

AA.43. The following appeared in an article in the health section of a newspaper.

“There is a common misconception that university hospitals are better than community or private hospitals. This notion is unfounded, however: the university hospitals in our region employ 15 percent fewer doctors, have a 20 percent lower success rate in treating patients, make far less overall profit, and pay their medical staff considerably less than do private hospitals. Furthermore, many doctors at university hospitals typically divide their time among teaching, conducting research, and treating patients. From this it seems clear that the quality of care at university hospitals is lower than that at other kinds of hospitals.”

At first glance, the author's argument appears to be somewhat appealing, but a close examination will reveal how groundless it is. The author of this article concludes that the quality of care at the university hospitals is lower than that of the other hospitals. To support his conclusion, he states that the university hospitals in his region have several disadvantage factors mentioned above. However, I do not think the argument is logically convincing because some of the evidences on which its conclusion relies are highly untenable. Here are some reasons why. First of all, the author makes a hasty generalization. He tries to make the specific case a general fact without offering any representative evidence. To elaborate, the university hospital in the region is not representative of all university hospitals. Moreover, no further information is offered to support the generalization. Thus, the evidence in the article is not conclusive because only one example is rarely sufficient to establish a general conclusion. In addition, the writer claims that many doctors at university hospitals typically divide their time among teaching, conducting research, and treating patients. However, this fact does not necessarily represent the lower quality. The doctors in university hospitals may advance their medical skills or expertise by doing a research. Moreover, people with a critical disease may be attracted to the university hospitals because doctors there are more experienced in helping those people. This reason may explain the lower successful rate. Hence, without further investigation, it is too arbitrary to say that the division of the time will result in the lower quality. Finally, the writer states that, compared with private hospitals, the university hospitals have fewer doctors, lower success rate in treating patients, and less overall profit, as well as paying less to their medical staff. However, it is not clear why those factors should be in principle to evaluate the overall quality. To assess the quality, there must be other aspects that should be taken into consideration. For example, advanced instruments, better equipments, and higher education backgrounds of a doctor are all very important to assess the quality. Therefore, the statement is not sufficient to reach the conclusion without the sound consideration. In conclusion, the reasons employed by the author are neither persuasive nor convincing. The argument lacks credibility because the evidences and the reasons cited in the analysis do not lend strong support to what the author claims. Therefore, in order to make the argument more effective, the author would have to resolve the flaws mentioned above and provide more reasonable explanations.