Autoriteit Consument & Markt

The effect of Dutch hospital mergers on quality of care

16-11-2016 | Amsterdam | ACM conference | Ron Kemp

Context

Since 2004 ≈ 30 hospital merger assessments

 Majority unconditionally cleared, 1 remedy, 3 voluntary price cap, 1 prohibition

Claimed rationale

- Improving quality
- Volume standards

Questions?

Autoriteit

- Is the claimed quality improvement achieved?
- What are the important drivers for the quality improvements?

Research design

Qualitative analyses

• 3 cases

Autoriteit

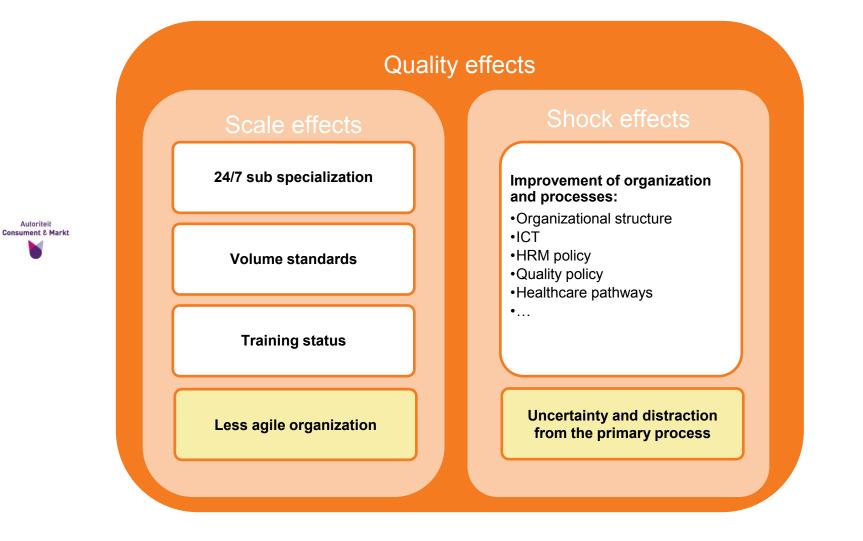
Consument & Markt

Interviews with board of directors, specialists, quality manager, insurer

Quantitative analyses

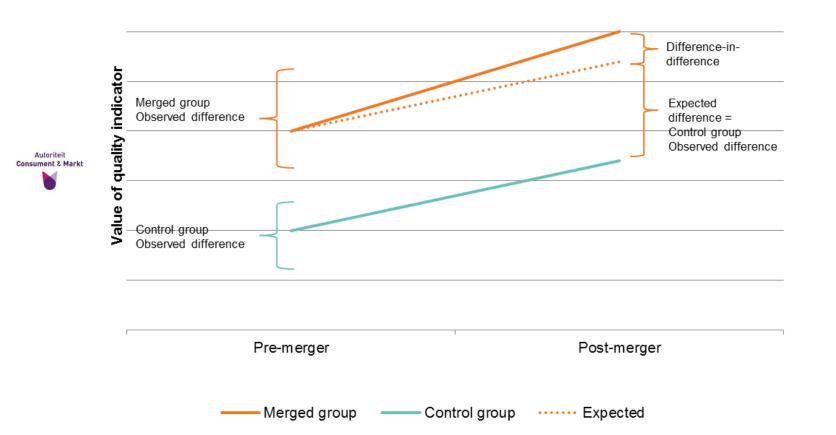
- Which quality indicators to use?
 - Outcome measures, hospital vs treatment level
 - several years, measurement instrument constant in time
- Difference-in-differences approach
- 14 cases (merged in period 2007-2013)

Results qualitative research



Quantitative research





Quantitative research

Indicators

Autoriteit Consument & Markt

- 97 indicators
- Outcome indicators
 - E.g. measurement of pain
- Customer quality indicators
- Waiting time
- Mortality rates

Results quantitative research

Hospital level (n=12)

Autoriteit

- Screening of malnutrition in adults \rightarrow lower
- Pain measurement in nursing ward \rightarrow lower
- Longer waiting times (diagnostics, outpatient clinic)
- Mortality rate (unweighted) increases

Results quantitative research

Treatment specific indicators

- Healthcare outcome indicators \rightarrow no effect
- Patient experiences \rightarrow no effect



- Waiting times treatments \rightarrow no effect
- Waiting times outpatient clinic : 1 \rightarrow shorter; 3 \rightarrow longer
- Waiting times diagnostics : 1 \rightarrow longer

Results quantitative research

 Lower premerger score influences the results → trend towards industry average

	No trend	Trend
Pain measurement in nursing ward	positive	negative
Waiting time treatment	shorter	no effect



- No effect for a different control group
- Correction for multiple comparisons → only three significant effects

Conclusion

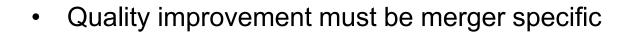
Autoriteit

- No indications for positive effects of hospital mergers on ۲ quality of care
- Results can be case specific ۲
- Management focusses on intermediate results (sub Consument & Markt specialization, volume) without a link to the measured quality indicators.
 - A merger to catch-up?

What next?

Autoriteit

- Consequences for merger assessment
 - Critical on quality claims
 - Should be based on case-specific facts and evidence



• Effects should be timely

• Ex post study on price effects of hospital mergers



Thank you