Total Quality Management and performance in substance abuse treatment centers
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Objective. To examine the relationship of organizational characteristics of substance abuse treatment centers with their use of quality management practices (total quality management [TQM]) and the contribution of TQM use to a center’s provision of comprehensive care and to use of evidence-based treatment practices.

Data Sources. Data were collected from a national sample of over 700 private and public substance abuse treatment centers in the National Treatment Center Study.

Study Design. The design was a cross-sectional field study. The key variables were three TQM practices, the provision of comprehensive treatment services, and the implementation of evidence-based treatment practices. Numerous organizational characteristics were controlled.

Data Collection. The data were obtained through interviews with administrative directors and clinical directors of the treatment centers in 2002–2004.

Principal Findings. In multivariate models, TQM practices were positively related to provision of comprehensive care and use of evidence-based practices. A limited set of organizational characteristics predicted the use of TQM practices.

Conclusions. Substance abuse treatment centers’ implementation of TQM processes may be positively related to the quality and cost-effectiveness of care provided.

Key Words. Quality management, substance abuse treatment, behavioral health services