



The Presentation of Proper Indicators for Evaluation of WHO Collaboration Centres' Activities in Iran

*S Motevallizadeh Ardakani¹, *SH Zakiani²*

- 1. Substance Abuse and Dependence Research Center, University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences, Tehran, Iran*
- 2. Dept. of Development and Coordination Medical Informatics, Undersecretary for Research and Technology, Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Tehran, Iran*

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Abstract

Background: There are thirteen WHO collaborating centres in Iran which no mechanism or model has ever been foreseen for the evaluation of them. This original research is innovative in Iran, which has been offered by the researcher through a joint research project with WHO.

Methods: The aforesaid model has been approved by the International Relation Department of Ministry of Health & education. This was done to develop model and indicators for evaluation of WHOCC's activities in Iran, which includes online survey, reports, literature reviews and website searches, published literature in another country, documents in Undersecretary for Research and Technology of Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

Results: We studied collaboration centres in other countries and then compared these indicators together and presented a proper indicators for evaluation of WHOCC' activities in Iran.

Conclusion: Evaluation of WHOCC's activities could be used as a mean for implementing policies and promoting knowledge production. Evaluation of WHOCC' activities is country's requirements.

Keywords: WHO collaboration centres, Evaluation indicators, Activities, Iran

Introduction

Following the stated mission of the World Health Organization (WHO) as, "The WHO collaborating centres are institutions such as research institutes, parts of universities or academies, which are designated by the Director-General to carry out activities in support of the Organization's programmes. Currently there are over 800 WHO collaborating centres in over 80 Member States working with WHO on areas such as nursing, occupational health, communicable diseases, nutrition, mental health, chronic diseases and health technologies. A WHO collaborating centre is an institution designated by the Director-General of WHO to form part of an inter-institutional collaborative network set up by WHO in support of

its programme at the country, intercountry, regional, interregional and global level . A WHO collaborating centre must also participate in the strengthening of country resources, in terms of information, services, research and training, in support of national health development" (1). The main role of the WHO CCs is to provide strategic support to the Organization to meet two main needs:

- Implementing WHO's mandated work and programme objectives
- Developing and strengthening institutional capacity in countries and regions.

Evaluation is defined by Lee Miyong and Lee Seunghee as, "often is used to characterize and appraise subjects of interest in a wide range of human enterprises, including the arts, criminal justice, foundations and non-profit organizations, government, health care, and other human services" (2).

Basing on the situational analysis done, there are currently 12 WHO Collaborating Centres in the country with most of them located in the capital city of Tehran and unfortunately, no countrywide distribution of the centres can be observed despite the fact that there are also many research centres of excellence actively performing their research works outside Tehran.

Although, no mechanism or model has ever been foreseen for the evaluation of them. So far, there has been any checklist for assessment centres in Iran. For the first time, we decided to provide a checklist of evaluation for WHO Collaboration Centres in Iran and present for WHO. The present article has been offered by the researcher through a joint research project with WHO.

Up to the present time, there is no effective linkage between this centres and or any knowledge network operating among the centres. Therefore, the activities of these centres are not recorded and referred to at the National level.

Iranian International Relation Department of Ministry of Health& education has implemented a project aimed at providing a better opportunity for the current centres as well as any potential centres to be designated as WHO Collaborating Centres in the future and host an environment for more effective application of the centre's knowledge and experiences in promoting applied health research in the country and using the acquired knowledge in health policy decisions (3-7).

Materials and Methods

This was an applied-sectional study. The study population was as follows:

1. Otolaryngology, Head & Neck Research Centre
2. School of Dentistry, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (SBMU)

3. Pasteur Institute of Iran
4. Reference Laboratories of Iran, Ministry of Health and Medical Education
5. Shaheed Beheshti University of Medical Sciences & Health Services
6. Isfahan Cardiovascular Research Centre
7. National Research Institute of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (NRITLD)
8. Shaheed Beheshti University of Medical Sciences & Health Services
9. Digestive Diseases Research Centre
10. National Nutrition and Food Technology Research Institute, Ministry of Health and Medical Education
11. Tehran University of Medical Sciences
12. Shahid Beheshti Medical University

In this method the following areas were reviewed articles, library resources, WHOCC's websites and their research outputs. Then we reviewed evaluation results and reports from the other countries, for example India, Canada, England, African Evaluation Association (Niger) and USA (Georgia, Kansas UN and United Way Report).

Then we reviewed WHO website. After that, we developed indicators for evaluation, confirmed them with experts of Iranian Undersecretary for Research and Technology, Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

In this part, we present indicators for evaluation of WHOCC" activities as follows:

1. Basic information
2. Evaluation
 - a. Centre information
 - i. Active Website
 - ii. Departments
 - iii. Faculty
 - iv. Laboratory
 - v. Library
 - vi. Total Staff
 - b. Knowledge production
 - i. Books
 - ii. Journals
 - iii. Thesis
 - iv. Proposals
 - v. Articles
 - vi. Innovation
 - c. Education

- i. National Symposium
 - ii. International Symposium
 - iii. Workshops
 - iv. Training course
 - v. Earn superior degree in RAZI Symposium
 - vi. Earn superior degree in KHARAZMI Symposium
- d. Human resources
- i. Degree
 - ii. Engagement position
 1. Full time
 2. Part time
- e. Centre Articles

Results

WHOCC in Iran has not been evaluated and this process is necessary. In this part, we present outcomes from the evaluation of WHOCC' activities based on our provided criteria:

- To direct and guide accredited centres towards improving management process (indicators No 1-2a)
- To improve accountability and clarity of the centres (all of indicators)
- Promotion of the centres' managers within the indicators of standards and results gained from performance evaluation(indicator No 2c)
- To present evaluation results (with observance of available facilities and resources) to the representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Iran for the purpose of disseminating information regarding the centres' performances [strengths and weaknesses] (all of indicators).
- To inform stakeholders about the performance status of the centres and as a result, increase reliance on their integrity (indicators No 2ai, b, c, e).
- To organize the centres' activities and interventions through feedbacks of the evaluation results (all of indicators).
- To reform policies, goals, functions and programs and to assess their existing philoso-

phies by using the results obtained from the performance evaluation and establish a more realistic one (all of indicators).

- To encourage those centres who possess superior performances to use various appropriate mechanisms (all of indicators).
- Future programs; to select an exemplary centre based from the results of the performance evaluation. The centre that ranks the highest will be honored with an award at the annual Razi Festival (all of indicators).
- To warn accredited centres about their unsatisfactory and unworthy performances (all of indicators).
- To continue the centres' activities or cancellation of future collaboration with WHO (all of indicators).

Our results show that Iranian Ministry of Health & Medical Education only focused on acceptance of research centres without their evaluation. However, that was very limited. For example, they have not seen website, number of departments, faculty, library and other elements. It has been shown that other countries focused on outcomes of centres. Our indicators focused on human, educational and research information of centre for example centre staff, centre articles, and patent. Our research suggests that evaluation of WHOCC's activities is important to promote research centres. We propose that evaluation of centres are conducted every year and results of their evaluation be taken into the macro-management decision for example budgeting, policy, human resource management, recruitment, participating in external foreign festivals, reporting for WHO, etc.

Discussion

Specific objectives of this study were as follows:

- Present a Solution of Administrative matters in Iranian's International Relation Department of Ministry of Health& education.

- Preparation of evaluation questions and indicators
- Present an evaluation mechanism, reasons & features of WHOCC' evaluation.
- To create the possibility of classifying Iranian's WHOCC'.

In the study conducted by **Indian** collaboration centres' evaluation checklist focused on 3 axes:

- Scientific and Technical Standing
- Institution's Stability
- Institution's Potential Collaboration with WHO (8).

In another study conducted by International development research centres in **Canada**, presents a document about evaluation of research centres which points evaluation is 3 purposes: The performance of centres can be conceived as falling within three broad areas: performance in activities that support the mission (effectiveness), performance in relation to the resources available (efficiency), and performance in relation to long term viability or sustainability (ongoing relevance) (9).

North Georgia Regional Development Centre (NGRDC) Administrative Committee presents a report of Performance Evaluation of NGRDC Activities. The Committee's purposes were to examine and assess the conduct of program initiatives, administrative procedures, and other NGRDC affairs in accordance with performance expectations; to make conclusions relative to the achievement of expectations and recommend actions to maintain or enhance future performance; and to comply with statutory requirements for an annual performance evaluation.

The performance standards are organized under two components:

- Ø Governance and Administration
 - A. Organizational Structure
 - B. Board Operations
 - C. Financial Administration
 - D. Staff Operations
- Ø Programs
 - A. NGRDC Mission Statement
 - B. Organization

C. Program Policy Development and Maintenance (10).

African Evaluation Association (Niger) presents a report in 2007 and explains indicators for evaluation of education in African organization and centres. In the schematic representation of their indicators shown below, performance is defined in terms of effectiveness (mission fulfilment), efficiency (optimal use of resources), ongoing relevance (the extent to which the organization adapts to changing conditions in its environment), and financial viability (Fig.1). The indicators imply that certain contextual forces drive performance: the capacities of an organization and centre, forces in its external environment, and the internal motivation of the organization and centre (11).



Fig. 1: African Evaluation Association (Niger) - Organizational Assessment (OA) framework

University of Kansas presents a Logic Model for evaluation of WHO Collaborating Centre that its mission is: To promote community health and development through capacity building, participatory research, and co-learning. In that report, they have pointed to elements, which other countries pointed them and the elements that they explained were:

- Funding for the work on website for stakeholders
- E books
- People communication
- Free online resources to enhancing capacity, efficiency and performance (12).

The United Way of America provides an excellent overview of outcomes-based evaluation, including introduction to outcomes measurement, a program outcome model, why to measure outcomes, use of program outcome findings by agencies, eight steps to success for measuring outcomes, examples of outcomes and outcome indicators for various programs and the resources needed for measuring outcomes.

The general steps to accomplish an outcomes-based evaluation include to:

- Identify the major outcomes
- Choose the outcomes
- For each outcome, specify what observable measures, or indicators, will suggest
- Specify a "target" goal of clients
- Identify what information is needed to show these indicators
- Decide how can that information be efficiently and realistically gathered
- Analyze and report the findings (13).

In addition, Juma Hemed Lungo (2003) argues that, "Good health management is a requisite for increase of the health services efficiency and efficacy of health services" (7).

WHO presents an evaluation checklist for collaboration centres that focused on 8 criteria that seem too limited?

- Scientific and technical standing of the institution concerned at the national and international levels (14).
- Place the institution occupies in the country's health, scientific or educational structures
- Quality of its scientific and technical leadership, and the number and qualifications of its staff (15).
- Institution's prospective stability in terms of personnel, activity and funding

- Working relationship which the institution has developed with other institutions in the country, as well as at the inter country, regional and global levels (16).
- Institution's ability, capacity and readiness to contribute to WHO programme activities, whether in support of country programmes or by participating in international cooperative activities
- Technical and geographical relevance of the institution and its activities to WHO's programme priorities (17).
- Successful completion by the institution of at least two years of collaboration with WHO in carrying out jointly planned activities (18-48).

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues (Including plagiarism, Informed Consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, redundancy, etc.) have been completely observed by the authors.

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