

Self-managed teams in the healthcare sector

[Health & Medicine](#), [Healthcare](#)



Not only is the productivity increasing by having self-managed teams, but also the healthcare workers are becoming more committed and are facing new challenges. This is improving the quality of healthcare and creating competition. Several healthcare organizations in the US are training their staff members to form self-managed teams to deliver the patient care and help fulfill the objectives of the organization. Healthcare organizations in the US should begin to realize that the healthcare workers if allowed to participate in the management process would be able to improve their performance (Schrubb, 1992).

Yeatts et al conducted a study in the year 2004 to determine the benefits of having self-managed teams in nursing homes over several criteria including costs and effectiveness of the services. Besides, the study also examined the steps that were needed to implement the managed-managed teams and the strategies that had to be followed in order to effectively manage these teams. This study was conducted in five nursing homes in the Dallas regions where the nursing-self managed teams were implemented. The results obtained were compared to another five nursing homes that did not have self-managed teams.

The survey was conducted after examining the data recorded from the nurses, patients, residents, nursing assistants, and the family members. It was found that the nursing homes that contained self-managed teams functioned much better than those nursing homes that did not have self-managed teams. However, these observations were only noted after a short period following implementation of self-managed teams in the nursing homes. Data

had to be recorded after a one-year period in order to determine the long-term benefits of such teams in the healthcare sector.

As initial data recorded was positive, the hospital management considered having such teams functional in the organization. The hospital had started considering training and orienting the nurses, nursing assistants, managers and the supervisors about working in self-managed teams. In a self-managed team, the managers would have to provide advice on how certain procedures have to be performed, and at the same time have to get the feedback from the staff members of any difficulties experienced by these procedures.

As the manager who handles a particular team, knows the difficulties and the challenges, he/she could find a solution easily after interacting with the team members. As the team is flexible, the decision-making process is implied and effective. This can help to solve any day-to-day problem that arises during execution of patient care. In this way, the self-managed teams are more effective in providing patient care (Yeatts et al, 2004). One of the persons who identified the importance of self-managed teams in the performance of any task was Edward Deming.

He brought out a book in the year 1982 titled ' Out of Crisis'. In this book, Deming gave importance to the employees in the industry who were in the manufacturing and the services sector. As healthcare also comes under the services sector, the Deming's theory could be applied to that field. Deming's theory gave importance to the fact that in the healthcare industry the

workers should be able to control their environments they function in, rather than be treated as machines that would be performing a particular task.

Once the staff members are given a particular task, they should be in control over several things including the environment they function in. This would result in greater amount of responsibility and ownership. The staff members would do everything so that the quality of the services improves. Especially in the healthcare industry, the self-managed teams are required for certain specific purposes including:

- Improve the quality of services
- Ensure active participation of the staff members in patient care
- Ensure self-motivation of the staff members
- Ensure that there are creative inputs from each staff member

(Moss, 1996, & Carty, 1996).