



World Health
Organization

European Region

NOVA
NATIONAL SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC HEALTH



WHO Collaborating Centre for Education, Research
and Evaluation of Safety and Quality in Healthcare



WHO 2nd European Autumn School on
**Quality of Care
and Patient Safety**

Lisbon, Portugal, 7–11 October 2024

Background

The WHO Athens Quality of Care and Patient Safety Office develops comprehensive capacity building and training programmes tailored to quality of care and patient safety. These initiatives align with the WHO European Programme of Work, 2020–2025, which prioritizes fostering resilience, driving transformation through innovation, and offering dedicated support to countries. The primary emphasis is on moving towards universal health coverage (UHC), guaranteeing access to high-quality health services to all, without imposing financial burdens on individuals.

In line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda, the WHO Athens Quality of Care and Patient Safety Office works to advance universal access to high-quality health-care services as a key component of achieving sustainable development. Health improvements can remain elusive unless those services are of sufficient quality to be effective. Transformation of health care will require an unprecedented commitment to quality improvement. With the global momentum of UHC as a backdrop, combined with the previous decades of work on health-care quality worldwide, the time is ripe for advancing high-quality health-care systems as those that optimize health care in a given context by consistently delivering care that improves or maintains health outcomes, by being valued and trusted by all people, and by responding to changing population needs.

Indeed, the Agenda recognizes that quality of care and patient safety are critical aspects of providing equitable, accessible, and people-centred health care to all individuals, leaving no one behind.

After the success of the 1st European Autumn School on Quality of Care and Patient Safety in 2023, the WHO Athens Quality of Care and Patient Safety Office, in collaboration with the WHO Collaborating Centre for Education, Research and Evaluation of Safety and Quality in Healthcare from the NOVA National School of Public Health, Lisbon, Portugal, will host the WHO 2nd European Autumn School on Quality of Care and Patient Safety. This initiative is specifically designed to advance scientific knowledge and elevate expertise in health-care quality and patient safety across the European Region and beyond.

Contents

Background	2
Course details	3
Why a course in quality of care and patient safety is important	5
What participants will gain from the course	6
Highlights from the previous edition	7

Course details

The WHO 2nd European Autumn School on Quality of Care and Patient Safety is a pioneering initiative dedicated to advancing scientific knowledge in health-care quality and patient safety. This intensive programme will take place over the course of one week, from 7 to 11 October 2024, in Lisbon, Portugal.

The primary objective of this Autumn School is to cultivate a deep, comprehensive understanding of the complex dimensions and best practices in the field of quality of care and patient safety. Through a wide array of engaging panel discussions, interactive lectures, and collaborative workshops, participants will explore key topics such as the foundations of quality of care; governance and measurement; policy and innovation; patient safety and resilience; and patient-centredness and experience. In addition to the sessions, participants will engage in a daily group activity on quality of care policy design. This exercise, conducted in small groups, is designed to provide practical experience in creating and refining policies that address critical issues in quality improvement and patient safety at national level, while fostering a collaborative and innovative learning environment. The programme will also include a site visit to a health-care facility, where participants will observe and analyse real-world applications of quality improvement strategies.



Location

The course will be held in person in Lisbon, Portugal



Language

The course will be delivered in English. Fluency in English is a prerequisite for participants to ensure effective comprehension and articulation of public health concepts and active engagement with other participants.



Manual

The WHO 2nd European Autumn School on Quality of Care and Patient Safety offers a comprehensive manual designed to support participants throughout the programme. This resource sets forth in-depth guidance on the key principles and practices covered in the sessions. Additionally, the manual provides a crucial guide for the quality of care policy design activity.

Participants and speakers



The WHO 2nd European Autumn School on Quality of Care and Patient Safety brings together a distinguished cohort of participants, including high-level health-care professionals, policy-makers, and experts from across the WHO European Region. The programme will also feature top speakers from leading academic institutions, WHO and prominent health institutions in Europe, who will offer critical insights and strategic guidance.

Programme outline



The programme is an in-depth exploration of the latest advancements in health-care quality and patient safety, featuring pioneering case studies and insights from leading health policy experts and country experiences. It is designed to empower high-level participants, key decision-makers across the health system, and international experts on quality of care and patient safety. The course aims to enhance understanding of key concepts and practical methodologies for driving positive transformations in health-care systems. The goal is to equip participants with the knowledge and skills needed to optimize health-care systems, improve patient-centred outcomes, reduce inefficiencies, build resilience, scale equity, and underscore the importance of a well-prepared health-care workforce capable of delivering high-quality care under challenging circumstances.

Quality of care policy design group activity



The quality of care policy design activity is a central component of this year's programme, designed as an immersive experience in developing strategic health policies. Throughout the week, participants will work in diverse groups, each assigned a specific country profile to focus on health-care challenges related to quality of care and patient safety. Building on these insights, participants will then engage in policy development, crafting innovative and sustainable solutions to address the identified challenges. The exercise culminates in a simulated policy discussion, where groups will present their policy briefs and engage in role-play, simulating real-world policy advocacy and negotiation.

Why a course in quality of care and patient safety is important

Quality of care and patient safety are vital for accessible, equitable, timely, patient-centred health care, forming the foundation of robust health systems and UHC. Quality of care interventions improve outcomes, ensure evidence-based therapies, and act as a safety net, preventing errors and reducing harm. They foster health-care system resilience and efficiency, making use of digital tools and innovation, ultimately contributing to a better value for money spent. Additionally, they promote health-care equity by addressing delivery disparities, ensuring all patients receive equal, high-quality care.

However, a well-designed health-care system alone is not enough. Training health-care professionals, managers and policy-makers in quality of care and patient safety is equally crucial to building their capacity to adopt a data-driven culture of continuous improvement. Quality of care training enhances strategies to engage people in health-care design, leading to better patient experience.

This course facilitates future training and collaborative networks on quality of care and patient safety, enabling health-care professionals, managers and policy-makers to better understand how to safeguard individual health and meet health-care needs equitably.



What participants will gain from the course

Through a comprehensive blend of keynote lectures, plenary sessions, workshops, challenges, case studies, group activity, and networking time, participants will be exposed to an in-depth exploration of critical aspects related to quality of care and patient safety. They will be empowered with knowledge, skills, and strategies that drive continuous improvements in health-care practices and patient safety at national, regional and local level.

During this year's course, participants will:

- 1 contemplate critical challenges and improvement opportunities on quality of care and patient safety, by using innovative examples of good practices and case studies;
- 2 advocate for action through an equity and human-rights approach to quality of care and patient safety;
- 3 collaborate and engage with experts in foundations of quality of care; governance and measurements; policy and innovation; patient safety and resilience; patient-centredness and experience to generate action-oriented insights that will provide pivotal resources to country-level health systems strengthening;
- 4 be encouraged to explore innovative approaches and new technologies that advance quality of care and patient safety;
- 5 boost their personal and professional global networks and fostering a community of professionals committed to elevating global health-care standards and enhancing safety of care in the European Region and beyond; and
- 6 deliberate on the importance of health-care professionals' well-being and the involvement of patients and families to improve safety and quality of care.

Highlights from the previous edition

“We really need an advanced course on quality of care and patient safety because this topic is critical to achieving UHC. We need to design systems that pay more attention to quality, and we need to explore innovations in quality of care and new approaches that, for example, take more equity and patient experience into account. This will enable us to have modern and high-performing health systems.”

João Breda, Head, WHO Athens Quality of Care and Patient Safety Office, WHO Regional Office for Europe

“I believe this course will be a great opportunity to reinforce the necessary networking to put quality improvement and patient safety at the top of every national health agenda.”

Paulo Sousa, Head, WHO Collaborating Centre for Education, Research and Evaluation of Safety and Quality in Healthcare

“Quality is not a transaction. There are a lot of documents and guidelines on how to improve quality that are very transactional, and they are important as a base. But the most important element is the human element... how do we inspire people with quality and safety? How do we genuinely bring them on board, get their ideas, and engage them at the heart?”

Pedro Delgado, Vice President,
Institute for Healthcare Improvement



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