



Optometry Australia's position on the use of Key Performance Indicators to assess individual, employed optometrists

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Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are tools used to measure how effectively individuals or organisations achieve strategic goals and business objectives. KPIs can be quantitative or qualitative and are commonly used across healthcare settings and various industries to evaluate professional performance.

KPIs not only measure performance but can also shape it, particularly when linked to professional advancement or reward. In optometry, KPIs are often used to assess and manage performance of employee optometrists.

When used appropriately, KPIs for employees can:

- support the achievement of business goals and overall organisational performance
- provide employees with clarity on their role's objectives and strategic priorities
- help identify individual strengths and areas for development.

However, inappropriate use of KPIs can incentivise practices that are not in the best interests of patients, such as over-servicing or other unethical clinical behaviours.

Use of KPIs in optometry practice

The use of KPIs in optometry practice must be carefully considered and managed. Both practitioners and employers have ethical and legal responsibilities in this area. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) Shared Code of Conduct (Code) emphasises that registered optometrists must prioritise patient care in their clinical practice. Good practice requires the optometrist to:

"provide treatment options that are based on the best available information and are not influenced by financial gain or incentives" and

"investigate and treat patients based on clinical need and the effectiveness of the proposed investigations or treatment, and not provide unnecessary services or encourage the indiscriminate or unnecessary use of health services."

The Code also states:

"if you employ other registered health practitioners, do not set performance targets, quotas or engage in business practices that are inconsistent with this code, and/or may compromise patient safety."

Optometrists must comply with the standards of professional conduct set out in the Code. While the Code applies specifically to registered practitioners, under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, "directing or inciting unprofessional conduct or professional misconduct" is an offence, with penalties for both individuals and organisations.

Recommendations

Optometry Australia recommends that both optometrists and their employers carefully consider the KPIs used to assess individual and organisational performance, ensuring they align with the Code and relevant laws.

KPIs that incentivise optometrists to breach the Code or relevant laws, whether directly or indirectly, should not be used.

Further support for members

Website:

<https://www.optometry.org.au/practice-professional-support/career-employment/contract-advice/kpi/>

Optometry Advisor Help Desk:

<https://www.optometry.org.au/practice-professional-support/optometry-advisor-help-desk/>

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