health fund in Egypt .....	27
<b>Chapter II: Accreditation .....</b>	<b>33</b>
Historical background .....	33
Definition of accreditation.....	34
Requirements of accreditation.....	34
Bodies that grant accreditation .....	35
Accreditation versus ISO.....	38
Accreditation versus certification.....	39
Benefits of accreditation.....	39
Vital components for a successful accreditation program.....	40
Incentives and accreditation.....	43
Options for accreditation model design and implementation.....	44
Challenges of accreditation.....	45
Accreditation program in Egypt.....	47
Objectives of the accreditation program in Egypt .....	50
Principles of the accreditation program in Egypt .....	50
The accreditation program policies and procedures in Egypt .....	51
Key players in the accreditation program in Egypt .....	52

Survey team members.....	56
Accreditation survey process and procedures in Egypt .....	57
Challenges of the accreditation program in Egypt .....	63
<b>Chapter III: Sustainability: .....</b>	<b>65</b>
Definition .....	65
Pillars of sustainability .....	66
Sustainability indicators .....	73
Characteristics of program or project design and management to achieve sustainability.....	77
<b>Research Methodology.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Results .....</b>	<b>91</b>
I. Perspectives of the policy makers at MOHP-HQ regarding sustainability of quality PHC within the accreditation program.....	91
II. Perspectives of the Health District staff towards potentials of sustainability of quality PHC services in the accredited FPM facilities.....	97
III. Perspectives of the service providers towards the potentials of sustainability of quality services in the accredited FPM facilities.....	106
IV. Findings derived from the observation PHC services according to the quality checklist data.....	115
V. Findings derived from health service statistics.....	117
VI. Findings derived from the PHC clients' exit interview.....	128
<b>Discussion.....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>162</b>

<b>Annexes.....</b>	<b>187</b>
Annex 1: Guidelines of the in-depth interviews conducted with the director of the QI Directorate–MOH–HQ and with one of the key quality specialist who was working at the same Directorate.....	187
Annex 2: Guidelines of the in-depth interviews conducted with the director of Al-Badrasheen health district/ and FGDs with physicians responsible of managing of different aspects of FPM in Al-Badrasheen health district .....	190
Annex 3: Guidelines of the in-depth interviews conducted with the physicians (directors and junior physicians)/ and FGDs with the nurses of the three ARFHUs .....	191
Annex 3: Guidelines of the in-depth interviews conducted with the physicians (directors and junior physicians) and with the nurses of the three NRHUs.....	193
Annex 5: Some personal data, qualifications, and Jobs of the service providers working in the six studied health units at the time of data collection (three accredited and three non-accredited facilities).....	194
Annex 6: Observation quality standards' checklist.....	197
Annex 7: Health service indicators.....	211
Annex 8: Exit interviews questionnaire form conducted with the clients of the six studied health units .....	216

## **Arabic Summary**

## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>AAHC</b>	The Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care
<b>ALPHA</b>	Agenda for Leadership in Programs for Health Care Accreditation
<b>ANC</b>	Antenatal Care
<b>ARFHUs</b>	Accredited Rural Family Health Units
<b>ARI</b>	Acute Respiratory Tract Infections
<b>BBP</b>	Basic Benefit Package
<b>BCC</b>	Behavior Change Communication
<b>BCG</b>	Bacillus Calmette and Guérin
<b>CCHSA</b>	Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation
<b>CCOs</b>	Curative Care Organization
<b>CHD</b>	Coronary Heart Disease
<b>COTSP</b>	Central Office of Technical Support and Projects
<b>CQI</b>	Continuous Quality Improvement
<b>DM</b>	Diabetes Mellitus
<b>DOTS</b>	Direct Observation Therapy of Short Duration
<b>DPOs</b>	District Provider Organizations
<b>DPT</b>	The Triple Vaccine of Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>ECTAT</b>	European Commission Technical Assistance Team
<b>EDL</b>	Essential Drug List
<b>EMRO</b>	Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>FHC</b>	Family Health Center
<b>FHF</b>	Family Health Fund
<b>FPM</b>	Family Practice Model
<b>FHU</b>	Family Health Unit
<b>FP</b>	Family Planning
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GOE</b>	Government of Egypt
<b>GPs</b>	General Practitioners
<b>HBV</b>	Hepatitis B Vaccine
<b>HDCA</b>	Highland District Community Association
<b>HIO</b>	Health Insurance Organization
<b>HSR</b>	Health Sector Reform
<b>HSRP</b>	Health Sector Reform Program
<b>IEC</b>	Information, Education, and Communication
<b>IDIs</b>	In depth Interviews
<b>IDS</b>	Identity Documents
<b>IMCI</b>	Integrated Management of Childhood Illness
<b>IP</b>	The Internet Protocol
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>ISQua</b>	International Society for Quality in Health Care

<b>JCAHO</b>	Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations
<b>LE</b>	Livre égyptienne (Egyptian Pounds)
<b>MBHC</b>	Millennium Behavioral Health Care
<b>MCH</b>	Maternal and Child Health
<b>MD</b>	Ministerial Decree
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System
<b>MOH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MOH-HQ</b>	Ministry of Health-Head Quarter
<b>MOHP</b>	Ministry of Health and Population
<b>NAB</b>	National Accreditation Board
<b>NAEYC</b>	National Association for the Education of Young Children
<b>NGOs</b>	Non Governmental Organizations
<b>NHIO</b>	National Health Insurance Organization
<b>NPC/RMU</b>	National Population Council/Research Management Unit
<b>NRHUs</b>	Non Accredited Rural Health Units
<b>NSW Health</b>	New South Wales Health
<b>ORS</b>	Oral Rehydration Solution
<b>PHAB</b>	Public Health Accreditation Board
<b>PHC</b>	Primary Health Care
<b>PHR</b>	Partnerships for Health Reform
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>QI</b>	Quality Improvement
<b>RH</b>	Reproductive Health
<b>RTIs</b>	Reproductive Tract Infections
<b>SIF</b>	service Improvement Fund
<b>SIP</b>	Sector Investment Program
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package of Social Science Software program
<b>STDs</b>	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
<b>SWA</b>	Sector Wide Approach
<b>TB</b>	Tuberculosis
<b>THO</b>	Teaching Hospital Organization
<b>TT</b>	Tetanus Toxoid
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund Agency
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>U5</b>	Under 5
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WBCS</b>	Well Baby Care Services
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

## **Glossary**

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**Accreditation:** has been defined as a self-assessment and external peer assessment process used by health care organizations to accurately assess their level of performance in relation to established standards and to implement ways to continuously improve its quality performance. Critically, accreditation is not just about standard-setting: there are analytical, counseling and self-improvement dimensions to the process. There are parallel issues around evidence-based medicine and quality assurance, and the reduction of medical error is a key role of the accreditation process. Broadly speaking, there are two types of health care accreditation: 1) hospital and healthcare accreditation which takes place within national borders, 2) international healthcare accreditation.

**Ad hoc:** is a Latin phrase which means "for this [purpose]". It generally signifies a solution designed for a specific problem or task, not able to be generalized, and which cannot be adapted to other purposes. Common examples are organizations, committees, and commissions created at the national or international level for a specific task. In other fields the term may refer, for example, to a tailor-made suit, a handcrafted network protocol or a purpose-specific equation.

**Content analysis:** is a technical technique of interpretation that can be applied both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively it includes word counts, space measurements (column centimeters in the case of newspapers), time counts (for radio and television time) etc. Qualitatively it can involve any kind of analysis where media content is categorized and classified. A common variant of content analysis is stereotyping studies.

**Continuity of care:** refers to the ongoing relationship between individual patients and primary care clinicians who are committed to the person, not a specific disease, body of knowledge, or specialized technique, and who recognize that physical, mental, emotional, and social concerns are related.

**Continuous Quality improvement (CQI):** is a management philosophy to improve the level of performance of key processes in the organization. It is the process of reducing variations of performance to achieve a better outcome to the organization's customers.

**Decentralization:** it is the process of dispersing decision-making governance closer to the people or citizens. This is more appropriate to the individual program setting that need more detailed and more refined information about the available resources and clients' needs and demands. Integrated programs promote decentralized decision making at the district level.

**Family health fund (FHF):** it is a new organization established to finance the new primary care model under the first phase of the HSRP in Egypt. The FHF will ensure financial sustainability of the HSRP. It will help separate service finance from service provision. Through its incentive-based payments, it will ensure high quality services, provider efficiency and competition among them. Also, it will encourage health care providers to contract with the fund on equal criteria based upon quality of service. The FHF plays a major role in communication and raising awareness about the HSRP among both service providers and beneficiaries.

**Family practice model (FPM):** has been described as a high quality PHC that depends on the availability of well trained physicians as members of health care teams in the community. FPM is the application of family medicine to the care of individuals and families in day to day practice. The new primary health care model in Egypt is centered on the practice of FPM. It will decrease fragmentation in the delivery of care. The holistic medical approach and the integrated care system (pediatrics, reproductive and adult medicine) will also increase the likelihood that preventive and early intervention care, reaches those who most need it.

**Family physician:** is a physician who is educated and trained in the discipline of FPM. He provides personal, primary, comprehensive, and continuing medical care to each member of the family regardless of sex, age, or type of problem (be it biologic, behavioral, or social problem). He / she is assisted by a team of community nurse and a social worker. He / she monitors the staffs' performance who works under his / her supervision. Physicians who are accredited in FPM have a better understanding and

familiarity with the early stages of illness and are thus more capable of assessing the importance of those initial signs and symptoms.

***Gold Star Program in Egypt:*** in 1993 MOHP instituted a QI Program in selected FP clinics. This program emphasizes; training to standardize the quality of care, a consumer-oriented approach aimed at improving client services, and raising client satisfaction. A FP clinic that earns a gold star is among the “best of the best” of the FP clinics. These clinics are supervised and rated according to a comprehensive checklist of 101 quality indicators. Clinics are rated each quarter according to the quality indicators. A clinic earns a gold star by attaining a 100% quality standards certification score for two consecutive quarters and retains its gold star by maintaining that score at successive quarterly evaluations.

***Health sector reform program (HSRP):*** means building on the strengths of the current health system and rectifying the weaknesses to achieve public health care goals.

***IDs/ STDs:*** they are identity documents that are used to document or verify aspects of a person's personal identity regarding the STDs he got, the more concern sure is about HIV/AIDS.

***Institutionalization:*** the term institutionalization is widely used in social theory to denote the process of making something (for example a concept, a social role, particular values and norms, or modes of behavior) become embedded within an organization, social system, or society as an established custom or norm within that system.

***Interpretation:*** is a presentation or portrayal of information altered in order to conform to a specific language. This may be a spoken, written, pictorial, mathematical, sculptural, cinematic, geometric or any other form of language. The purpose of interpretation would normally be to increase the possibility of understanding, but sometimes, as in propaganda or brainwashing, the purpose may be to evade understanding and increase confusion.

**Legislation:** is law which has been created by a legislature or other governing body. Legislation is usually proposed by a member of the legislature (e.g. a member of Congress or Parliament), or by the executive, then it is debated by members of the legislature and is often amended. Those who have the formal power to *create* legislation are known as legislators. The act of making legislation is sometimes known as legislating. The law-making function is primarily the responsibility of the legislature.

**Logistics:** the Oxford English dictionary defines *logistics* as: "The branch of military science having to do with procuring, maintaining and transporting material, personnel and facilities." Another dictionary definition is: "The time related positioning of resources." Logistics is the management of the flow of goods, information and other resources, including energy and people, between the point of origin and the point of consumption in order to meet the requirements of consumers.

**Managed care organizations:** there is a continuum of organizations that provide managed care, each operating with slightly different business models. Some organizations are made of physicians, while others are combinations of physicians, hospitals, and other providers.

**PHR plus:** recognizing that accreditation has been a successful change agent in many countries, the decision was taken in Egypt to embark on a **National** health care organization accreditation program with the support of USAID. This led to the partnerships for Health Reform<sub>plus</sub> Project; (PHR<sub>plus</sub>) accreditation program. Building on the work that was accomplished during the initial partnerships for health reform (PHR) project (1997-2000), the PHR<sub>plus</sub> accreditation program for Egypt began in 2003-2005. During this period, efforts focused on expanding the focus of accreditation program in Egypt from PHC facilities to include hospital facilities.

**Primary care:** is a term used for the activity of a health care provider who acts as a first point of consultation for all patients. So, primary care is the first contact with a healthcare provider in a given episode of illness that leads to a decision regarding a course of action to resolve the health problem presented by the patient. Continuity of care is also a key characteristic of primary care. Primary care is an important form of health access for patients. Primary care involves the widest scope of health care including all ages of

patients, patients of all socioeconomic and geographic origins, patients seeking to maintain optimal health, and patients with multiple chronic diseases.

**Primary health care (PHC):** is essential health care based on practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods and technology made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community through their full participation and at a cost that the community and the country can afford.

**Qualitative data:** is data that is written with descriptions and narrations, a method that investigates the experience of users through observations and interviews.

**Quality:** is the proper performance (according to standards) of interventions that are known to be safe, affordable to the society and have the ability to produce an impact on morbidity, mortality, disability and malnutrition. Quality is doing the right thing right the first time and every time.

**Quality assessment:** is the process of comparing performance with expectations, standards or goals and thus identifying opportunities to improve. However, it does not suggest imposing solutions and does not require any declared intention or ability to take corrective action, and it relies upon available measurements.

**Quality assurance (QA):** is a management system designed to give the maximum confidence that a given acceptable level of quality of service is being achieved with a minimum of total expenditure.

**Quantitative data:** is data that is written in numbers. It is a method that investigates observable facts with measures. It can be analyzed using statistical methods, and results can be displayed using tables, charts, histograms and graphs.

**Regulation:** it refers to "controlling human or societal behavior by rules or restrictions. Regulation can take many forms: legal restrictions set by a government authority, self-regulation, social regulation (e.g. norms), co-regulation and market regulation. One can consider regulation as actions of conduct imposing sanctions (such as money paid usually to superior authority, usually governmental authority, as punishment for a crime