



IMPACTS OF INTRODUCING FEES FOR EVALUATION PROCEDURE OF MEDICAL DEVICES AND CONSUMABLES IN JORDAN ROYAL MEDICAL SERVICES

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Article Received on 29/01/2025

Article Revised on 30/01/2025

Article Accepted on 01/02/2025

ABSTRACT

Background: Most new innovative health technologies are costly and have a high impact on the budgets. Therefore, many healthcare organizations, including the Jordan Royal Medical Services (JRMS), apply a certain process for evaluating new medical devices (MDs) and medical consumables (MCs) in order to assess and compare the new medical technologies with the existing alternatives. The evaluation procedure in JRMS was a free of charge process before 2023. Since the beginning of 2023, the JRMS started to charge the suppliers a fee for the evaluation procedure in order to regulate and control this process. This decision had an impact on the quantity and quality of evaluations. **Aim:** To measure the impact of introducing fees for the process of evaluating MDs and MCs in JRMS in terms of quantity and quality of the applied evaluations. In addition, to highlight the potential benefits and drawbacks related to this decision from the perspective of JRMS. **Methods:** The study was conducted in the Directorate of pharmacy and medical supply /division of medical consumables supply in the JRMS, Amman, Jordan. In this study, the researchers measured the number of the evaluations applied for MDs and MCs in JRMS for two time intervals, two years (2021 and 2022) before introducing fees for the process of evaluation and two years after (2023 and 2024). In addition, the researchers assessed the quality of evaluations in both intervals by assuming that only good quality evaluations succeeded to accomplish the evaluation process in the JRMS. **Results:** In JRMS, the evaluations applied for MDs and MCs fell by 30% after introducing fees for the process of evaluation. Conversely, the percentage of evaluations accomplished successfully after introducing the fees improved from 37% to 62% of the total evaluations applied. **Conclusions:** Although fees may act as a barrier to service utilization, it could be associated with service quality improvements. In JRMS, the drop in the number of evaluation files submitted after introducing fees may reveal the actual need of companies to be involved in the process; yet, the quality of service was affected positively.

KEYWORDS: Medical devices, medical consumables, evaluation, fee for services.

INTRODUCTION

Most new innovative health technologies are costly and have a high impact on the budgets. Therefore, many healthcare organizations, including the Jordan Royal Medical Services (JRMS), apply a certain process for evaluating new medical devices (MDs) and medical consumables (MCs) in order to assess and compare the new medical technologies with the existing alternatives. JRMS is a publicly funded healthcare provider in Jordan and has its own unique procedure for evaluating new MDs and MCs. The evaluation procedure of MDs and MCs in JRMS was fully described by Al-Sharayri and Alefaishat, 2024.^[1]

The evaluation procedure in JRMS was a free of charge process before 2023. Since the beginning of 2023, the JRMS started to charge the suppliers a fee for the

evaluation procedure in order to regulate and control this process. This decision had an impact on the quantity and quality of evaluations.

This study intended to measure the impact of introducing fees for the process of evaluating MDs and MCs in JRMS in terms of quantity and quality of the applied evaluations. In addition, to highlight the potential benefits and drawbacks related to this decision from the perspective of JRMS.

METHODS

The study was conducted in the Directorate of pharmacy and medical supply /division of medical consumables supply in the JRMS, Amman, Jordan. In this study, the researchers measured the number of the evaluations applied for MDs and MCs in JRMS for two time

intervals, two years (2021-2022) before introducing fees for the process of evaluation and two years after (2023-2024). In addition, the researchers assessed the quality of evaluations in both intervals by assuming that only good quality evaluations succeeded to accomplish the evaluation process in the JRMS. This study was approved by the institutional review board (IRB) in JRMS in its meeting number (17/2024).

RESULTS

Table (1) shows the number of the evaluations for MDs and MCs applied in JRMS for two time intervals: first interval (2021 - 2022) and second interval (2023 - 2024). In addition, the table shows the number of evaluations accomplished successfully in both intervals.

Table 1: The number of the evaluations for MDs and MCs applied in JRMS by years' intervals.

Time interval by year	Number of evaluations applied	Number of evaluations accomplished successfully	Percentage of evaluations accomplished successfully
(2021 - 2022)	113	42	37.2%
(2023 - 2024)	77	48	62.3%

It should be mentioned that (8) evaluations in the second interval (2023 - 2024) were applied at the last two months of 2024.

It can be noticed that the total number of applications after introducing fees for the process of evaluation of MDs and MCs dropped by one third. Nevertheless, the number of evaluations accomplished successfully increased in the same time interval.

It can be observed that the percentage of evaluations accomplished successfully had doubled from around one third in the first interval to approximately two thirds of the total evaluations applied in the second interval.

In other words, the results show that a high percentage (63.8%) of evaluation files were uncompleted in the first interval, while this percentage dropped after introducing fees to 37.7%.

DISCUSSION

The evaluation procedure of MDs and MCs in JRMS was described in depth by Al-Sharayri and Alefaishat, 2024.^[1] JRMS is a publicly funded healthcare provider in Jordan and the evaluation procedure in JRMS involves follow up by the companies to successfully accomplish the procedure. MDs and MCs should be evaluated via this procedure and get a positive feedback in order to participate in JRMS tenders.

Before introducing the fees for the evaluation process, many evaluation files were left open without finishing the process for many reasons, mainly due to lack of follow up from companies. This increased the workload on the JRMS employees responsible for these files.

In addition, the process of evaluation incurs costs on the institution. Such costs may include, for example, use of other disposables, electricity or staff time. Therefore, in order to control the procedure of evaluation, as the beginning of 2023, the JRMS started to charge a fee for the evaluation procedure. A fee of (JD 250), approximately (USD 352), per each item should be paid by the company before starting the evaluation process.

Fees could be used in several public organizations to prevent abuse of service.^[2] Introducing fees could act as a barrier to service entry and decreased service uptake.^[3] Therefore, in JRMS, only companies concerned in completing the process will go through the evaluation procedure and hence pay the fees.

In JRMS, after introducing the fees for evaluation process, the total number of evaluations dropped by one third. This could be inevitable result, which may reveal the actual willingness or interest of companies to be involved in the procedure, i.e., only interested companies will submit evaluation files and get involved in the process.

On the other hand, the percentage of evaluations completed successfully increased after introducing the fees. This may indicate that companies started the evaluation process after paying the fees are more committed to accomplish the procedure of evaluation.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that evaluations applied late of 2024 did not have sufficient time to complete the entire process of evaluation, which needs 1-3 months. This may possibly increase the percentage of evaluations completed in the second interval successfully.

Although fees could act as a barrier to service entry, some previous studies showed that introducing fees was associated with quality improvements of the service.^[3] This could justify the improvement in the percentage of completed evaluations in JRMS. Other positive effects of introducing fees could be saving time for employees to focus on other tasks under the pressure of human resources limitations. Moreover, even though fees are relatively not high, it could be considered as money generating process to the institution.

CONCLUSIONS

Although fees may act as a barrier to service utilization, it could be associated with service quality improvements. In JRMS, the drop in the total number of evaluation files submitted after introducing fees for evaluation procedure

of MCs and MDs was associated with higher percentage of evaluation files completed successfully. This might be attributed to real willingness and the actual need of companies to be involved in the process; consequently, the quality of service was affected positively.

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