

# Quality strategies in European health systems: assessing their nature, use and effectiveness

**Dr. Dimitra Panteli**

Department of Health Care Management

Berlin University of Technology

European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies

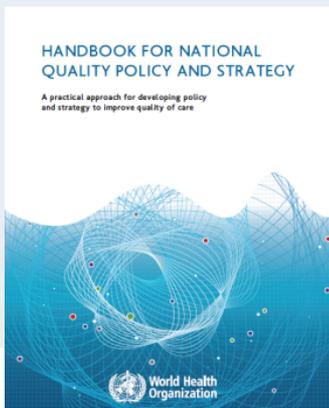


# Background

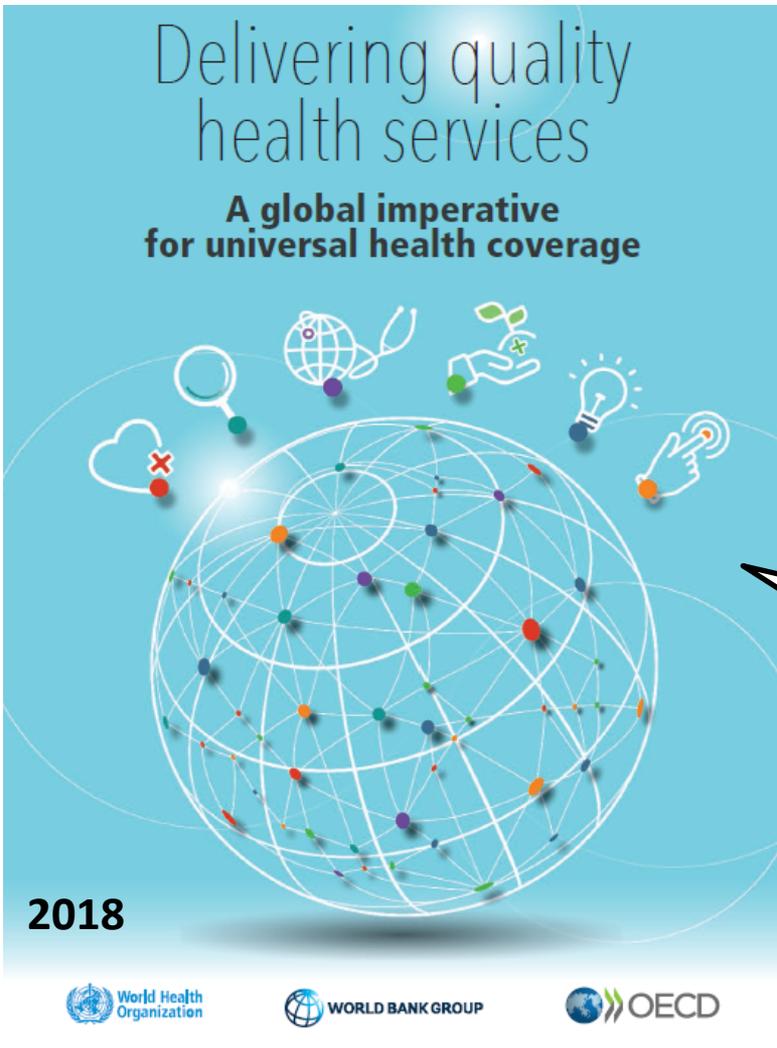
- (1) “Quality” is one of the most often quoted principles of health policy, e.g. in EU health systems’ common values and principles.
- (2) Understanding the term and what it encompasses varies. Most definitions take a very broad perspective on quality which includes not only effectiveness, safety and responsiveness / patient-centredness, but – confusingly – also access, appropriateness, efficiency and equity (all part of the broader “health system performance”).
- (3) Many “movements” such as *evidence-based medicine, health technology assessment, accreditation, guidelines, patient safety* claim importance for their strategy, sometimes unaware of parallel activities under a different label.

# Definitions

Institute of Medicine, IOM (1990)	Quality of care is the degree to which health services for <b>individuals and populations</b> increase the likelihood of <b>desired health outcomes</b> and are consistent with <b>current professional knowledge</b> .
Council of Europe (1997)	Quality of care is the degree to which the treatment dispensed increases the patient's chances of <b>achieving the desired results and diminishes the chances of undesirable results</b> , having regard to the current state of knowledge.
European Commission (2010)	[Good quality care is] health care that is <b>effective, safe and responds to the needs and preference of patients</b> . "Other dimensions of quality of care, such as efficiency, access and equity are seen as being part of a wider debate and are being addressed in other fora"
WHO (2018)	Quality health services across the world should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective</li><li>• Safe</li><li>• People-centred</li></ul> In order to realize the benefits of quality health care, health services must be timely [...], equitable [...], integrated [...], and efficient [...]



# → a strong focus on quality internationally ...



**... but no overview of specific quality strategies**



# Improving healthcare quality in Europe

Characteristics, effectiveness and  
implementation of different strategies

*Edited by:*

**Reinhard Busse**  
**Niek Klazinga**  
**Dimitra Panteli**  
**Wilm Quentin**

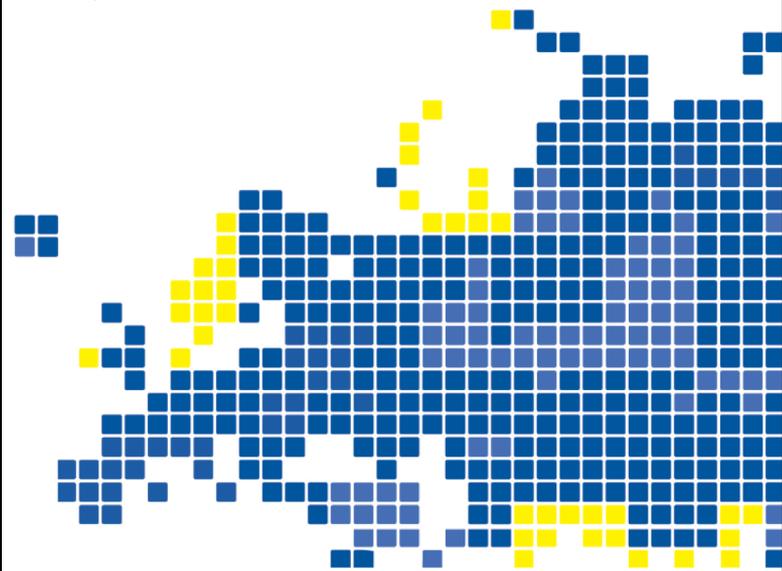
## Improving healthcare quality in Europe

53

Health Policy  
Series

Characteristics, effectiveness and  
implementation of different strategies

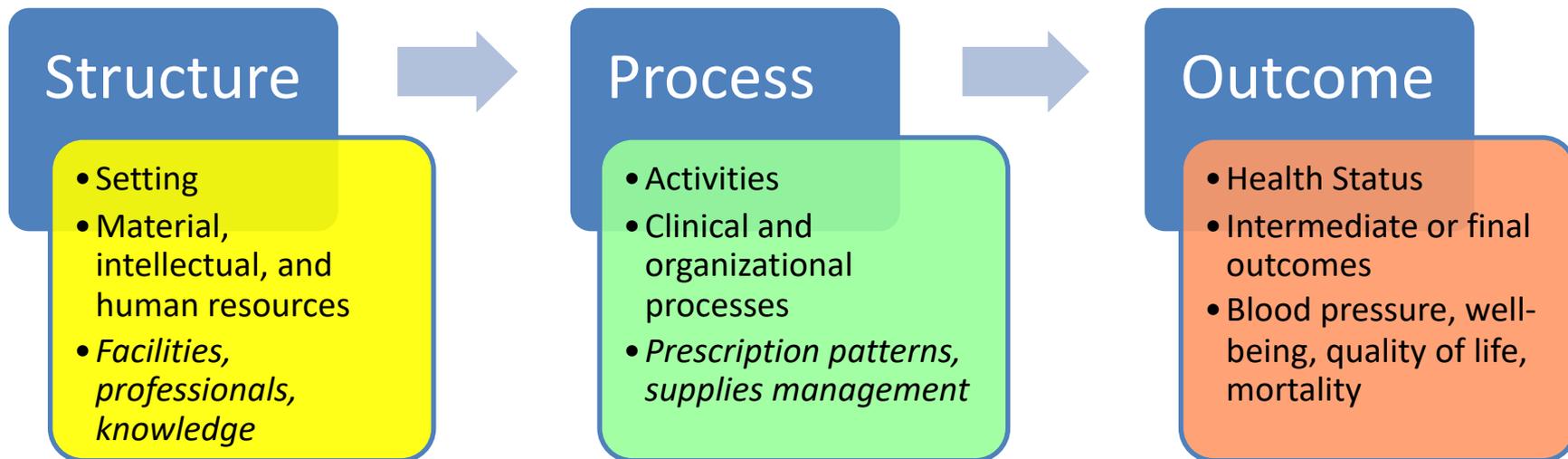
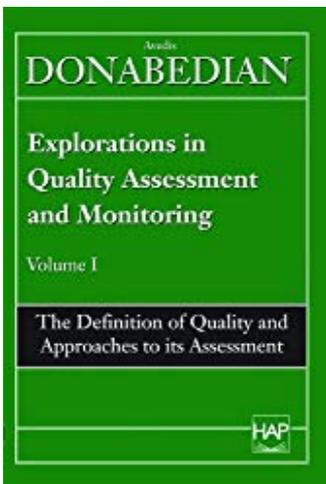
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**With our new book,  
we therefore aim at providing ...**

- (1) a comprehensive framework for understanding, measuring, and ultimately improving the quality of health care through a variety of strategies,
- (2) an overview on the status of activities of the various strategies in the countries of the European Region (including highlighting best practice examples) as well as European initiatives/ projects active in the respective areas,
- (3) an analysis of the strategies' effectiveness and cost-effectiveness in actually improving quality of care, and
- (4) lessons learnt for policy-makers interested in developing and implementing comprehensive approaches to improve the quality of their health system

# The framework = based on Donabedian's Structure-Process-Outcome triad



# Two more important aspects (visualized along OECD's HCQI project)

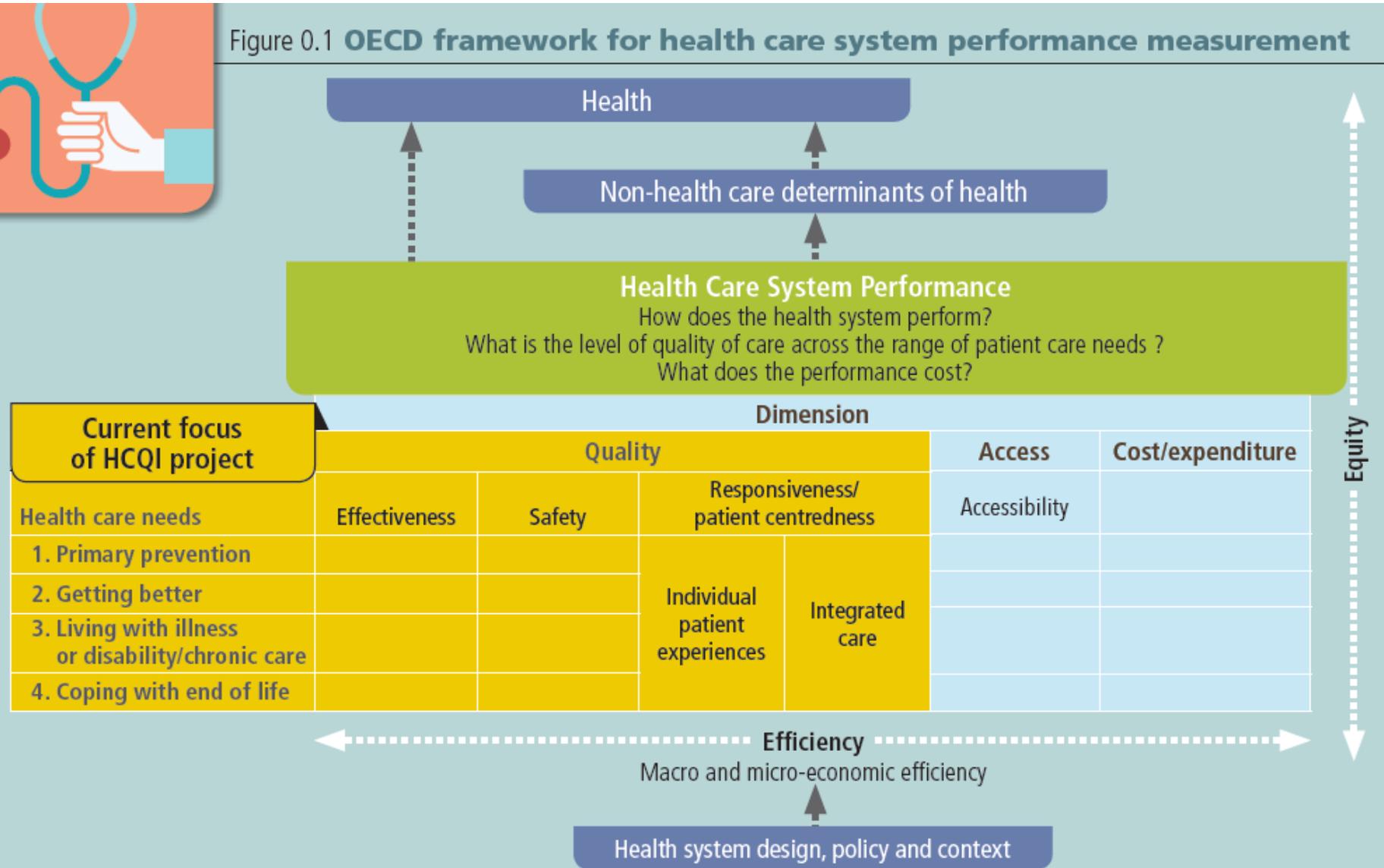
1. Three dimensions of quality: effectiveness, safety, responsiveness/ patient-centredness
2. Four areas of care
  - Persons have different needs and seek different kinds of care
  - Indicators and quality strategies differ for different care needs areas

Current focus of HCQI project	Dimension			
	Quality			
Health care needs	Effectiveness	Safety	Responsiveness/ patient centredness	
1. Primary prevention			Individual patient experiences	Integrated care
2. Getting better				
3. Living with illness or disability/chronic care				
4. Coping with end of life				

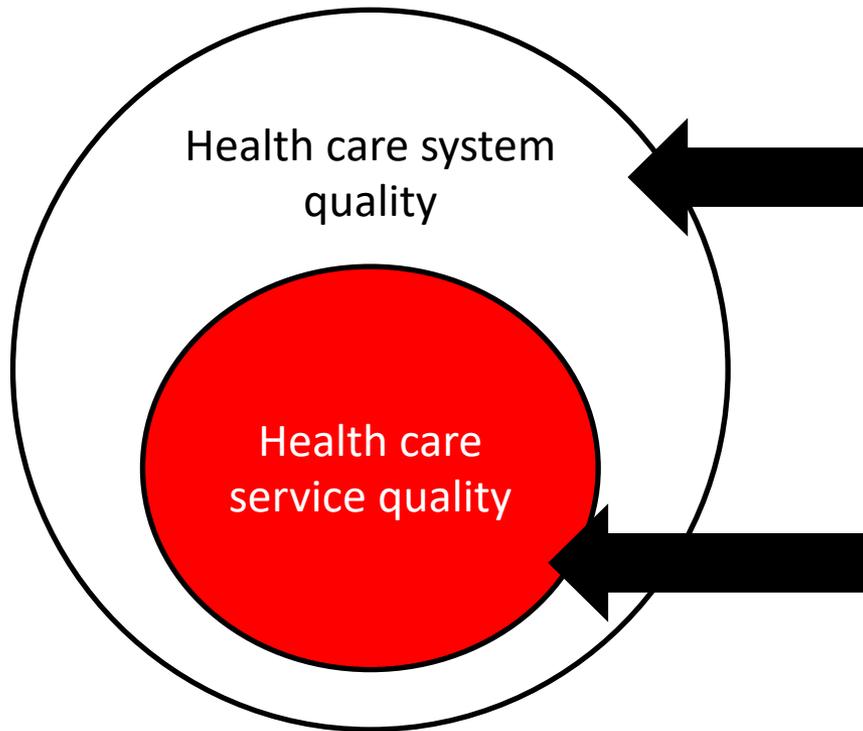
# But “performance” is more than “quality”

→ often not clearly differentiated

Figure 0.1 OECD framework for health care system performance measurement



# Levels of health care quality - simplified



= Health system performance  
Achieve the overall goals of improved health, responsiveness, financial protection and efficiency.

= Health care quality:  
"the degree to which health services for individuals and populations are effective, safe, and people-centred"

# The performance assessment framework

**Access(ibility)**  
incl. Financial protection/  
Coverage

x

**Quality**  
(for those who  
receive services)

=

**Population  
health outcomes**  
(system-wide effectiveness,  
level & distribution)

**Responsiveness**  
(level & distribution)

Inputs (money and/or resources)

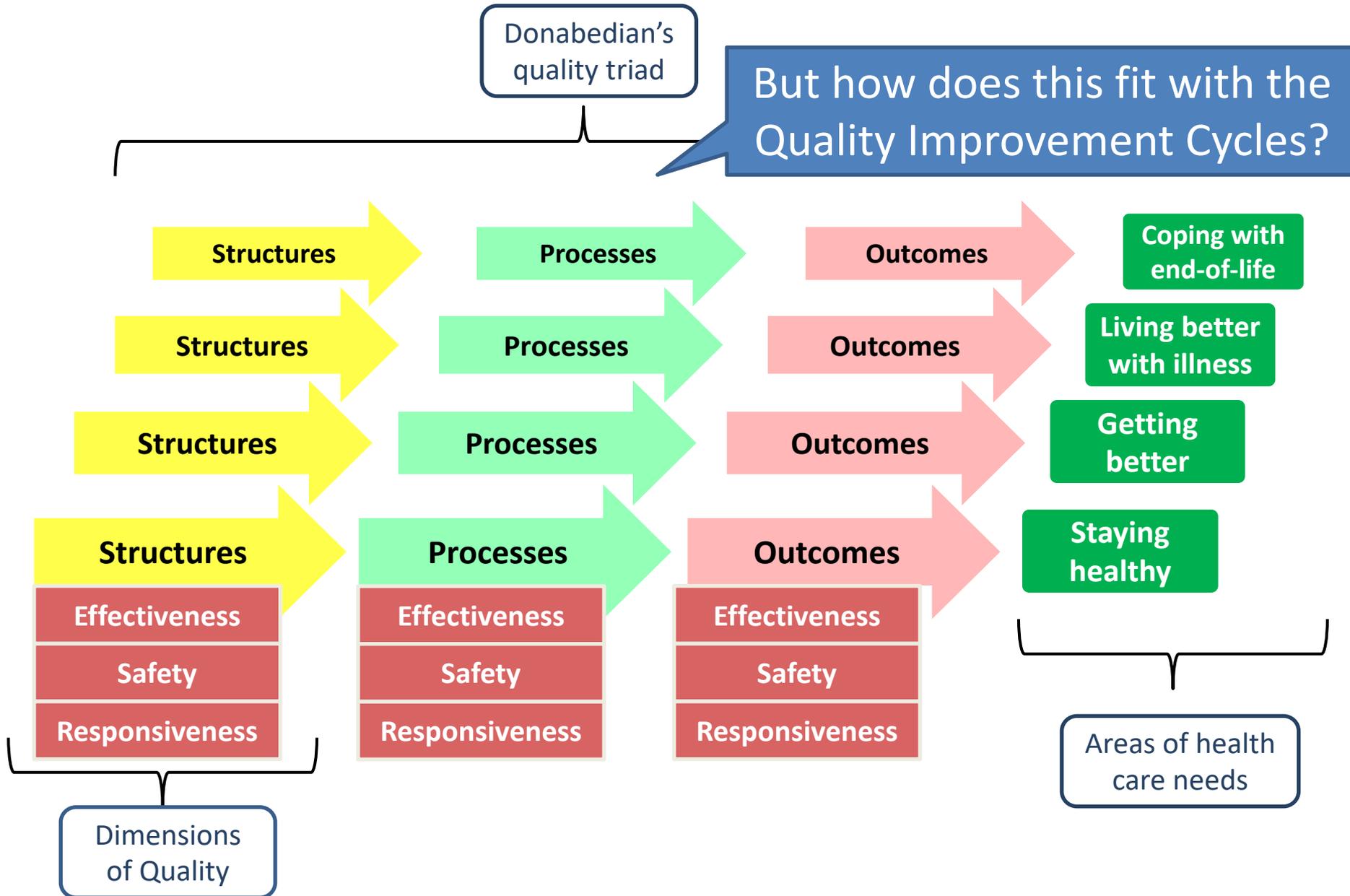
(Allocative)  
Efficiency

(value for money, i.e.  
population health and/ or  
responsiveness per input unit)

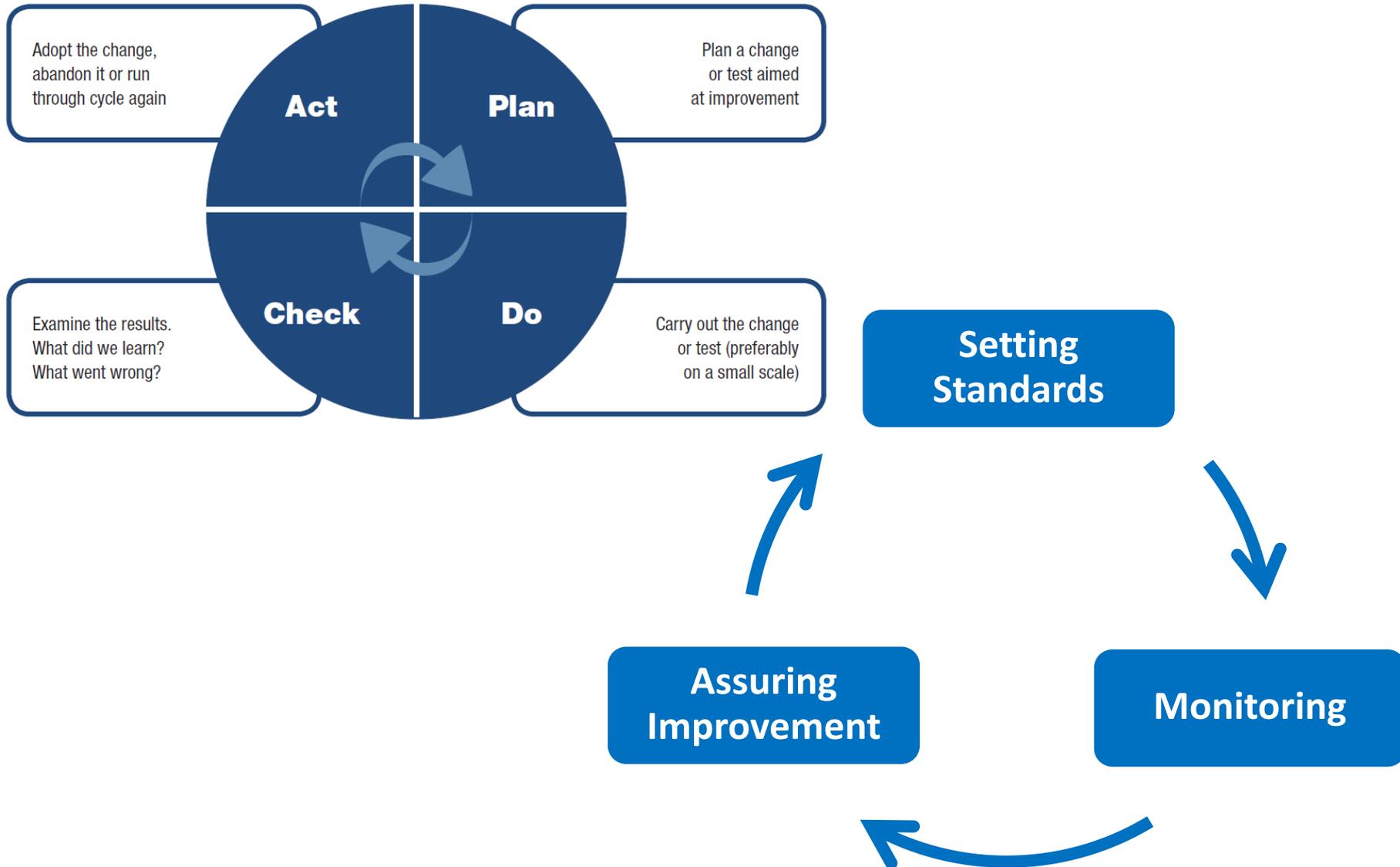
Health system  
performance

„TRIPLE AIM“:  
Access ↑  
Quality ↑  
Costs ↓

# Combining the various quality aspects ...



# Quality as a relative notion and hence a Cyclic Construct

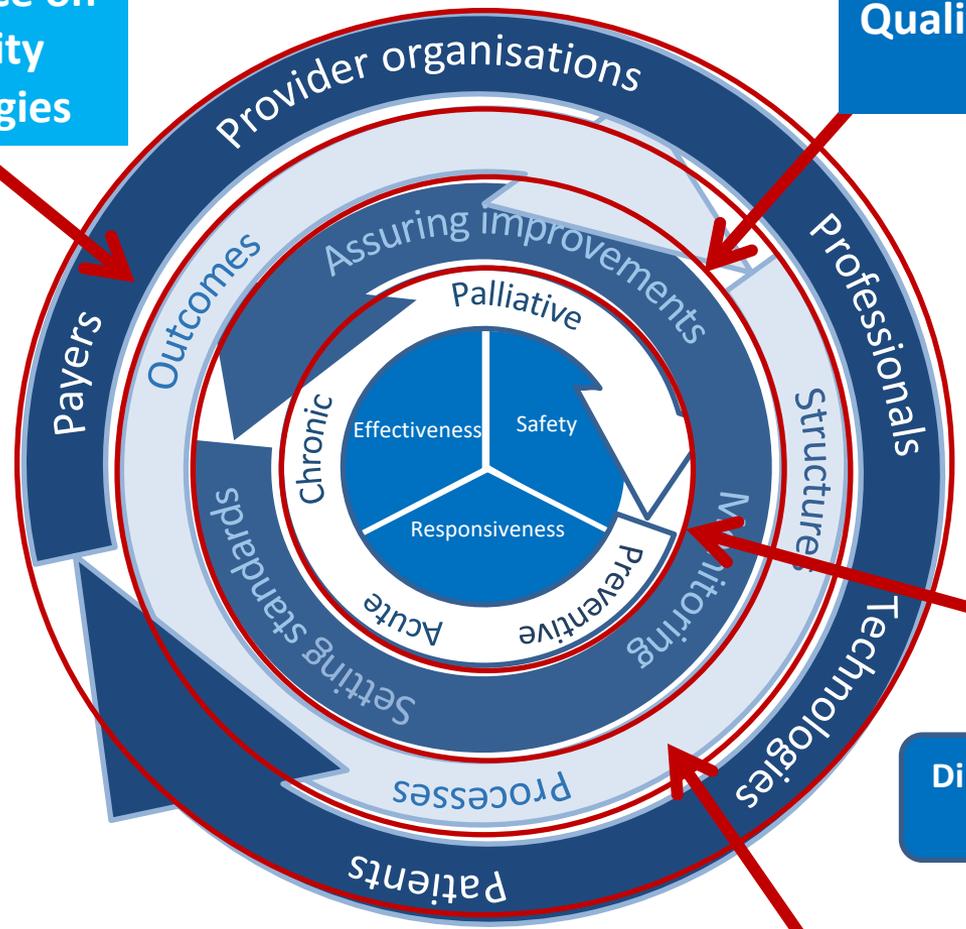


# → comprehensive “five-lenses” framework



**WHO (2008)**  
guidance on  
quality  
strategies

Targets of  
strategies



**Quality improvement cycle**

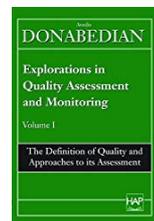


Activities of  
strategies



Dimensions of  
Quality

Areas of care



Donabedian's  
triad

# Part II of the book: strategy by strategy

## Chapter structure

(1) What are the characteristics of the strategy?

(2) What is being done in European countries?

(3) What do we know about the strategy's (cost-) effectiveness?

(4) How can the strategy be implemented?

(5) Conclusions: lessons for policy-makers

# Part II of the book: strategy by strategy

Chapter structure	<i>Settings standards for structures and inputs</i>	<i>Steering and monitoring quality of processes</i>	<i>Leveraging processes and outcomes of care to assure improvements</i>
(1) What are the characteristics of the strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation of <b>health professionals</b></li> <li>• Regulation of <b>health technologies:</b> Health Technology Assessment</li> <li>• Regulation of <b>healthcare facilities</b></li> <li>• External institutional strategies: <b>accreditation, certification, supervision</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clinical Guidelines</b></li> <li>• <b>Audit &amp; Feedback</b></li> <li>• <b>Patient Safety Strategies</b></li> <li>• <b>Clinical Pathways</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Public Reporting</b></li> <li>• <b>Financial Incentives</b></li> </ul>
(2) What is being done in European countries?			
(3) What do we know about the strategy's (cost-) effectiveness?			
(4) How can the strategy be implemented?			
(5) Conclusions: lessons for policy-makers			

# More strategies and a different logic to sort them

System level strategies	Organizational/institutional level strategies	Patient/community level interventions
Legal framework for quality assurance and improvement	Clinical quality governance systems	Formalized patient and community engagement and empowerment
Training and supervision of the workforce	Clinical decision support tools	Improving health literacy
Regulation and licensing of physicians and other health professionals	Clinical guidelines	Shared decision-making
Regulation and licensing of technologies (pharmaceuticals and devices)	Clinical pathways and protocols	Peer support and expert patient groups
Regulation and licensing of provider organizations/institutions	Clinical audit and feedback	Monitoring patient experience of care
External assessments: accreditation, certification and supervision of providers	Morbidity and mortality reviews	Patient self-management tools
Public reporting and comparative benchmarking	Collaborative and team-based improvement cycles	Self-management
Quality-based purchasing and contracting	Procedural/surgical checklists	
Pay-for-quality initiatives	Adverse event reporting	
Electronic Health Record (HER) systems	Human resource interventions	
Disease Management Programmes	Establishing a patient safety culture	

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