

SWOT Analysis of the Marketing Environment of a Private Multidisciplinary Clinic

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Abstract

The use of such modern management techniques as marketing research in the private health care sector and the use of the results in planning the activities of health organizations will enhance the competitive advantages of a multidisciplinary clinic in the growing market of paid medical services.

The objective is to conduct a situation analysis (SWOT analysis) of the marketing environment of a private multidisciplinary clinic to optimize the clinic's management and improve the competitive advantages in the market of existing health care services.

Materials and methods. The official statistics data and statistical reports of the researched medical organizations were used. The method of statistical analysis of the data for the studied period, the frequency analysis of provided medical services and the quantitative method of STEP analysis were used.

Results and discussion. The results of frequency analysis of provided medical services and SWOT analysis of the marketing macroenvironment of a private medical organization helped to identify the opportunities and threats for its activities. It was established that the consultations of experts in the field of obstetrics and gynecology, traumatology, as well as surgeries on the musculoskeletal system had the leading position of the patients' demand.

Conclusion. The results of the SWOT analysis of the marketing macroenvironment of a multidisciplinary private medical organization can be used for decision making in the optimization process of managing the clinic and improving the competitive advantages in the market of existing health care services.

Keywords: marketing environment, medical organization, SWOT analysis, STEP analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing studies of healthcare organizations reduce the level of uncertainty in the market and affect all elements of the marketing complex, as well as the parameters of macro- and microenvironment. Private medical clinics in Russia, as a rule, have a high level of being equipped with medical equipment, highly professional medical personnel and an excellent level of service. This creates an opportunity to provide competitive services for the treatment of patients. The segment of consumers of paid medical services in Russia has a tendency of steady growth in the medical tourism sector. This is because of the affordability of treatment (compared to the prices in clinics in Europe or the US for similar services). Such development of the healthcare sector of Russia, aimed at the export of medical services and service provided for the prosperous citizens of the country, creates ever increasing competition in the market of corporate and private healthcare.

Optimal strategic management of organizations of any profile, including the preservation and development of existing structures, expanding the range and improving the quality of services provided, the introduction of advanced management practices in operations [1, 2], becomes crucial for achieving competitive advantages in the market. These actions are carried out directly by the management and staff of the medical organization; they are subject to control by management tools. This regulatory function can be planned, organized, motivated, and controlled directly in the internal environment of the clinic [3-5]. The results of such activities can bring both profits and losses and become strengths or weaknesses of the enterprise. These sides can be exposed to influence in the form of correction of managerial decisions and the change of the vector of direction [6, 7].

The marketing macroenvironment of a medical organization is able to influence its activities, but is not accessible to impact from the side of organization [8]. Such processes that occur in social, demographic, economic, scientific, technological, political and other spheres of "the environment" of the clinic and have different trends in their development have a direct impact on the activities of the medical organization. The medical organization is not able to adjust these phenomena by the direct effects [9, 10]. This outer shell of the organization is the macroenvironment of

the organization and shall be subject to a thorough study as a phenomenon that covers most of the threats and opportunities for the implementation of the organization's development strategy. Constant monitoring of macroenvironment gives the clinic the benefits in the specific market situation.

The objective of the work is to conduct a SWOT analysis of the marketing environment of a private multidisciplinary clinic to optimize the management of the clinic and improve the competitive advantages in the market of rendered medical services.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The assessment of the macroenvironment was made by the STEP analysis, which got its name by the first letters of the English spelling of the studied components of the macroenvironment: social, technological, economic, and political (Fig. 1). This tool of marketing analysis is applicable to healthcare organizations of any profile, intensity and forms of ownership [11].

The list of factors or parameters for STEP analysis of macroenvironment is not average or standard and for each organization the choice of these indicators is the key to the objectivity of the study.

The sources of information for STEP analysis of the macroenvironment of healthcare organizations, typically, are only secondary data, presented by a variety of databases of official statistics, normative and legal acts, periodicals, the results of conducted and published studies, information on the Internet.

The main requirement for the choice of parameters to analyze the macroenvironment of the clinic is an apparent effect on the operations and development of medical organizations [12].

The multidisciplinary private medical clinic is located in the city of Moscow (Russia). It was founded in 1993. The clinic has outpatient department, where the daily consultations of specialists of all profiles are carried out. The examination of patients is carried out using its own laboratory facilities. The majority of studies are conducted on the day of visit; the test results are ready during the day. Currently, the appointments in clinic are held by the doctors and candidates of medical sciences as well as the doctors with higher qualification category. Consultative-diagnostic assistance is provided for the citizens of Russia, CIS,

near and far abroad. The system of electronic registries successfully operates in the clinic; the appointment to specialists is possible to make via the Internet. The clinic at the patient's request stipulates:

- the annual enlistment of all family members (individual or family);
- direct contract conclusion or through an insurance company;
- compiling the health map on the basis of the results of examination;
- attaching a permanent doctor taking responsibility for all organizational-methodical and therapeutic interventions of the patient or family;
- the conclusion of contracts on pregnancy management up to 36 weeks.

The clinic has a comfortable round-the-clock hospital, a diversified operating unit, equipped for surgeries by the laparoscopic method. All units of the medical center are equipped with modern equipment and consumables.



Fig. 1. The components of the macroenvironment of the organization.

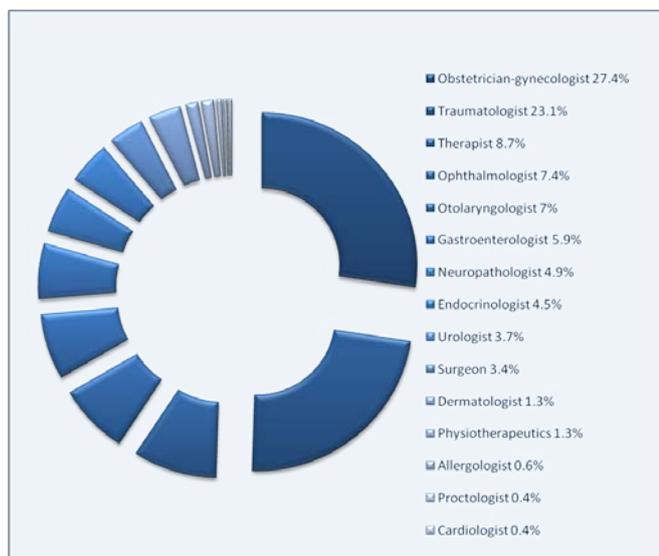


Fig. 2. The results of frequency analysis of the consultations with medical specialists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The choice of parameters to study the marketing macroenvironment of the clinic was carried out on the basis of frequency analysis of the provided services and the subsequent ranking of the results by consumers' demand [13-15]. Frequency analysis by two indicators: the number of consultations with specialists of the clinic and the number of operative interventions

was performed according to the statistical reporting of the medical organization for the calendar year [13, 14].

It was found that the services in the field of obstetrics and gynecology (27.4%) and traumatology (23.1%) had the upper hand in patients' demand of the specialists' consultations. The consultations of such professionals as a physician (8.7%), optometrist (7.4%), otolaryngologist (7%), gastroenterologist (5.9%), neurologist (4.9%), endocrinologist (4.5%), urologist (3.7%), surgeon (3.4%) were less popular. The services of a dermatologist (1.3%), physiotherapist (1.3%), allergist (0.6%), cardiologist (0.4%) and proctologist (0.4%) were in the least demand (Fig. 2).

The frequency analysis of the operational interventions carried out in the clinic during the studied period revealed a commanding lead of the operations on the musculoskeletal system (79.6%) by consumers' demand. Less popular were gynecological surgeries (12.3%), surgeries on the thyroid gland (4.9%) and abdominal operations (3.2%) (Fig. 3).

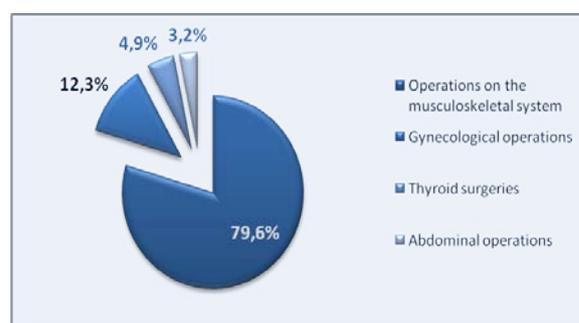


Fig. 3. The results of frequency analysis of surgical interventions.

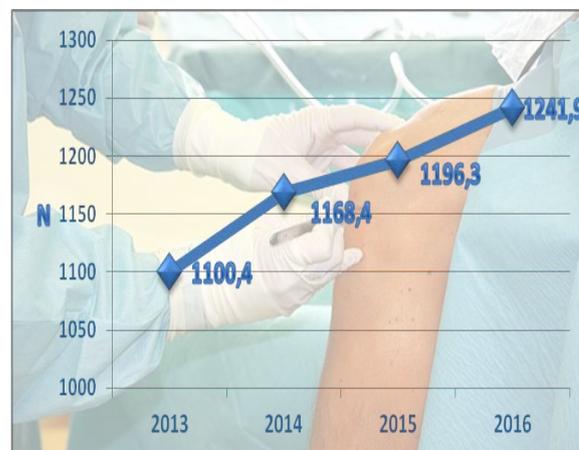


Fig. 4. The number of operations (N, thousand people) held in hospital on the musculoskeletal system in Russia.

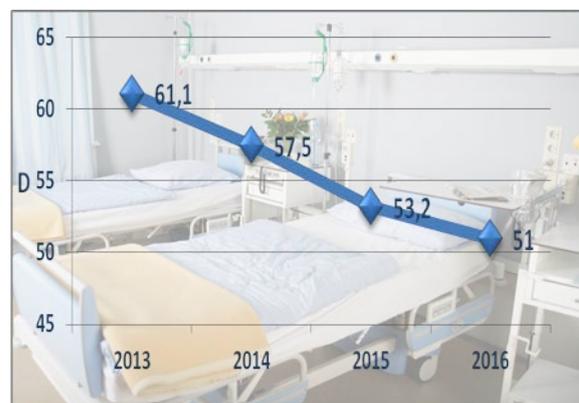


Fig. 5. The number of hospital beds (D, thousands) of gynecological profile.



Fig. 6. The volume (C, million rubles) of paid medical services to population.

In the course of marketing research, the analysis of the social component of the macroenvironment of the multidisciplinary private clinic was carried out based on the results of frequency analysis of rendered medical services. The degree of influence of the following selected parameters of the social component of the macroenvironment was determined and the dynamics of their change for the past five years was assessed:

- on health assessment of the population of Russia: the number of complications of pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period; the number of performed justifiable legal abortions; the number of performed medication-induced abortions; the number of abarticulations, sprains, injuries of muscle, tendons, Lumbosacral strains; the number of population with the diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue; the number of lower limb fractures; the number of interscapulothoracic fractures; the number of surgeries on the musculoskeletal system carried out in the hospital; the distribution of the number of persons recognized as disabled for the first time for the reasons of disability – the diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue;
- on the demographic situation in Russia: the number of effected marriages; migration growth; the number of economically active population.

The ranking of the parameters according to the degree of their influence on the activities of the medical organization was conducted, the assessment of the factor condition was carried out in dynamics and the parametric indices for each parameter were calculated. It has been established that the maximum impact on the development of the studied clinic and the strengthening of its position in the market of medical services is exerted by the parameter "the number of operations performed in hospital on the musculoskeletal system in Russia" (Fig. 4). This indicator during the studied period has grown by 12%, which indicates a steady increase in demand for surgical interventions on this profile. The confirmation was the results of a frequency analysis of the prevalence of these operations in the activities of the clinic. Consequently, at the strategic and tactical planning of development of the medical organization, it is necessary to consider the identified regularities of changes in the macroenvironment and thereby enhance the competitiveness of the clinic in the market.

A parameter containing the threat posed by the macroenvironment, by the results of the study became the decrease in the number of legal abortions by 19.4% being in the second group on mass percentage of surgeries performed by the clinic. The reduction by 55% in the number of persons recognized as disabled for the first time for reasons of disability: the diseases

of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue, which characterized one of the segments of regular users of this medical organization. This can have extremely negative consequences for the clinic. The threats, contained in these parameters, should adjust the marketing planning and management decisions.

For the analysis of the technological component of the macroenvironment of the medical organization, the indicators of provision of population with physicians, surgeons and obstetricians were used; the number of middle grade medical staff in Russia; the number of women's consultation clinics; the number of surgical and gynecological beds; the number of beds for the performance of abortion; the rates of production of medicines, consumable medical materials, and medical equipment.

Within the studied period, the number of specialized hospital beds had steadily decreased. So, the number of hospital beds for surgical and gynecological profile decreased by 10.2% and 18.1%, respectively (Fig. 5).

The declining trend in the number of hospital beds in all profiles allows the clinics of nonstate subordination if necessary, to increase the capacity of their fund of hospital beds, thereby attracting consumers with timeliness and the quality of medical services.

The economic component of the macroenvironment of the clinic was presented by the indicators of per capita income of the population, spending on health (per capita), inflation level in the country, interest rates on loans, the average wage of health workers, the number of population with the income below the subsistence minimum, the volume of paid medical services to population.

The favorable opportunity of the economic component of the macroenvironment has been provided by the parameter "the volume of paid medical services to population", having the highest parametric index (Fig. 6). In the analyzed period, this indicator has grown by 31.4%, which indicates the consumer interest in investing in high-quality and timely services on the provision of medical care.

The marketing analysis of the political component of the macroenvironment of the clinic included a review and assessment of the political situation in the country; the main federal and departmental regulatory legal acts affecting the activities of the organization; the processes of the development of healthcare priority areas.

Among the indices of the political component of the macroenvironment, the option of "political stability in society" had the highest parametric index. Political stability ensures that patients can be confident about the costs of medical care and are ready to go to a private paid clinic not only for emergency or specialized care, but also for preventive measures. The possibility of expanding the list of services for prevention of diseases gives the clinic an advantage in the use of resources of the organization, as these services do not require such a number of expensive medical equipment and highly qualified personnel as high-tech surgeries and, at the same time, generate significant revenue at the expense of the regularity of the clinic visits.

CONCLUSIONS

As the result of the study of the marketing macroenvironment, the opportunities and threats for the development of a multidisciplinary private clinic and strengthening the position in the market of the medical services provided by it were identified. The data obtained can be used for decision making in the optimization process of managing the clinic and increasing competitive advantages in the market. A systematic analysis of the marketing macroenvironment will enable privately owned medical organizations to respond quickly to market fluctuations, the changes in consumer preferences, adjust, diversify and update the list of medical services that will

allow avoiding the consequences of a mass outflow of consumers and making existing patients loyal to the company.

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