

## Injustice in Access to Health Information: The Difference between Health Professionals and Patients

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The role of information is undeniable in promoting public health (1-3). "Access to health information for all" was the slogan of the World Health Organization in 2004 (4). The proving of this slogan requires access to health information by beneficiaries (health professionals and patients). Access to health information by specialists as partly been achieved, but access to health information for patients and their families is considered low (5-7), which could have adverse effects. Health professionals have quick and easy access to information through libraries and medical information centers, participation in seminars, exchange of scientific information with other professionals, as well as identifying ways to effectively access to health information, but patients and their families do not have access to such facilities and capabilities. Therefore, patients and their families are faced with a phenomenon known as "inequity in access to health information" and the continuation of the injustice leads to health information poverty. Thus, the main question now is what we should do? It seems that the government needs to develop a national policy in the field of health information and it is the most important step. In the next step, the government should expand the concept production via using potentials of different organizations like public media (TV and Radio), health ministry and press and increase the access of patients to health information in the easy language (level of health information between health professionals and patients is different). Among the most important measures to improve the patients' access to health information can be noted as follows:

1. The participation of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education to strengthen health information resources in public libraries;
2. Constructing a specialized health library in different cities;
3. Allocating subsidy to the information health resources and support the publishers of health field;
4. Supporting the authors by government in writing easy to understand and suitable books for patients and their families
5. Providing health-related brochures in easy language;
6. Enriching the website of hospitals and treatment centers for public access to health information;
7. Encouraging health professional departments to develop brochures and information resources efficiently;
8. Encouraging health professionals to write articles in newspapers;
9. Holding special programs on television and radio aiming at increasing health information among public;
10. Using potentials of social media to raise the patients' knowledge
11. Motivating the medical professionals in the production and dissemination of health information;
12. Introducing useful books in the field of health by libraries, health professionals and health websites;
13. Participating of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and other ministries and institutions to increase the health of employees and their families through workshops and training courses.

To disseminate health information among beneficiaries in the health systems, it is important to increase the quality and safety of health care and reduce costs (8). Among beneficiaries (health professionals and patients), patients' access to health information is considered less and this can harm many patients and their families and ultimately leads to injustice in access to health information. To prevent this injustice, national policies in the field of health information at the macro level as well as measures taken by the government and related institutions to facilitate access to useful health information for patients and their families can contribute to health promotion.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

None declared.

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