**Objective**

This study was designed to explore relationships between scores on Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) and positive outcomes and to verify the relationship between an effective leadership team and a high quality facility.

**Performance Outcomes**

**MAJOR FINDING:**
One of the most significant results of the research efforts was the correlation between the assigned QAPI score and the CMS Five star rating. This is not surprising based on both of these measures being associated with overall quality. This validates to some degree the QAPI tool and its use as a descriptor of a quality environment. This means that the higher a facility’s QAPI score, the more likely it is to have a higher five star rating.

**OTHER FINDINGS:**
When doing the correlations for other outcome measures with the QAPI tool, we found some relationship, yet were also concerned about a high degree of multicollinearity between measures. Satisfaction, management turnover, overall turnover, and operating margin may have a relationship with the QAPI score, but cannot be used as an independent predictor. One of the issues we have with this data set is it is not large enough to allow for further analysis.

**Qualitative Analysis**

In order to analyze common themes amongst the different practicum sites, we did qualitative surveys to further investigate the relationship between a high QAPI score and positive outcomes.

**People Designated to Provide Leadership:**
Responses: the administrator, director of nursing, management team, department heads, director of operations, director of organizational advancement, vice president of operations, interdisciplinary team, education and quality improvement supervisor, director, grant managers, process specialist, executive director, and the quality assurance specialist. Although there were repeated answers, this exhaustive list demonstrates that there is great diversity in the people who provide leadership responsibilities throughout the facilities.

**Leadership Team Advancing a Quality Agenda and Best Practices:**
A common theme as to how the leadership team advances a quality agenda and environment included an investment in meetings such as: QAPI, Stand up, QA, QI, CQI, QST, steering committee, safety committee, and leadership. Listening sessions and LEAN process improvement involved all levels of staff. A number of facilities also use internal auditing systems to track QI level goals. These qualitative results indicate that it is common for the facilities to utilize quality meetings, include all levels of staff, and use an auditing system. Strong and effective communication, being transparent, and inspiring a shared vision are frequently used best practices that help to advance the quality culture throughout the practicum sites.

**Methodology**

- The University of Minnesota provided us with the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement tool to survey the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire practicum sites.
- The forty-seven practicum sites completed the existing QAPI tool.
- Thirty-four practicum sites completed the performance outcome and effective leadership survey.
- We used this data to develop a correlation between the high QAPI score and positive outcomes. As well as utilizing the leadership effectiveness survey to further examine performance that may uncover high impact practices.

**Average Data for Facilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Score</th>
<th>CMS Five star rating (2013)</th>
<th>Aggregate customer satisfaction</th>
<th>Management turnover rate</th>
<th>Overall turnover rate</th>
<th>Estimated operating margin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score 71.5</td>
<td>2.4 stars</td>
<td>Satisfied residents and/or families</td>
<td>Between 5 – 9.9%</td>
<td>Between 20 – 39.9%</td>
<td>-2.4% - 0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of the research, we also asked organizations about their current quality leadership practices with the results shared above. First, it was positive that the overall means were all near or above 4 on a 5 points scale, which suggested an overall leadership commitment to the quality journey. You can also see that a commitment to customers and learning were a couple of the strongest areas emphasized. In exploratory analysis, there was some limited evidence of a relationship between the QAPI score and leaders acting on a vision and setting an example with their actions. We also asked a series of questions that suggested that their leaders modeled quality in their actions, behaviors and words.

**Research Team**

**Student Researchers:** Lori Mahan, current Health Care Administration major

**Faculty Mentor:** Douglas Olson, Ph.D. Professor, Health Care Administration Program

**Other Faculty Contributions:**
Tim Vaughan, Ph.D. Associate Dean, Professor, Management
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All of these individuals are from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

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