

Methodology for evaluating cost-effectiveness in primary health care centers in Chile

Metodología para la evaluación de la relación costo-efectividad en centros de atención primaria de Chile

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Objective: Present a methodology for evaluating cost-effectiveness in primary health care centers (PHCs) in Chile based on the family health care model promoted in Chile and evaluate the results of the first two years of operation of the first pilot center to work under this new primary-care model.

Methods: A cost-effectiveness study with a social perspective and a one-year time frame was conducted. In order to compare the university health center in question with the control (a municipal health center), a Family Health Center Composite Quality Index (FHCCQI) was devised. It combines technical indicators and user perceptions of the health centers in six areas: access, continuity of medical care, a preventive and promotional clinical approach, problem-solving capability, participation, and a biopsychosocial and family approach. In order to calculate the costs, the centers' expenses, the savings realized in the rest of the health system, and patients' out-of-pocket expenditures were cons