Evaluation of Primary Health Care Strategies.  
An Application for Buenos Aires City  
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Abstract

Primary Health Care strategies are considered the most cost-effective initiatives, especially for developing nations. In spite of this, the literature that accounts for the implementation of evaluation models is limited. The objective of the paper consists of specifying a theoretical/methodological framework that allows evaluating, given a certain context, the effectiveness of PHC strategies, establishing the relative development of involved actors from the institutional supply side, as well as the relevance of population requirements on the type of services eventually offered. The units of study are the Health and Community Action Centres (CESAC) distributed among sixteen Centres of Management and Participation (CGP) of Buenos Aires City. The Proposal combines descriptive statistics with the estimation of a model based on the theory of determination of efficient frontiers applied to multiproduct organizations. Relying on a panel of daily consultation on CESACs for the 2004/5 period across patients, by cause of consultation and treatment, the differential development of each centre was estimated for four types of interventions, controlled by infrastructure and resources factors, demand's characteristics, goods delivered and seasonal variables. Results suggest that traditional supply indicators are significant to explain the development of CESACs. As long as population determinants are concerned, patients' education operates in the same direction, so that the lower the educational level, the more limited is the access to existing services is. In terms of demands homogeneity within CESACs, the regression analysis confirms the hypothesis of self-focalization: patients who approach a public centre have similar poverty levels, regardless of their localization. Finally, the proposed methodology suggests the presence of significant differences concerning management between CESACs by using idiosyncratic variables. Results do not drive to the conclusion that there are units more efficient that other in absolute terms, but that it depends on the type of service provided.

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