

## Health Managers Education in Kazakhstan: demographics and assessment

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**Abstract:** Considerable changes in Healthcare system of Kazakhstan leads to improving of managerial knowledge and skills of top managers of medical facilities. Department of Healthcare Policy and Management, Kazakh National Medical University one of the educational centres for providing that knowledge to medical chiefs. The study included 122 chief doctors of hospitals, 63 chief doctors of outpatient clinics and 60 chief nurses of hospitals. There is a clear male dominance among chief doctors while nursing is a female-dominated occupation. Mean age of health care managers is over 45 years. Five-days courses showed improvement of knowledge which were confirmed by pre- and post-tests.

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### Introduction:

Efficiency of healthcare systems and quality of health services depend upon on human resources (number of medical professionals, their professionalism and motivation)[1]. Therefore, the development of the effective human resource policy is very important issue. In many countries heads of clinics are professional administrators. Human resource policy of the developed countries directed towards introduction of the effective methods of management of available resources, empowerment of the healthcare organisations managers, enhancement of the functions of the nursing personnel, increase of the requirements to the professionalism of the human resources. [2,3].

Until recently, the absence of managerial knowledge and skills were not considered as a priority task of the healthcare system of the Republic of Kazakhstan. [4]. Strictly regulated post-Soviet system proposed limited authorities for the leaders regarding resource usage and did not require possession of the broad spectrum of managerial abilities and skills. However, with the introduction of market relation into healthcare system managers became more independent in managerial decision making and responsible for the goals achievements in a competitive environment.

As a consequence, at all management levels there is a lack of qualified managers, competent in a strategic planning, operational management, innovation management and management of health services quality. Thereupon training of the professional managers becomes very important under circumstances of healthcare system reforming and development. It should be noted that big requirements are made not only to chief doctors, but to the heads of nursing

services of healthcare organisations. The organisation of high-quality nursing help, introduction of the new organisational forms of nursing activity into clinical practice, development of preventative direction in nurse personnel's work with population depends in particular on their training and professional competence [5-10].

### Material and Methods:

To study socio-demographic characteristics of healthcare managers in Kazakhstan, and to assess their knowledge of management. The study included 122 chief doctors of hospitals, 63 chief doctors of policlinics and 60 chief nurses of hospitals, who received 5-day training at workshops on management at the Kazakh National Medical University in 2012. Tests to evaluate knowledge of management were developed by the Ministry of Health of Kazakhstan and included 20 questions for chief doctors, 15 questions for chief doctors of policlinics and 30 questions for chief nurses. The questions included the following topics: strategy and health policy, health legislation and ethics, health service management, people and self management, health economics and financial management and health statistics.

The proportion of correct answers in each group was assessed before and after training and compared using t-tests for paired samples.

**Results:** Altogether, 71.3% of hospital chief doctors and 39.7% of chief doctors of policlinics were men. Mean age of all chief doctors was 49.6 years (95% CI:48.1-51.0). Mean working experience for the

managers was 5.8 years (95% CI:4.6-7.0) for outpatient clinics and 6.8 years (CI:5.6-8.0) for hospitals.

All chief nurses were women with mean age of 47.6 years (95% CI:45.7-49.5).70% of them were married. Only 11.6% of chief nurses had additional education in management (bachelor's degree).

Average total work experience of head nurses was 26,4 years (95% CI: 24,6-28,2), average experience in the current position was – 9,4 years (95% CI: 7,8-11,0). 51.7% of respondents are satisfied with their knowledge and skills in the field of management. There is a statistically significant relationship between work experience in the current position and satisfaction of managerial competencies ( $r_p=0.7$ ,  $p=0,001$ ,  $n=60$ ).

36.7% of chief nurses would like to improve their management skills in leadership, 34% - in human resource management, 22% - in the field of quality management of nursing care and 7.3% in health promotion.

53.3% of chief nurses as forms of continues education prefer Formal accredited Courses, 46.7% of chief nurses prefer Flexible learning opportunities (on workplace).

There is not statistically significant relationship between preferred forms of postgraduate training, age of respondents and general guidelines of experience ( $r_p = 0.02$ ,  $p = 0,8$ ,  $n=60$ ).

At workshops, the proportion of correct answers among chief nurses were 45.4% correct answers before and 53.1% after training ( $p<0.001$ ).

### Conclusions:

There is a clear male dominance among chief doctors in Kazakhstan while nursing is a female-dominated occupation. Mean age of health care managers is over 45 years.

Existing gap between the high percentage of chief nurses with total work experience more than 10 years (98%) and a low percentage of chief nurses with experience in current position more than 10 years (42%) may testifies that for careers nursing supervisor is optimal time step is 10 years. The fact that public sector managers tended to be older than 45 years and yet have < 10 years of experience suggests that hospitals tend to promote their nurses into management positions because of their clinical experience, rather than managerial expertise. Most of health care

managers have only medical education and need training in management. Knowledge of management improves after attending workshops on management.

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