The Inspectors Body of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (SEYYP) and the administrative control of Public Hospitals

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ABSTRACT: The administrative inspections of hospitals, the mode of supply, shipment and the inventory of sanitary materials and pharmaceuticals, performed by SEYYP inspectors ensure the orderly and effective function of agents offering health and welfare services.

Key Words: Inspectors body, Hospital administration, Inspections.

INTRODUCTION

Many decades ago the economically advanced countries introduced in their universities «Controlling» and «Auditing» courses, rendering these concepts of internal control mechanisms, critical for advancement and operation of any economical activity.

In the public sector, these mechanisms are functioning as external factors, so the concepts of investigation and inspection are known for their input in the correction of erroneous actions and penalizing of the liable persons and for the proactive actions preventing errors and neglects by public servants.

In the Hellenic public sector, contrary to what is applied abroad, such mechanisms are very difficult to thrive. Many times the government resolved for renovation of the Health System, attempting to rationalize the organization and administration, practices which mostly remained incomplete, due to their conflict with underdeveloped structures and practices of the Hellenic Social System¹.

An exception is the establishment of a special «investigation» body, destined to prevent phenomena of erroneous administrative practices in health care units.

The Inspectors Body of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (SEYYP) was created by the 2920/2001 law and their objective is the subject of this article.

SEYYP: Foundation and objectives

In the beginning of the 21st century, in parallel with the decentralization of the system into 17 regional centres, which took the form of autonomous legal entities, laws for the rational management of the supply system and for the formation of the Inspectors Body of Health and Welfare enacted².

The mission of SEYYP, at a central and regional level, is the execution of systematic investigations, inspections and examinations in all services and agents under the authority or supervision of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity and in Social Security Organizations.

The main goal of SEYYP, under the authority of the minister of Health, is to ensure the orderly and effective functioning of agents offering health and welfare services¹, reinforced through actions of inspectors employed in three sectors: a) Health & Pharmaceutical, b) Administration & Economical and c) Welfare.

The inspection authority of SEYYP extends to private and public sector offering health and welfare services, agents producing and distributing pharmaceuticals, the centers for aesthetic and weight control, bottling of water industry and therapeutic springs.
The activity of the Body is presented in its annual report, published by the National Printing Institute.

**Administrative Control of Health Institutions**

All the means used by the organizations to ensure that the resources allocated in production are properly utilized with the maximum effectiveness towards the determined objectives is the meaning of administrative control. It is therefore necessary that the involvement of the administration in all levels pursues maximum effectiveness in the usage of resources made available. The increased responsibility of persons executing the anticipated, by the budget expenses, must be imposed.

In Greek hospitals, the investigation focuses in the way of incomes and outgoings of commodities to confirm the accounting balance vs. inventory (monetary, consumable or non-consumable).

Consumable is considered any item which is consumed through usage, such as drugs, sanitary material, food and cleaning material, stationery etc. Non consumable is any item not consumed, but is subject to deterioration due to time or usage. In the category of consumables are also classified materials incorporated in non consumables and abort their autonomous entity.

The import and export of materials is accompanied with the issue of incoming and/or outgoing draft, with the respective debit or credit on the warehouse record book. In the case of incorporated materials an incorporation protocol is necessary.

**The inventory: the starting point of investigation**

The inventory of materials by kind, quantity and person accountable and the drafting of results is critical for a successful administrative inspection. The accounting control which follows includes the cross-examination of the receipt documents with debit and credit registrations of materials up to the date of inventory and the extraction of the accounting balance for each category of goods. The accounting balances are compared with results of inventory, the differences (surplus or deficit) are extracted for each commodity and a separate protocol is constructed. The surplus is reintroduced in inventory management with the edition of an import draft and the reasons for its creation are examined. The investigator reports the deficits and justifies them, or else they are credited to the person accountable.

**Administration supply - import drafts**

Materials, coming by purchase, donation or any other way, are introduced in administration, with the issue of import draft edited upon the presentation of the item in the storehouse and signed on the same day by the “receiving committee” and the liable administration members. They have to comply with the given purchase order and the terms of the particular agreement. The registration of the item on storehouse records is especially inspected by the investigators.

It is obligatory to specifically describe the quality, origin, quantity of the material and all the special characteristics describing the introduced item, without alterations, scrapings, corrections or additions made after the recording. The import draft is officially stamped and numbered in an accenting scale, starting from Nº1 for each economical year.

**The shipment - Export drafts**

The shipment of non consumables in the organization is done by crediting the liable persons of each section. Materials exported from the storehouse are charged on special records (temporary protocols- credit receipts etc.) This shipment and export of commodities from the storehouse does not bring any change in the credit registrations of the storehouse records. Therefore, parallel to the inspection of the storehouse, inspection in the sectors of the administration is needed. Credit for the non consumables is registered only after the edition of export draft.

Export drafts for the non consumables are edited in the cases: a) destruction or clearance, proven by a protocol, b) exit and delivery of materials in another institution, verified by acceptance documents of the addressee and c) transformation of one item to another and in this case an export draft, a protocol of incorporation and an entry draft of the newly constructed item will be found.

**Inspection of Pharmaceuticals and sanitary material**

The hospital’s pharmacy delivers the pharmaceutical and sanitary material, the chemicals and narcotics. The manager of the pharmacy department, appointed by the Executive Council, is responsible with the serving pharmacists being jointly liable.

The inspectors especially examine recipe and other books kept, for the shipment of pharmaceuticals and narcotics.
The doctors issue either a personalized recipe, or a collective one for all patients of a medical sector. On the collective one the medicines are prescribed with the notification «for general use» or «for usage in the … sector». The medicines are stored in special cabinets and are given to patients according to the doctor’s orders. The recipes are signed by the sector’s director, the registrar or the certified doctor.

The pharmacist is also responsible for the supply of pharmaceuticals and the exact execution of the prescriptions presented by the external patients, eligible to receive pharmaceutical care by the hospital. The pharmacist may deny prescriptions’ execution when a) they are not prescribed according to the norms of pharmacology and pharmaceutical legislation and b) when the prescribed drugs are not available in the pharmacy. In this case the prescription is returned to the medical sector to prescribe homologous drugs.

Each medical sector keeps a hospital care record for each patient, where the drugs given are recorded. In case of interrupted hospitalization, the drugs are returned to the pharmacy and a reimbursement draft is issued, notifying the accounting office to credit the patient.

The pharmacist is responsible for the maintenance of the records. A special record book is updated for narcotics and their allocation, special recipes are kept and a three month narcotic’s list and a narcotic’s allocation record.

CONCLUSIONS

The preceded analysis demonstrates the difficulty of inspections and the great responsibility of public servants to insure legitimacy in the sensitive health sector.

Indicatory cases of inspections conducted in public hospitals, during 2005, appoint mistakes, neglects and problematic functions of the administration. In a hospital pharmacy, differences between accounting and true balance of materials were found, due to faults of the computerized system. Neglects concerning the legislation of hospital pharmacies were also verified. Cases of neglect in the inventory of material, registration of incoming and outgoing material, surveillance of stock and withdrawal of expired commodities were reported.

The hospital cashier, in another case, retained collections granting them with delay, exploiting the inefficient control system.

Record registration and assessment of estate (hotel supplies, medical equipment, computers etc.) does not exist in most hospitals, as well as inventory of materials in storehouse.

The inspector’s role is a difficult one. He acts in a field where human life is under stake, and he is not supported by protocols clearly defining the steps and the boundaries of inspections, so as to avoid arbitrary actions.

The inspector’s work is described in the annual review report of SEYYP, which is publicized to the governmental agents and the Hellenic parliament. From September of 2000 (commencement of operation) until the end of 2006 about 2000 inspections were completed7,8,9,10.

The inspector must have a guiding, consolatory and informative role. His contact with the inspected units has to be constructive to achieve best results in organization and functioning.
To Σώμα Επιθεωρητών του Υπουργείου Υγείας και Πρόνοιας (Σ.Ε.Υ.Υ.Π.) και ο διαχειριστικός έλεγχος των δημοσίων νοσοκομείων

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ: Ο έλεγχος των διαχειριστών των νοσοκομείων, ο τρόπος, οι διαδικασίες του εφοδιασμού, της διακίνησης και της απογραφής των υφεσιομοικών υλικών και των φαρμακευτικών σκευασμάτων και ουσίων, αποτελεί αντικείμενο των επιθεωρητών του Σ.Ε.Υ.Υ.Π. που σκοπού έχει τη διασφάλιση της εύρυθμης και αποτελεσματικής λειτουργίας των φορέων που παρέχουν υπηρεσίες υγείας και πρόνοιας.

Λέξεις Κλειδία: Σώμα Επιθεωρητών, Διαχείριση νοσοκομείων, Επιθεωρήσεις.

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Abbreviations
SEYYP: Inspectors Body of the Ministry of Health and Welfare.