

Principles of good and excellent supervision

The use of principles

Working with principles works well, because principles are good, valid and sometimes even inspiring guidelines for effective policies and their implementation. Using principles means a continued commitment to improve upon the actual operation of principles by reflection, innovation, and evaluation. In this way principles stimulate continuous, dynamic striving for adequacy if not excellence.

For example, the Estonian approach to e-health is to formulate principles and implement/ operationalize them in the tools and procedures that make up e-health. One major principle is that people own their own data and should be able to see them or get to them at any moment. Principles can be used to construct strategies or to evaluate them. Also, the OECD principles of best practice stimulate the use of information (risk analysis, evaluation, evidence) and good governance (organization and strategy).

Principles used for CARDS

CARDS is also principle based. It is founded on 8 principles:

1. supervision consists not only of inspections, but also of other means such as communication, consultation, exchange of checklists, etc.
2. supervision should strive for proportional commitment; where problems and risks are great, more effort.
3. supervision should primarily aim for effectiveness, i.e. the resolution of acute problems and the steady reduction of future problems (non-compliance and risk) over time and the steady increase of quality (in this case: health care)
4. supervision must be transparent for supervisors, professionals, management and clients. This applies to problems, commitment, strategy as well as output and effect.
5. It is better to have a measured than an estimated image, and an estimated image is better than no image.
6. the effectiveness of supervision depends on the extent to which supervision knows how to respond to characteristics and differences of the target group; variation of strategy and resources is crucial.
7. supervision must have a multi-annual perspective; partly to achieve real effects through constructive strategies, partly to generate an innovation and investment perspective.
8. Surveillance must therefore also invest in own competence and effectiveness to exercise ever better / more effective supervision, i.e. in new insights, tools and strategies.

Each of these principles has multiple implications. E.g. principle 1 leads to a classification of methods and strategies that can be used to promote compliance, risk reduction and quality improvement. It also leads to the sub-principle that supervision agencies should avail of all possible methods. This subprinciple in its turn promotes innovation; agencies should develop, use, and improve all methods.

Principles implied by Fryberg categories

The principle that is implicit in Freiberg's classification scheme are similar in nature:

- a. use all regulatory methods at a high level under the appropriate conditions
- b. evaluate regularly whether their form and function can be improved.

1. Regulatory Methods	2. Description	3. Examples in healthcare
1. Economic regulation	Taxes, prices, tenders and market regulation	Introducing competition into the healthcare system by the removal of barriers to market entry.
2. Transactional regulation	Contracts, grant and procurement contracts	Public procurement process established to contain costs and create greater efficiencies
3. Authorization as regulation	Accreditation, certification, registration and licensing	External inspections, accreditation and licensing
4. Structural regulation	Physical design, process design and choice architecture	Behavioral cues, visual reminders and structural design
5. Informational regulation	Using information to raise awareness, improving decision making and change attitudes,	Quality ratings, registries and performance indicators
6. Legal regulation	Laws, guidelines and rules	Standards, clinical practice guidelines
7.		

If one uses principles in this way, excellence is not only an ambition, but also a strategy.