# Supplementary material

Table S1. Descriptive statistics – health professionals’ sample.

| Variable             | Frequency | Variable             | Frequency |
|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| **Gender**           |           | **Hospital type**    |           |
| Female               | 83.7%     | Chronic diseases     | 4.8%      |
| Male                 | 16.3%     | General              | 54.5%     |
|                      |           | Specialty            | 20.7%     |
|                      |           | Emergency            | 19.1%     |
| **Hospital coverage**|           |                      |           |
| Job position         |           |                      |           |
| Medical doctor       | 26.2%     | Local                | 67.6%     |
| Nurse                | 73.8%     | County - level       | 16.8%     |
|                      |           | Regional             | 11.8%     |
|                      |           | Unspecified          | 1.3%      |
| **Hospital ownership**|          |                      |           |
| Public               | 91.3%     | II                   | 5.7%      |
| Private              | 7.7%      | II M                 | 6.2%      |
|                      |           | III                  | 12.1%     |
|                      |           | IV                   | 49.9%     |
|                      |           | V                    | 14.9%     |
|                      |           | Unclassified         | 3.1%      |

* Hospital rank according to the “Order no. 10/2018 regarding the approval of the classes of accreditation of the healthcare units with beds corresponding to the cycle II of accreditation, Official Gazette no. 95 from January 31st, 2018”: I - accredited (a total score of conformity with the Romanian Authority for Quality Assurance in Healthcare henceforth RAQAH standards of at least 90% after the evaluation); II - accredited with recommendations (at least 70% conformity with the standards of the RAQAH); III - accredited with reserves (at least 51% conformity with the standards of the RAQAH); IV - accredited with low trust (at least 51% conformity with the standards of the RAQAH + less than 30% from the parameters scored by (-10) applicable to the respective healthcare unit); V - is made for a period of mostly 6 months from the reception of the accreditation report, during which a decision to extend the process of accreditation is released and needs the fulfillment by the healthcare units with beds of the new criteria and cumulative conditions.
| Variable          | Frequency | Variable            | Frequency |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| **Gender**        |           | **Education**       |           |
| Female            | 58.9%     | Maximum 10 years    | 30.5%     |
| Male              | 41.1%     | High school         | 27.5%     |
|                   |           | Vocational school   | 26.7%     |
|                   |           | Bachelor            | 12.8%     |
|                   |           | Master              | 2.4%      |
| **Civil status**  |           | **Occupation Sector** |           |
| Married           | 61.9%     | Public              | 13.5%     |
| Divorced          | 5.8%      | Private             | 28.2%     |
| Unmarried         | 14.0%     | Do not work         | 58.3%     |
| Consensual union  | 2.1%      |                     |           |
| Other             | 15.9%     |                     |           |
| **Social status** |           | **Home place (# inhabitants)** | |
| Similar to other families | 61.3% | Village              | 58.7%     |
| Above average     | 15.0%     | 100-200              | 7.9%      |
| Among the wealthiest | 0.8%  | 30-100               | 8.9%      |
| Among the poorest | 3.5%      | >200                 | 16.9%     |
| Under average     | 16.0%     | <30                  | 7.5%      |
**Table S3: Questions in the health professionals’ sample**

| No. crt. | Question                                                                 | Item                                                                                           | Latent construct                                      |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.      | To what extent do you think that the following effects occurred after accreditation? | Increased patients’ satisfaction with medical services, Increased quality of administrative services, Increased quality of medical services, Better hospital reputation | “Perceived differences in quality” (PDQ). |
|         | **Measurement:** 1 – 5; 1 = total disagreement; 5 = Total agreement          |                                                                                               |                                                        |
| 2.      | To what extent do you agree that after accreditation the following happened? | Better resource allocation to improve the quality of medical care, Developing a clear strategy to improve quality, Support to remedy improvable aspects identified during evaluation, Support to improve hospital’s reputation | “Actions taken after accreditation” (ATAA). |
|         | **Measurement:** 1 – 5; 1 = total disagreement; 5 = Total agreement          |                                                                                               |                                                        |
| 3.      | To what extent the following type of initiatives have been taken to support the employees after hospital accreditation? | Training to identify and implement measures to increase quality, Ongoing monitoring of patients’ feedback regarding the quality of received medical care, Other concrete actions to improve quality of care | “Actions to improve quality” (AIQ) |
|         | **Measurement:** 1 – 5; 1 = total disagreement; 5 = Total agreement          |                                                                                               |                                                        |
| 4.      | Do you think that the patients who come for medical services knew whether the hospital was accredited or not? | Not part of a latent construct                                                                 |                                                        |
|         | **Measurement:** Yes/No                                                    |                                                                                               |                                                        |
| 5.      | To what extent do you believe that the results of the accreditation process will determine patients to: | (a) choose better ranked hospitals, (b) stay with the hospital that they choose, (c) ask for alternatives | Not part of a latent construct |
|         | **Measurement:** 1 – 5; 1 = total disagreement; 5 = Total agreement          |                                                                                               |                                                        |
| 6.      | To what extent do you believe that family physicians will use this signal to direct patients towards hospitals able to provide services of a better quality | Not part of a latent construct                                                                 |                                                        |
|         | **Measurement:** 1 – 5; 1 = total disagreement; 5 = Total agreement          |                                                                                               |                                                        |
| Question                                                                 | Item                                                                 | Latent construct                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Are you aware that the Romanian hospitals pursue accreditation?         | Measurement: Yes/No                                                  | Not part of a latent construct    |
| To what extent would you pursue one of the following,                   | (a) ask the family physician or the specialist for another option;   | Not part of a latent construct    |
| if you found that the hospital you are sent to does not comply with the | (b) look for another option yourself;                                |                                   |
| accreditation standards?                                                | (c) stay with the option because you trust the health professionals |                                   |
|                                                                         | of that hospital                                                     |                                   |
|                                                                         | Measurement: 1 – 5; 1 = total disagreement; 5 = Total agreement      |                                   |