



# The role of standardized management practices in improving quality of care: Evidence from healthcare chains

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# Introduction

Improving performance remains a pervasive concern for healthcare facilities, especially hospitals

- Due to market regulation, they have limited opportunities to differentiate from competitors
- To achieve this purpose, they may seek to gain efficiency by expanding their size and improving their management (Bloom et al., 2015)
- Over the past few decades, cooperation and networking behaviors have become prevalent among hospitals (Craig et al., 2021; Schmitt, 2017)

# Introduction

The impact of network integration on performance remains debated

- In the public sector, hospital networking tends to produce mixed results
- In the private sector, groups rely on leveraged buyouts (LBOs) to acquire new facilities
  - Healthcare networks and their business model are a subject of growing criticism
  - A systematic review showed that mergers leads to contrasted impacts in terms of quality of care (Mariani et al., 2022)
- The specific impact of standardized management practices has been overlooked, although they can lead to damaging outcomes (e.g., ORPEA group in France)

# Aim of the study

Our research investigates the link between standardization of managerial practices via network integration and hospital performance, and especially:

- Whether network integration improves hospital performance
- Whether network integration fosters the standardization of managerial practices
- Whether standardized managerial practices improve hospital performance

# Empirical context

The French hospital sector is very concentrated

- A few healthcare networks hold most of private hospitals
- Since 2016, all public hospitals are part of a territorial cooperation network (136 Hospital Territory Groups - GHT)
- Both sectors strive to strengthen their performance (especially quality of care) and harmonize practices...

Private group	Facilities
Elsan	137
Ramsay	125
Santé Cité	120
Korian	114
Clinéa	105

*Les Echos Etudes (2023)*

# Methods

We have designed a mixed-method study focusing on private hospitals in France

- **First stage** (in progress): qualitative study based on a series of semi-structured interviews
  - Target interviewees from hospitals (e.g., healthcare managers, care directors) and healthcare networks (e.g., healthcare directors, heads of group quality)
  - Explore the standardization of practices and how it is perceived
- **Second stage** (to be conducted): quantitative study based on data from the French National Health Data System (SNDS)
  - Examine the impacts of network integration on performance (e.g., quality of care, HR performance)

# Preliminary findings

Preliminary findings from initial interviews allow to better understand:

- Which practices are standardized among hospitals belonging to a network
- How these practices are standardized and adopted among hospitals
- Which aspects of performance may be affected by these practices

Data collection will continue in the coming months, with a target of around 30 interviews



# Discussion

Our study will make several contributions

- Clarify the link between hospital networking and quality of care
- Identify practices that may improve performance and mechanisms facilitating their adoption
- Guide public authorities in market regulation and the development of networking among public hospitals
- Open up avenues for research in other countries to examine the impacts of network integration and the role of managerial practices in performance

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# THANK YOU



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