

Socio-economical aspects of day-case surgery

A. VLEUGELS

The lecture deals with the economical aspects of ambulatory surgery, and its impact on patient and society. It starts from the two major motivations which are traditionally used to promote the development of ambulatory surgery : it results in better care for the patient and it reduces health care cost.

In a critical appraisal of these premisses, among other things, the following questions must be addressed :

- Does ambulatory surgery actually save the money we assume it saves ?
Does ambulatory surgery actually improves patient outcomes in the way we assume it does ?

The data and the observations available leave little doubt that the development of ambulatory surgery was the right way we to go. The answers, however, to both critical questions are nor straightforward, neither unanimously affirmative.

There is room for improvement. Historically health care has to a large extent been designed on basis of the needs and the attributes of the health care structures – the “traditional” in patient hospital, the one-day-clinic... Inspiration for improvement can be found in a more patient-centered way of thinking.

Arthur VLEUGELS, Centre for Health Services and Nursing Research, Catholic University Leuven.