



SIGMA

Support for Improvement in Governance and Management

A joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union, principally financed by the EU

Executive Summary

Experience with ISO 9000 in the health sector in the Netherlands

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Jellinek is an addiction treatment centre, located in Amsterdam with services in Hilversum and Texel.

The current mission of the centre is represented by the following statement:

By its clients and their environment and by society at large, the Jellinek Centre is seen as a dedicated, progressive and innovative organisation in the area of prevention, treatment, care and research into addiction problems and related high-risk life-styles.

The path towards a quality policy started in the mid-eighties when the Jellinek Centre was in a state of reorientation after recovering from a financial and organisational crisis. Simple goals were formulated such as the publishing of a regular newsletter for staff which would give dynamism back to the organisation. A quality policy was necessary in view of the critical eye with which society views addiction. Also policy-makers demanded better treatment and clear results. There are always critical questions like "is it really worth treating addicts?" "What is the benefit to society?" So with a quality policy, Jellinek could at least tell the sceptics that in the long run they were demonstrably investing in quality.

In the following years, several projects were started like EFQM, BPR, INK, ISO and HKZ. Jellinek was the first mental health organisation with an ISO and HKZ certificate in the Netherlands. (HKZ means "Harmonisation of Quality in Health Care" and is compatible with ISO 9000). HKZ focuses the organisation on the treatment processes and is based around the care of the patient.

This improvement process was not easy. Implementation of different quality improvement systems was very demanding for the staff, who became "policy-and-project-exhausted". Criticism from staff was seen as resistance. As staff were constantly reminded that they were working on a mission with attainable goals, they began to realise that the quality policy would eventually improve their effectiveness and working conditions. Now, while there is still resistance from some staff, they cannot deny the results obtained by implementing the various quality systems.

The process has led to the following achievements: external ISO and HKZ certification, the Dutch quality prize, redesigned treatment processes, evaluation through telephone contacts with all service users after their treatment, and regular organisation of satisfaction surveys for staff. These surveys of patients and staff show that satisfaction has been increasing over time. All these processes are integrated in the HKZ quality management system.