

Review Article

Health and Hospital Management Education in India

Kavya Sharma¹, Sanjay Zodpey²

¹Manager Academic programmes and Adjunct Lecturer, ²Director Public Health Education
Public Health Foundation of India, New Delhi

Correspondence to Dr. Kavya Sharma Email: kavya.sharma@phfi.org

Public health has been of national and international concern as in the process of assuring the health standards of any nation, it involves mobilizing and engaging local, state, national and international resources. Since the health problems and issues vary from country to country, the health policies and reforms addressing these should also be customized. To effectively implement and practice these developments, it is necessary to scientifically derive the lessons learnt and relate them to adequately trained and adroit health workforce. Winslow in his definition of Public Health stated, "Public Health is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health and efficiency through organized community efforts for the sanitation of environment, the control of community infections, the education of individuals in principles of hygiene, the organization of medical and nursing services for the early diagnosis and preventive treatment of disease and the development of social machinery which will ensure to every individual in the community a standard of living adequate for maintenance of health, so organizing these benefits as to enable every citizen to realize his birth right of health and longevity⁽¹⁾. To effectively comply with the multidisciplinary dimensions reflected in Winslow's definition, it is necessary to explore the different domains of public health and provide sufficient capacity building initiatives to work upon the existing situations related to each of these domains. Public health education and competencies at various levels needed to translate evidence into policies, and to design, implement and evaluate programs⁽²⁾. The reach of public health has now burgeoned from studying infectious and tropical diseases to understanding the health systems and workforce at large.

The need of an ardent workforce equipped with the appropriate qualifications and professional trainings is necessary for

strengthening the public health architecture of any country. Most low- to middle-income countries (LMIC) including India have to cope with a wide range of health problems that interfere with their future economic development⁽³⁾. This entails the requirement of formal training and courses in public health addressing specific issues and areas; to help build the capacity of individual professionals and the health systems of the countries at large. Public health education broadly covers the multidisciplinary domains of biostatistics, epidemiology, social and behavioral sciences, environmental and occupational health and health management and administration. Looking at the global health scenario and the emphasis laid upon achieving the Millennium Development Goals, public health education covering these five domains is the main forte and need of the hour.

Traditionally public health education in India is catered through medical colleges and is open for medical graduates only. However, a predominant medical model of public health education is inadequate to answer a public health concern of a large magnitude. Public health professionals with medical background alone cannot address the severe crunch of public health personnel in the country. There is a growing recognition that public health is a multi-disciplinary field. This is because public health activities are a product of teamwork and involve an extensive and continual engagement between the community and the health team. Good health is dependent upon a much wider range of determinants that encompass economics, equity, education, empowerment, social justice and governance. Addressing these multiple dimensions is not possible for any one single profession and would need team work in policy formulation, administration and service delivery to the beneficiaries. In order to address these issues currently there is a conscious shift in public health education in

India with a few institutions (with medical and non-medical background) initiating public health programs for both medical and non-medical graduates. Some of them offer core public health programs (Masters in Public Health - MPH) and some of them offer specialized courses in health management and administration^(4,5).

The healthcare industry in India is rapidly expanding with endeavors of the various public and private stakeholders. There has been multi-million dollars of investments by various national and international donor agencies, pharmaceutical sector, central and state governments and the developmental partners. It is projected to grow 23% per annum to touch US \$77 billion by 2012 from the current estimated size of US \$35 billion, according to Yes Bank and an industry body report published in November 2009⁽⁶⁾. In order to respond to this growth and effectively and efficiently utilize the available resources and achieve realistic targets, it requires trained professionals in the areas of public health management and hospital administration. The ability of healthcare systems to provide safe, high quality, effective and patient centered services depends on sufficient, well-motivated, and appropriately skilled personnel operating within service delivery models that optimize their performance^(7,8). However, the country faces a dearth of adequately trained workforce in these domains to be suitably located at the various levels of the health care deliveries. The wide gap between supply and demand for trained healthcare managers/administrators to work for hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, health insurance and third-party administration, and other healthcare provider organizations needs attention^(4,5). Thus, understanding the existing health sector growth and complying with the increasing need of trained health care management professionals, it is important to understand the existing situation of health and hospital management education in the country.

Presently, several institutions in India are offering a joint program comprising both the domains - health and hospital management. Some of them offer these programs as a general program with a focus on both the domains and some of them offer either hospital or health management stream as

specialization in the second year. Moreover, there are many institutions in the country which offer long term capacity building programs in health and hospital management separately either as post-graduate diploma or master's degree. The following sections of the manuscript discuss these initiatives separately for health and hospital management education in India.

Health management is a very important and critical domain of public health education. A total of fifty-one institutions are identified across India, which offer such courses. Every year, around 2500 qualified professionals would be available to work in the field of Health Management/Administration based on the yearly intake capacity of these institutions. One of the important initiatives in this regard is undertaken by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India under the National Rural Health Mission to train in service medical professionals in public health management through the network of eight premier public health institutions in India (Indian Institutes of Public Health at Gandhinagar, Hyderabad, Delhi and Bhubaneswar under the umbrella of Public Health Foundation of India, New Delhi, National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi, All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Kolkata, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Sewagram, and Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical and Research, Pondicherry) in order to strengthen the management capacity of these professionals. The PG Diploma in Public Health Management is a Government of India flagship program which is a one year, fully residential program with a strong component of field-based project work mainly focusing upon the applications of management principles and tools in the field of health sector. Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) group of institutions has a mandate to build capacity in managerial cadre, and consist of three premier health management research Institutes in India. These institutes contribute towards management research, education, training and development programs in the health sector through institutes located in Jaipur, New Delhi and Bangalore. A new institute has been planned in Kolkata and

would be operational in the coming academic session. Other Government institutes which offer similar programs are All India Institute of Local Self Government-Mumbai, Institute of Management Studies, Devi Ahilya Vishwa Vidyalaya-Madhya Pradesh, Christian Medical College-Vellore, Faculty of Management Studies-University of Delhi, Jamia Hamdard University-New Delhi and School of Health Sciences-IGNOU New Delhi. Many private institutes and societies also provide related courses in health management and have been contributing to the growing demand of the health professional in the desired field. This list includes institutes like Symbiosis Institute of Health Sciences-Pune, Tata Institute of Social Sciences-Mumbai, Birla Institute of Science and Technology-Pilani and Manipal Academy of Higher Education-Manipal. The programs offered by most of the institutes are usually a 1-2 year regular Post Graduate Diploma in Health Management or a Master's Degree. Some institutes are offering an MBA with specialization in Healthcare Management, and also a Master's in Health Administration, acronym as MHA. The eligibility criteria for these courses vary from institute to institute, with a minimum requirement being a recognized Bachelor's degree in any stream, preferably medical or paramedical, life-sciences background. MBBS, BDS, AYUSH or physiotherapy, allied health science and pharmacy graduates are given preference over others. Although the aforementioned institutions annually produce around 2000 qualified professional to work in the domain of health management the demand assessment has projected that 20,000 professionals would be required based upon the country's present needs, which reflects the dearth in their workforce capacity⁽⁴⁾.

Hospitals are intricate organizations that require multi-sectoral coordination and strong managerial supports. Hospital management is a domain which offers expertise to the participants in providing leadership for the coordination activities across the hospital setup. The medical colleges and hospitals have an exclusive hospital administration department that is responsible for the various operational activities run within the hospitals. These are accountable for data handling, medical records section, issuance of

the birth and the death certificates, kitchen and laundry services, medical gases, biomedical engineering etc, which contribute as an equally vital factor in smooth functioning of the hospitals. There are various institutions in India that offer short and long term courses in this field. Fifty-one institutions have been identified which offer such courses, which range from MD in Hospital Administration for medical graduates, full time master's program in management to post graduate diplomas, distance learning programs, certificate programs, etc. Around 2526 qualified professionals in the field of hospital management and administration are available every year. This is a cumulative count of seats available in the regular programs offered by these institutes, and also includes three distance learning programs. Many such programs are also offered through various universities via distance learning mode. Several institutes offer the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree in Hospital Administration for medical graduates. Eleven MD (Hospital Administration) are produced every year across the medical colleges in India, while two prime institutes offer the similar program as Masters in Hospital Administration, i.e. All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi and PGIMER (Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research), Chandigarh. There are institutes like the Indian Institute of Health Management Research Society, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Symbiosis Institute of Health Sciences etc, which encourage the non-medical background students to pursue a related course in hospital management, and thus contribute significantly in building up on this workforce. The programs are usually of the span of 1-2 years duration. Some institutes also offer the Master's in Hospital Administration (MHA) or Master's in Hospital Management (MHM) courses. Around 447 MHAs and 200 MHMs are produced annually. Some institutes offer postgraduate diplomas for 1-2 years which form a major portion of the qualified graduates in this field. Core MBA with specialization in hospital management is also available with some institutes to provide the industry edge. Around 540 MBAs and 858 regular Postgraduate Diploma holders in this stream graduate every year. The eligibility criteria range course structure and curriculum of these

program. graduate every year. The eligibility criteria range from plain graduates in the science stream to medical professionals, having an MBBS or an allied health degree. Although the total annual output of these institutions is 2500 qualified professionals which are available to work in the domain of hospital management / administration the need is estimated to be of 22,000 professionals based upon the country's present status, which reflects the dearth in their workforce capacity⁽⁵⁾.

Issues like accreditation and affiliation of these programs which offer health and hospital management education are challenging questions, since there is no set council to answer to the comprehensive needs of these courses. Medical Council of India accredits courses which are offered to the medical graduates only. Rest of the programs have a usual university status granted by the UGC or affiliations by the AICTE. With the formation of a recognized and registered council (National Council for Human Resource in Health), there are hopes for better regulation and uniformity.

References:

1. Winslow CEA. Public health at the crossroads. *Am J Public Health* 1926; 16: 1075-1085.
2. Travis P, Bennett S, Haines A, Pang T, Bhutta Z, Hyder AA, et al. Overcoming health-systems constraints to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. *Lancet*. 2004; 364: 900–6.
3. Heller RF, Chongsuvivatwong V, Hailegeorgios S, Dada J, Torun P, Madhok R and Sanders J (on behalf of the People's Open Access Education Initiative). Capacity-building for public health: <http://peoples-uni.org>. *Bulletin of WHO* 2007; 85: 930-934.
4. Sharma Kavya, Zodpey Sanjay. Need and opportunities for health management education in India. *Indian Journal of Public Health* 2010; 54: 84-91.
5. Sharma Kavya, Zodpey SP. Demand and supply analysis of human resource capacity in hospital management in India. Accepted for publication in *Journal of Health Management*, September 2010.
6. Result of secondary data research by India Brand Equity Foundation. Available from: http://www.ibef.org/industry/health_care.aspx. [last cited on 2010 Aug 1].
7. Dussault G, Dubois C-A. Human resources for health policies: a critical component in health policies. *Hum Resour Health* 2003; 1: 1.
8. ACHDHR. A framework for collaborative Pan-Canadian health human resources planning. Ottawa: Health Canada Advisory Committee on Health Delivery and Human Resources, HHR Planning Subcommittee; 2007.