‘General Care’ is a state-owned hospital in the capital of the Republic of Angelistan. The hospital has a certain level of autonomy, but works with a budget through a service level agreement with the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health also has two seats on the Board of the hospital.

General Care has been struggling hard to attract specialist doctors to its hospital. These specialists can earn more money in a private hospital or abroad. However, the specialists who joined General Care since last year are allowed to have a small private practice besides their hospital work. They are not allowed to work for another hospital.

In order to be able to compete with private hospitals, the Board of General Care recently decided to apply for the JCI accreditation. This decision to go for a quality label was widely published by the government last month. Last year a big scandal occurred, when scissors were ‘forgotten’ inside the body of a patient after a surgery.

The limited government budget does not allow General Care to make huge investments. The hospital would like to purchase an additional MRI, as currently patients have to wait up to six months for an MRI scan.

Most treatments and surgeries are covered by the state social security system. However, certain treatments are considered by the Ministry of Health as luxury treatments and are not covered by social security. Only a very limited number of patients have a private insurance. According to the service level agreement, General Care does not have the right to refuse patients.

Normal hospital rooms are for two or four patients. When a patient insists on having a single, private room, the doctors have the right to ask for a higher fee. The extra cost for a private room is not covered by the social security. Patients are also expected to use lockers for their personal belongings. Valuables sometimes disappear and people are very fast to point a finger towards the hospital staff.

The doctors are very often fighting with the hospital management. The doctors claim that management gives too much priority to bureaucratic measures rather than the health of the patients.

General Care has been quite often in the press. Given this public exposure, internal audit decided to incorporate some processes and challenges in its 2017 internal audit plan.