

Professionalisation of the training of healthcare managers: Where are we?

The health workforce is one of the six building blocks of a health system.^[1] The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a new global strategy for human resources for health, which defines four core objectives around evidence-based policies, the alignment of investments in human resources for health with current and future population needs, the capacity of institutions for action, and accountability.^[2] Capacity building remains one of the priorities for the optimisation of human resources. Target 17.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals is dedicated to capacity building, and aims to 'enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular co-operation'.^[2]

However, the vast majority of health-system capacity-building efforts have focused on enhancing medical and public health skills; less attention has been directed at developing healthcare managers, despite their central role in improving the functioning and quality of healthcare systems.^[3]

In South Africa (SA), several initiatives have been undertaken to build capacity among healthcare managers over the last two decades. In 2012, a new Institute for Leadership and Management in Health was launched, and an advisory committee was formed to that effect, as part of the WHO's *Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030*.^[4] Recently, the SA National Department of Health published a notification inviting nominations for the newly

established National Governing Body on Human Resources of Health (incorporating training and development).

Sammut^[5] presents the unique concept of the establishment of an African Institute for Healthcare Management, based on his experiences at Strathmore Business School and elsewhere. Naidoo *et al.*^[6] share their experiences of training public-sector hospital managers through a formal Master's programme.

Hopefully, these capacity-building initiatives in SA and elsewhere will help us to professionalise the training of health managers, and assist in the effective and efficient implementation of National Health Insurance.

Deb Basu

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