BEYOND THE BARRIERS OF HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT TOOLS: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH IN LEAN MANAGEMENT, CLINICAL PATHWAYS AND CLINICAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Dr. Claudio Beltramello, MD – GIMBE Foundation -
Dr. Franco Pezzato, Degree in Philosophy – Vision group -
There exists a plethora of tools and approaches in healthcare management for quality improvement.

The choice of one or another (the operation of matching the problem at stake to a particular tool according to its suitability for that class of issues) is rarely based on evidence and usually depends on the manager’s personal attitudes.

Moreover, literature shows that once a particular tool is picked up, it is then applied with a kind of “all or nothing” attitude.
Think outside the box and propose an integrated approach among three management tools:

- LEAN MANAGEMENT
- PROACTIVE APPROACH OF CLINICAL RISK MANAG.
- CLINICAL PATHWAYS
Clinical pathways

FMECA (proactive tool of clinical risk management)

Lean management
SPECIFIC AIMS OF THESE THREE TOOLS

Lean management

to reduce waste and improve efficiency

Clinical risk management

to reduce adverse events to patients and improve safety

Clinical pathways

to increase appropriateness linking clinical choices to the best available evidence and improve effectiveness.
SIMILARITIES IN THE APPLICATION PHASES OF THESE THREE TOOLS

a) An analysis of the actual process the patients go through and of the concrete activities performed by health personnel in wards/departments that need improvement

b) A further examination of the processes involving patients and personnel through their “specific lens”

c) An overhaul of the process according to the optimal model worked out

d) The actual implementation of the changes followed by monitoring and evaluation of the results using SMART indicators
Lean management: increasing value through the elimination of wastes (*muda*) with the application of dedicated tools (value stream map, visual management, 5S, pull system, kanban and others)

Proactive clinical risk management: identification of the dangerous steps applying the FMECA (Failure Mode Effects and Criticality Analysis) in order to “close the holes in the cheese” before an adverse event might occur to a patient

Clinical pathways: reduction of variability among health professionals by means of an alignment of diagnostic and therapeutic decisions with the recommendations of the reference clinical guideline
M = muda (waste)
FMEA (Failure Mode Effects and Criticality Analysis)

H = high risk (probability X severity)
CLINICAL PATHWAYS

R = guideline recommendations

Process

Sub-process

Procedures

IN

OUT
FINAL THOUGHTS

Depending on the context and the problems under scrutiny the application of lean management or FMEA or clinical pathways can be more appropriate.

What may result in critical advancement, however, is that, when it comes to the common step of process re-engineering, an integration of the three approaches is conducive to the improvement of several quality dimensions at once.
Clinical pathways

FMECA (proactive tool of clinical risk management)

Lean management