



Caracterización de los laboratorios clínicos del municipio de Ocaña

Characterization of the clinical laboratories of the municipality of Ocaña

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Abstract

The services provided by clinical laboratories play a preponderant role in sanitation since the results of these examinations the doctor obtains information about the pathologies of his patients. The purpose of this study was to characterize the clinical laboratories of the municipality of Ocaña, it was developed using the quantitative methodology, with a descriptive approach, and it had a population and sample of 11 clinical laboratories in the city. The results show that they are formed as legal entities, with eleven to 46 years of experience in the field and only provide first-level services of complexity because they do not have the necessary and sufficient installed capacity to develop more advanced processes, which affects Their competitiveness in the market and the need to continuously establish strategies that allow them to have good development and high quality in the provision of services is evident.

Key words: Quality, Collaborator, Strategy, Clinical laboratories, Level of complexity, Health.

Resumen

Los servicios prestados por los laboratorios clínicos juegan un papel preponderante en la salubridad, puesto que los resultados de estos exámenes el médico obtiene la información sobre las patologías de sus pacientes. El objetivo del presente estudio fue caracterizar a los laboratorios clínicos del municipio de Ocaña, se desarrolló mediante la metodología cuantitativa, con enfoque descriptivo, contó con una población y muestra de 11 laboratorios clínicos de la ciudad. Los resultados demostraron que están conformados como personas jurídicas, con once hasta cuarenta y seis años de experiencia en el ramo y sólo prestan servicios de primer level de complejidad, debido a que no poseen la capacidad instalada necesaria y suficiente para desarrollar procesos más avanzados, lo cual afecta su competitividad en el mercado, el hallazgo más relevante fue la necesidad de establecer de manera continua estrategias que les permitan tener un buen desarrollo y alta calidad en la prestación de los servicios.

Palabras claves: Calidad, Colaborador, Estrategia, Laboratorios clínicos, Level de complejidad, Salud.



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1. Introduction

In the world, the trends of clinical laboratories have different points of view and in each country, they are different and adapt to different factors that involve them (Villegas Ledesma, 2011). Also called diagnostic means, it has great relevance in the provision of health services since these services contribute to confirming medical diagnoses, besides, it takes on special importance for the responsibility that this type of service has, a condition that forces them to provide health services. quality, according to (García, Gutiérrez, Rengifo, & Casas, 2013) the advances point towards clinical laboratories with high demand that demand quality care every day that guarantees timely and guided care in the regulations; In this sense, it reinforces the importance of the responsibilities of managers and professionals in laboratory medicine, in their role of delivering reliable results and with analytical quality, which will allow clinical decisions to be made by the health professional. (Figuroa-Montes, 2017).

Now, if it is true that health is affected as an essential service that is priceless, the entities that provide this type of service must do so effectively and so that they have to be highly competitive. The provision of health services under the insurance scheme makes it an activity with economic connotation, which is why its organization and operation obey market rules and, naturally, competition, even when the provision of the service is considered essential public because it is immersed in a fundamental right. (Ortiz, La libre competencia en el sector salud. enfoque crítico, 2013), likewise, quality and efficiency are essential requirements to maintain a competitive environment from the

social, labor and technological point of view (Molero, y otros, 2010).

In the health market, the demand for health services is determined by the entire population, since it is good that all people need without exception (Ortiz, 2013); However, high competition is observed, some organizations with high regional recognition have more than 20 years of service, and it is also evident that there is a large number of suppliers, which in turn should not be seen only as a competition but as possible allies, the Competition in this sense is given between the EPS and the IPS where the initial logic was to compete in terms of efficiency by reducing operating costs and improving quality. (Ministerio de Salud, s/f). It is important to distinguish between the Public Health Social Security System, according to the spokesperson of the Commission for Health Regulation (Cres), Esperanza Giraldo Muñoz.

It is necessary to differentiate between public insurance, and the General Social Security System in Health, from private insurance that includes prepaid medicine companies, ambulances and health policies. We would say that public insurance is compulsory and has no competition since health provision is almost a monopoly of the State. As it is compulsory, the only thing the user decides is which entity to affiliate with, but the conditions are the same and there is no space to generate elements that make a difference between one and another EPS.

The other entities, which manage private insurance, have much more freedom of decision to compete, advance, and grow in what is offered to insurance buyers. (Arias Jimenez, 2011).

Concerning laboratories, few provide services of the second and third level of complexity, the vast majority only provide the service at the first level of complexity, which would reduce shipping costs and in turn reduce the costs of results of clinical laboratory tests, which directly favor all those who require the service, for (Prada Ríos, Pérez-Castaño, & Rivera-Triviño, 2017) in Colombia 66% of the IPS are ambulatory care providers, 17% are hospitals, 11% are promotion and prevention centers and 6% are auxiliary service providers (for example, laboratories).

In the municipality of Ocaña, the offer of health services has been increasing over the years, entering new providers to the market, seeking lucrative personal interests without taking into account the quality of the service, offering the service at low costs that attract customers without guaranteeing the reliability of the results, creating greater competitiveness and more stringent survival challenges, for which reason this study aims to characterize the clinical laboratories that provide these services of vital importance to the community.

Management of clinical laboratories. In a world of constant changes, globalization and technology lead to modernize the way of doing business, for which strategic planning plays a fundamental role, therefore, for (Serna Gómez, 2014) change and innovation will be constant, and responsiveness will be a fundamental strategic element.

In this sense, clinical laboratories immersed in the needs of change and modernization turn to quality management systems as an alternative to obtaining quality standards and customer satisfaction. Quality management is conceived as a comprehensive

process, where all the organization must focus efforts towards achieving the best results. (Pacheco, Zamory, y Gerardo Collino, 2019)

2. Methodology

The present investigation was developed under a quantitative methodology, with a descriptive approach, since from this it is possible to identify and analyze in-depth the level of competitiveness of the health sector in the city of Ocaña Norte de Santander; Well, as expressed by (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 1997), Through this type of research, it is not only possible to describe the characteristics of a population and know how they perceive a situation, but also to identify the relationship that exists between more than two variables, for this reason, it is taken as the basis for the development of the study.

The population selected for the execution of the investigation was made up of the 11 laboratories of the municipality of Ocaña, which are legally constituted, according to the information provided by the (Special Registry of Health Service Providers - REPS., 2019).

To collect the information, as an instrument, the questionnaire was used, using the survey technique, in order to know aspects related to competitiveness in the health sector of the municipality of Ocaña.

3. Results

Once the information collection instruments were applied to the institutions under study, the laboratories were characterized, as detailed below.

Table 1. Years of operation

Years of operation	Frequency
Eleven years	2
Fifteen years	1
Twenty nine years	1
Thirty years	1
Thirty-one years	1
Thirty-six years	1
Forty-six years	1
Does not respond	3
Total	11

Source: self-made.

The operating time that a company takes to be in the market is a factor that contributes to its positioning, therefore, in this first question, it was evident that the clinical laboratories of Ocaña that responded, have been at the service of the community from eleven to 46 years old, which gives them the experience to be in a competitive market.

Table 2. Number of collaborators

Number of collaborators	Frequency	Percentage
Between one and four	3	38%
Between five and eight	2	25%
Between nine and ten	1	13%
Over ten	2	25%
Total	8	100%

Source: self-made.

At a business level, human resources are considered one of the most important elements, because, in addition to helping to have better productivity, they contribute to the fulfillment of the mission and the achievement of the vision, therefore, (Tito, 2003) indicates that if an institution, regardless of the sector it belongs to and its company name, requires collaborators in order to achieve competitiveness.

Based on the above, and as can be seen in Table 2, in the clinical laboratories of Ocaña, human resources also play a preponderant role within them, since in 38% of the population under study, they have between one and four collaborators, who are in charge of developing every one of the processes and activities that are carried out daily, while 25% of these have approximately five and up to eight workers, some even have more than ten (25%), to be able to cover all the demand, finally, although not least they have between nine and ten (13%). It is noteworthy that, to this question, three of the laboratories did not give an answer

Table 3. Company type

Company type	Frequency	Percentage
Legal person	7	64%
Natural person	4	36%
Total	11	100%

Source: self-made.

It was observed that the clinical laboratories of the city of Ocaña, are institutions that are constituted as a legal person (64%), because according to the respondents, through this type of figure who assumes all relationships and rights, as well as, the Debts that can be generated during the development of its activities are unique and exclusively of the company.

Table 4. Complexity level

Complexity level	Frequency	Percentage
Level I	6	55%
Level II	1	9%
Level III	0	0%
Level I y II	3	27%
Level I - II y III	1	9%
Total	11	100%

Source: self-made.

The level of complexity in institutions belonging to the health sector implies not

only responsibility, but also, Level of complexity in health care, since according to resolution No. 5261 of 1994 (Ministry of Health, 1994), in Colombia Currently, there is Level (I), which is where everything related to general practitioners and / or auxiliary personnel is found, and other health professionals, Level (II) which covers general practitioners with consultation, referral, and / or advice from specialized personnel or resources, and finally, Level III and IV, which is made up of the specialist physician, in addition to having the participation of the general practitioner. In this sense, it was found that in the city of Ocaña the vast majority of laboratories only have the first level of complexity (55%), therefore, it is very common to observe how many people are forced to move to other cities. of the country to be able to carry out third level studies, among which you can find hormonal, infectious, the drug of abuse tests, among others, since only 27% of the health entities in the city are first and second Level. Hence, the importance for the managers of these organizations to design strategies through which they can expand the service portfolio and compete in the market.

Table 5. *Population attended*

<i>Population attended</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
EPS-CP-ESE (Health Promoting Companies, private and contributory clients and Social Companies of the State)	1	9%
CP (private customers)	3	27%
EPS-S y C (Subsidized and contributory Health Promotion Companies)	2	18%
IPS-CP (Health and Tax Provider Institutions)	1	9%
CP-EPS-IPS-EP	1	9%
EPS-CP	2	18%
EPS	1	9%
Total	11	100%

Source: self-made.

Concerning the population served, it is possible to determine that 27% are private clients (PC), although in some cases, both individuals and those belonging to health-promoting companies (18%) are cared for, including situations in which the EPS has been linked to the PC (18%) as can be seen in the table above.

On the other hand, there are cases in which the EPS work together, with those of private clients and the State Social Companies (9%), it should be emphasized that all these links allow users to have much more benefits in terms of health, that is to say, if there is no specialist in one, there is the possibility that the institution with which the agreement is held has it, thus preventing it from moving to another place outside the city.

Another question that was part of the questionnaire was on whether it had certification (ISO 9001, 2015) or another type of certification, since, for companies in the health sector, the issue of certifications is a very important aspect, since it is a from these documents that endorse the processes developed by the institution, in turn, these allow for greater credibility with society, that is, they are the ones that indicate that the staff is being trained, that the processes are standardized, that there is the automation of administrative procedures, etc. in this sense for (Fraiz, 2003) The implantation of a total quality system requires a profound change in the functional organization of clinical laboratories but it brings a series of advantages, it is the best indicator of the effectiveness of a laboratory and consist a solid defense against possible claims.

It is for this reason that the entity that has any type of certification generates greater credibility and trust in society, taking into

account that to achieve this certification, it must comply with infrastructure, biosecurity, and quality standards; meanwhile, in the case of Ocaña's clinical laboratories, only nine (9) have certification regarding Resolution 2003 of 2014, which according to (Ministry of Health and Social Protection, 2014), aims to define the procedures and conditions of registration of health service providers and health services, as well as adopting the Manual of Registration of Health Services Providers and Authorization that is an integral part of this resolution.

4. Discussions

Starting from the results obtained with the application of the information collection instrument to clinical laboratories, to characterize them and obtain first-hand information on their current state, it is possible to observe that competitiveness is an aspect that is currently It has become something transcendent in the business field, regardless of the sector to which it belongs and company name, for this reason (Ibarra, Gonzáles, and Demuner, 2017), indicate that this is one of the most complex issues since it not only analyzes the Mild macroeconomic, economic development policies, cultural and social factors but also, the industrial scale.

As can be seen in the previous sections, in the health sector, competitiveness is also very marked, specifically, the clinical laboratories of the city of Ocaña, which, many times despite the years of operation they have, are factors competitiveness such as the quality of services, technological resources, human resource capacities, and financial resources, among others, which often affect the correct development of processes, which directly and indirectly gradually generate that their competitiveness is not the same.

Another aspect to which laboratories have been subjected, and which also affect their competitiveness, is the level of complexity they possess, since this is reflected not only in the services they offer but also in the number of populations that can be served and benefit, and this is where capacity comes to play a preponderant role, hence, the entities of the health sector need continuously establishing clear and well-defined strategies that allow them to have good development and high-quality services.

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