

THE EFFECT OF ACCREDITATION IN OBTAINING FINANCIAL BENEFITS IN LEBANESE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Rayyan Merhi

PhD Student, Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar"

E-mail: rayyan.merhi@vfu.bg

***Abstract:** More than two decades ago the Lebanese government initiated their local accreditation program for health care institutions in Lebanon. The program focuses on paying the hospitals based on their outcomes through a certain classification system. Hospitals with the highest classification get paid the most. Therefore, having more financial income based on better quality of services. We did a local survey that proved the presence of financial benefits for those who took the accreditation.*

***Keywords:** Accreditation, financial health, quality, profits, revenues, services.*

Introduction

Following the international trends in accreditation and community-based healthcare, and to decrease the general hospitalization expenditures, Lebanese consecutive governments directed their efforts to increase the level services through the “pay for performance” strategy by applying their own accreditation system. Specialists from France and Australia were consulted and the local accreditation system was born more than two decades ago.

Overview of the international accreditation systems:

Accreditation bodies were created to maintain the basic quality services for patients and enhance healthcare outcomes through set of standards and guidelines for certain community, country, or even on a global level. (Ashish, 2018)

USA: Joint Commission International:

Joint Commission International (JCI) is worldwide famous accreditation body who accredits hospitals around the planet. JCI brings massive income to the mother company in the United States of America. It is a non-for-profit organization and known for its dedication for quality

improvement around the world. In Middle East many countries adopted the JCI standards and received their accreditation accordingly. (JCI, 2024)

Australia: Australian Council on Healthcare Standards International (ACHSI). It is an international accreditation body also dedicated for quality improvement among Australia and it is a non-for-profit organization. (ACHI, 2024)

United Kingdom: The Trent Accreditation Scheme-TAS

It is like the previous bodies for nonprofit organization with a target to monitor the health care services. Apart from accrediting hospitals and healthcare bodies in the United Kingdom TAS accredits other hospitals around the world especially hospitals in Hong-Kong.

Canada: The Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation or CCHSA

It is the leading accreditation body in Canada where it accredits more than 900 organizations across the country. CCHSA has also been successful internationally in Italy, France, Ireland, Serbia, the Middle East, South America and much of the Caribbean. They also developed international standards known as “Accreditation Canada”.

France: Agence Nationale d'Accréditation et d'Evaluation en Santé or ANAES:

Now called “France Accréditation”. It is governed by the higher Authority of Health (Haute Autorité De Santé HAS) in the Ministry of health in France. Its concern is to maintain quality assurance among private and public hospitals.

Arab countries:

a) Saudi Arabia, Aramco has its own accreditation standards which is used to survey healthcare institutions that wish to treat Aramco employees.

b) MRQP stands for Makah Region Quality Program. It is basically an accreditation program for hospitals in the western region of Saudi Arabia. The program is evolving to involve the whole kingdom.

c) Central Board for Accreditation of Healthcare. Institutions CBAHI.

d) In Jordan, Health Care Accreditation Council (HCAC)

(MOPH, 2022)

The Lebanese MOPH considered of its obligation to help creating governmental hospitals abilities as the majority of these were new and needed involvement (WHO, 2018). For that reason, a collaboration was marked with the Higher Health Authority on 10th of July 2006 to lead a preparation program on add up to quality administration. Doctors were acquainted with prove based drug and clinical conventions. Directors and administrators were prepared on planning and breaking down approaches and methods and evaluating consumer loyalty, and all staff found out about execution estimation, cost-viability ideas and collaboration. The instructive program joined hypothetical modules furthermore, field visits. Prior to the finish of 2008, endless supply of a self-appraisal handle, public hospitals will be reviewed by specialists against the present guidelines on an indistinguishable balance from private medical centers. The Ministry of Public Health in Lebanon is resuming efforts to revitalize the Accreditation process, which was put on hold for a considerable amount of time in 2001 and has since been updated and enhanced. The Ministry of Public Health set out to update and improve the country's hospital accreditation system by creating new standards that adhere to international best practices and the most recent research, all while meeting the requirements set forth by the International Society for Quality in Healthcare (ISQua). The Lebanese Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) and the French Health Authority (HAS) inked a collaboration agreement for a new accreditation iteration in January 2022, with the strong backing of AFD (Agence Française de Développement). (MOPH, 2022)

According to Gates Group report on 13 December 2013 the accreditation had a positive impact on the hospitals. “Accreditation of Lebanese hospitals Evaluation Report/ Gates-group/Audit Services Department ESA-December 13th 2013”. (Gates group, 2013)

The impact was observed in the following points:

- The hospital contracts were enhanced by obtaining a rater setting with guarantors.
- Spending conveyance and other authoritative benefits.
- Developing KPIs.
- Use accreditation yields as contributions to National Health Policy.
- Present the Lebanese Accreditation System as a model for worldwide and neighborhood countries.
- The model to be adopted by the Arab world.

After the Lebanese accreditation became obligatory for healthcare institutions in order to get paid by the ministry of public health patients, hospitals competed to get high ranks since the higher the ranking is the higher the organization get paid based on the “pay for performance” rule (WHO, 2019). During the Syrian crisis new payers raised in the market to cover the refugee. Those payers were a burden and a release at the same time for most of the healthcare sector in the country. It was a burden since the pressure on health care services increased, and a release since it provided an extra source of funding where many local payers are finding difficulty to pay their invoices. This was an additional reason for those institutions to increase their attractiveness to those external payers.

The ability of the Lebanese health care institutions to survive within the current financial crisis and the effect of quality system adoption on this survival mode will be obtained. (C.Reeze, 2020).

Our local Survey results of evaluating the effect of accreditation in maintaining financial health of Lebanese hospitals:

We interviewed general managers of nine local hospitals about the effect of Lebanese accreditation on the revenues of their hospitals. We will present two major findings of our research:

- 1- We asked if the profits increased after he obtaining the Lebanese accreditation and the answers were as follows:

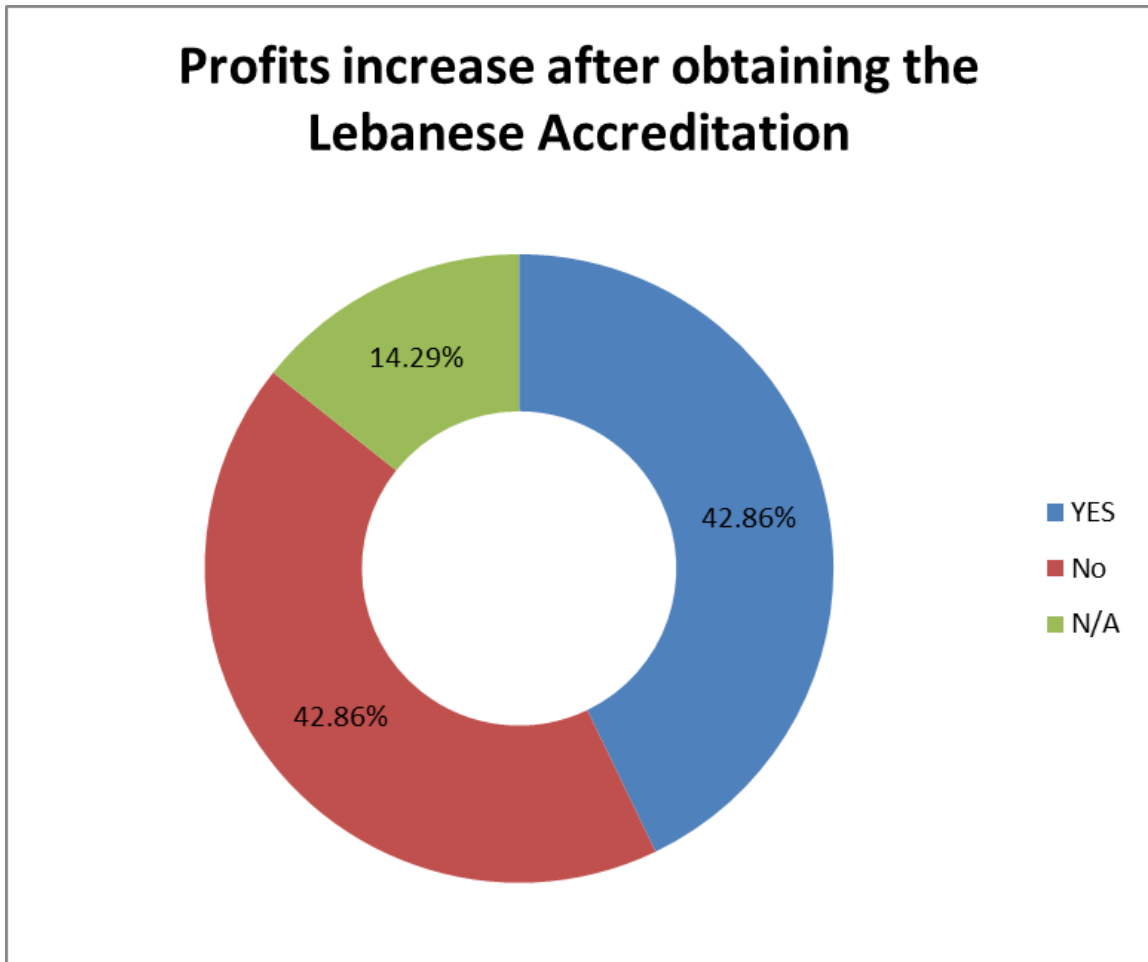


Figure 1: showing the answers of the participants about whether the Lebanese accreditation increased their profits or not.

We can see that the answers between “yes” and “No” were equal where around 43% believed that their revenues increased while the same percentage did not believe so. On the other hand, 14.5% did not know whether it increased or decreased.

- 2- The second question what was the hospital’s classification based on the Lebanese accreditation, with “A” being the highest rank and “C” being the lowest:

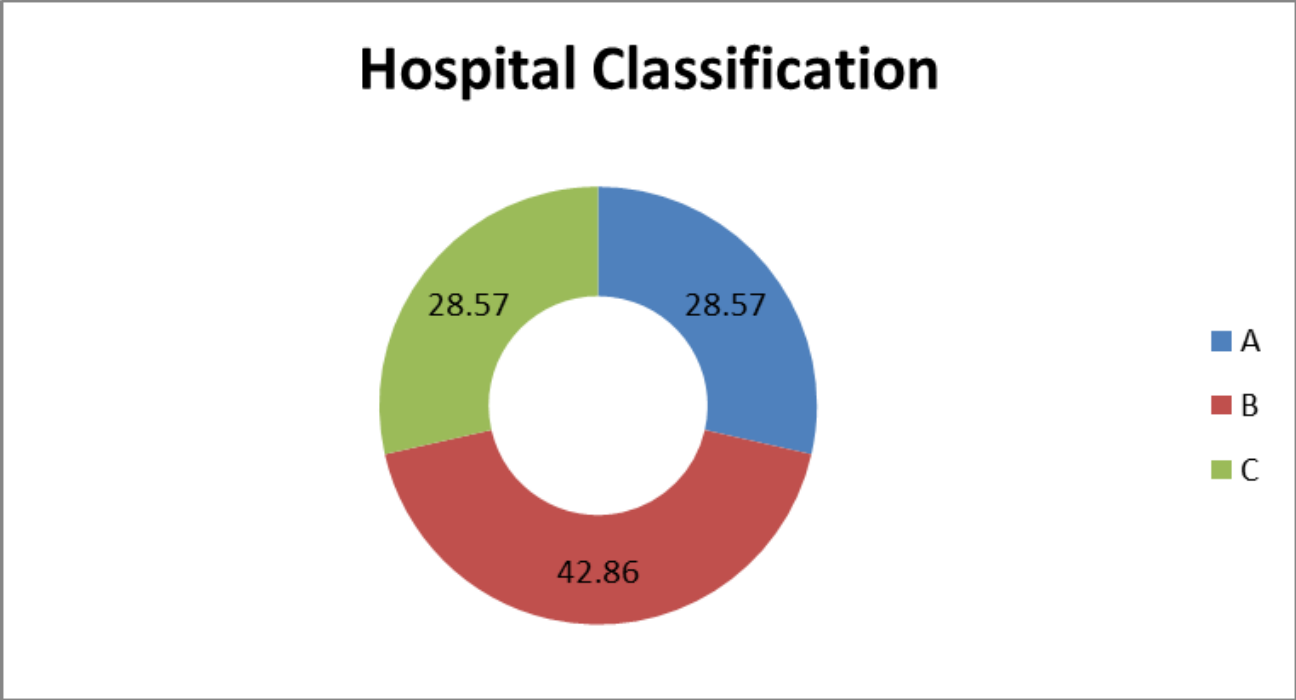


Figure 2: the rankings of the participants who took the Lebanese accreditation.

In this figure we see that almost 28.6% had class A while the rest and distributed between class B and C. and that explains why there was an equal percentage believing that the accreditation did not add up to their profits.

- 3- The important question was whether the accreditation really affected the financial status by helping in financial control and removing debts, the answers were as follows:

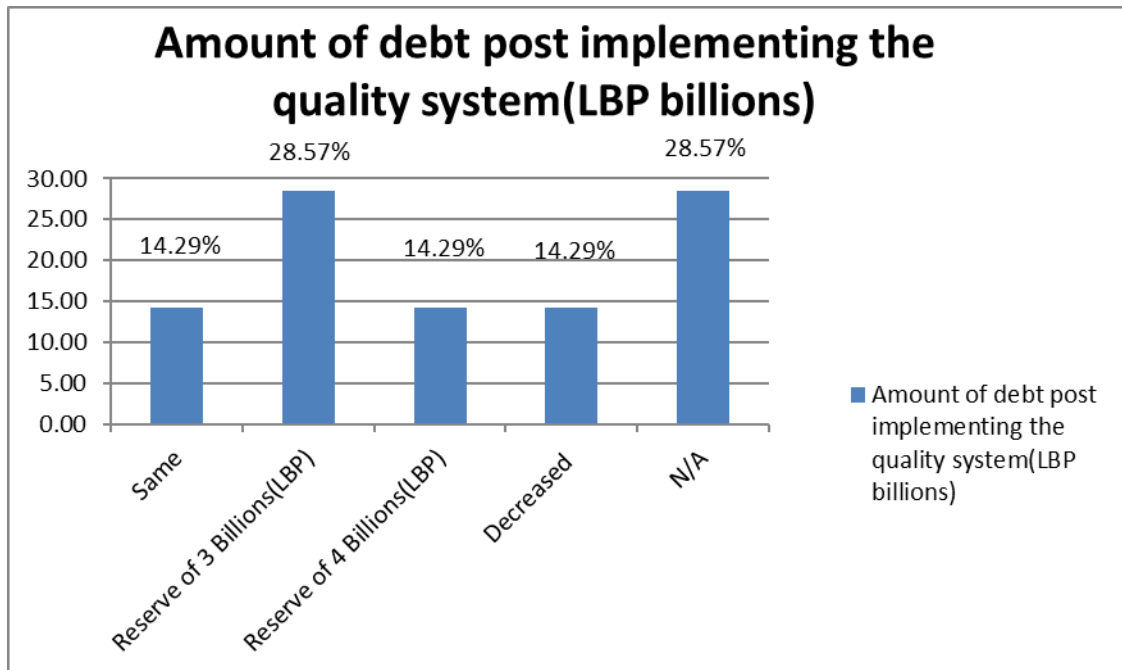


Figure 3: this figure is showing the results of the answers to whether the amount of debt decreased after implementing quality system as a requirement of accreditation.

The above figure shows the importance of the accreditation in decreasing debts, where 14.29% reported that it helped them to decrease debts , 28.57% not only got rid of debts but also had 3 billion LBP (equivalent to 34,000 USD) as reserve money and 14.29% had a reserve of 4 billion LBP (Equivalent to 45,000 USD).

Conclusion:

Following the footsteps of the international communities and to elevate the level of services while maintaining financial control and health, the Lebanese ministry of public health initiated the Lebanese accreditation system. Despite the regional crisis and wars, the ministry is trying to revive this system. To know how much this system was effective we interviewed local hospital managers and we concluded that 43% agreed that their profits increased after obtaining the Lebanese accreditation while only around 28.6% were classified as “A” class and the majority were “B”. The important results were in the third questions where a sum of 88.71% of hospitals reported that there debt decreased or disappeared completely with some reserve money added to

their accounts. We conclude that the local hospitals had financial enhancement through getting rid of debts and even generating some reserve budgets after adopting having the Lebanese accreditation. In addition to that, some hospitals need to work more to enhance their class to be paid better and to follow the steps of other hospitals and get rid of their bad debts. Finally, accreditation and quality are continuous processes where periodical evaluation is required to maintain and enhance current results.

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