



Communication and Marketing Department
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso
Kommunikasie en Bemerkingsdepatement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

www.uct.ac.za

08 June 2012

UCT PhD sets to improve healthcare delivery

Despite South Africa having one of the highest expenditures as a percentage of GDP on healthcare, it has a number of very concerning outcomes. Dr Zameer Brey's PhD thesis titled: *Towards building a theory of Lean Implementation in Healthcare*, shows how effectively implemented lean thinking can contribute to improved quality, responsiveness, flexibility and efficiency of service delivery whilst improving staff morale.

Dr Brey said: "A deep understanding of the health care system, coupled with strong training and expertise in management, can yield positive results in the system and I am confident that Lean will be part of a national plan to improve quality of healthcare in South Africa. I am very optimistic about transformation in the healthcare sector of our country."

The Lean model is based on the Toyota Manufacturing System; it has largely been applied to the manufacturing industry and only recently was transferred to healthcare processes. Brey believes that Lean is one of the management systems that can be used to bridge the divide between massive spending and poor outcomes. In healthcare processes the focus is on improving patients' experiences, reducing waste and decreasing staff frustration.

For his thesis, Dr Brey undertook five lean projects at a large tertiary hospital in South Africa and found the results encouraging. For instance, the waiting average time in an outpatient pharmacy was reduced from four hours to 55 minutes in just four months, with no additional resources. Staff members still believed 55 minutes was still too long, and there were days when a 25-minute waiting period was recorded – almost competing with the private sector. This speaks to a direct improvement in patient quality of care and satisfaction.

Most recently, a National Department of Health project involving 54 projects at 18 hospitals around the country involved a larger scale Lean implementation.

"Those results show certainly that the answer is not only more resources, but is better management of resources too. It will take some doing though," Brey said. "It requires middle management support; a supportive environment for change; employee recognition for improvements and empowering employees with the tools for change."

Dr Brey holds an MBChB and MBA from UCT. He is currently the Chief Operations Officer of the South African TB Initiative, an established world leader in vaccine research and development. Dr Zameer Brey will add another string to his bow when he graduates with a PhD in health systems from the UCT's Graduate School of Business at the graduation ceremony at 10h00 on 8 June 2012.

ENDS

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

Mologadi Makwela

Tel: (021) 650 5427 Fax (021) 650 5628

Cell: 078 258 3965

E-mail: loqa.makwela@uct.ac.za

Follow us on Twitter: @UCT_news

University of Cape Town

Rondebosch