Determining Standards and Estimating the Required Human Resources of Iranian Hospitals: An Overview in the Last Decade

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

An estimation of the number and types of the needed hospital human resources has always been one of the concerns of policy makers, managers, and researchers. In order to this estimate at a global level, researchers designed and applied various methods and models suitable for a particular time and type of structure (1). In Iran, as well, examining the hospital workers has also attracted the attention of policy makers and researchers. In recent years, numerous dissertations, articles, and reports have been published in this field. However, in addition to the complexity and importance of setting standards for hospital workers, we can find out that researchers and policymakers are confused about the frameworks of estimating the hospitals staffing requirements.

One of the problems attached to such studies is the ambiguity in the methods of using for estimation health workers. For example, some articles do not mention the method of the study referred only to the proposed template, however, no template was found in the full text of these articles (2-4). A further example is the researchers' claims about the comparisons with the standards of Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Educations (MoHME), however, we did not find a correct references (2-5). Moreover, there are some studies in the field that have been conducted using methods such as time and workload, as well as WISN method in a department of a hospital and in a number of hospitals (6-8). Meanwhile, a study has estimated nursing personnel without even mentioning references and the use of the WHO standards (9).

In addition to the mentioned studies, a comprehensive report on the health workers' requirements of hospitals under the supervision of MoHME (about 70% of hospitals) has been prepared and the results have been sent out to affiliated units. This report has been carried out using combined methods during 2009 to 2016 (10).

Considering the review of the mentioned researches, significant points are to be discussed. One of such points is that the separation of the headquarters and executive departments with

researchers is evident. Therefore, more communication will move towards synergy and the application of research. Furthermore, the norms and estimation provided by MoHME and all studies are related to governmental hospitals and no information is available with respect to non-governmental hospitals. In addition, researches have only estimated one occupational group, which was the needed nursing staff in hospitals.

In general, health workers are at the heart of the system, which needs being paid a special attention (1). The indicators for estimating health workers are dynamic and certainly, with the change of demand periodic revisions should be made. However, what is important to accuracy in the validity of using methods for conducting scientific researches, create a common language, unity of procedure to improve the relationship between headquarters and executive units with researchers, prevent duplications and waste of energy. Moreover, applied researches should be conducted to take into account the study gaps and the needs of policy makers as well.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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