How can consumers compare healthcare quality across borders?

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Why go abroad?

- Major reasons to go abroad (according to Eurobarometer survey "Cross-border health services in the EU"):
  - In my country, the treatment I need is not available
  - In my country, the quality of care is not sufficient
  - I want access to a specific specialist (outside of my country)
  - In my country, there is too long waiting for the treatment I need
  - I look for lower treatment costs.
Significant performance variations
Europe is divided into "waiting list territory" (Red) and "non-waiting list territory" (Green).

This is independent of GDP/capita.

Access has improved since 2013!
And yes; wealthy countries have better outcomes – but not all!

"Big Beveridge" (ES, IT, UK) not quite making it!

Health Consumer Powerhouse
NCP:s mostly a dead end

- Among all the EU MS, only 5 make any sense to CBC visitors, *i.e.*:
  - *Important parts available in a least English*
  - *Useful information about therapies and available care providers (or links to such info)*
  - *Q&A sections*
- Generally, lots of formal, legal and organisational notes
- Painfully evident, design not for users but to meet EU minimum expectations
- Reflects the discomfort among many governments in relation to CBC?
- A few NCP:s show a welcome: Germany, Czech Republic (bravo!), Slovenia (bravo!), Ireland and UK (both lingual advantages)
- “The rest is silence”
- *Is the DG Santé really satisfied with this poor show!?*
A few good NCP:s

- GE: the best!
- [http://www.eu-patienten.de/de/behandlung_deutschland/gesundheitsdienstleister/gesundheitsdienstleister_finden.jsp](http://www.eu-patienten.de/de/behandlung_deutschland/gesundheitsdienstleister/gesundheitsdienstleister_finden.jsp)
- UK: very good provider info - NHS Choices
- [http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx)
Looking for yourself

- [http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/135994/e94875.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/135994/e94875.pdf)

- Hardly the way you would hope for!?
National ratings

- Some national hospital ratings:
  - [http://www.independer.nl/ziekenhuis/intro.aspx](http://www.independer.nl/ziekenhuis/intro.aspx)
  - [http://www.kiesbeter.nl/](http://www.kiesbeter.nl/)
  - [http://www.iamexpat.nl/expat-page/healthcare/hospitals-netherlands](http://www.iamexpat.nl/expat-page/healthcare/hospitals-netherlands)
  - [http://www.weisse-liste.de/](http://www.weisse-liste.de/)
- Wikipedia (all of Europe)
Information impact?

- EU has assessed what has happened since the Directive turned into national laws: "Impact of information on patients’ choice..." (August, 2014):
- Weak indications that good information as such drives mobility
- CBC share of national healthcare costs in EU well below 1%
- Movement patterns stable, in spite of crisis and new formal options.
Global perspective

- http://www.medilink-global.com/cross-border-healthcare-cbh
- http://www.patientsbeyondborders.com/india
- https://www.bumrungrad.com/ (JCI accreditation)
Trustworthy?

• Few healthcare providers present own performance data – you have to trust guide service websites, accreditation systems etc.
• Key to know: do experienced patients recommend this therapy/hospital/provider?
• Hard to assess how credible (commercial) rankings and web advice are?
• Yet no/few information services offer more than a first selection and introduction to patient choice
• Is this the best we can expect?
Conclusions

• Yet, no take off for medical travelling (at least not in EU; but industry seems expectant)
• Still, most people trust their national healthcare
• A strong service infrastructure necessary to reduce the sense of risk related to moving cross-border
• An industry performance standard would be welcome
• A Medical Travelling Index for monitoring and assessment?
• Official CBC information still insufficient
• Significant individual efforts unavoidable.
Thank you!

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