

Health transformation plan: Goals achievement in Nemazee hospital

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The main purpose of this study was to assess fulfillment of goals about "Health Transformation Plan (HTP) of Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education" from the perspective of managers, which is as one of the most important management challenges in the Health System Reform Plan. These goals included six packages determined by the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education, the fulfillment of each of which one was evaluated separately as sub-goals in the current study. Finally, the rank of each package in comparison to other packages was determined and presented, using means rank test (Friedman test).

Method: This study was conducted using a questionnaire in which comments of the senior and middle managers of Nemazee hospital were collected as the research data. Due to the fact that about one year has passed since the beginning of implementation of HTP and since there were no documented methods or questionnaires, the researcher designed a self-made questionnaire. The basis of designing the questionnaire was the set of guidelines developed for Health System Reform Plan. These guidelines include goals that a hospital should achieve during implementation of Health System Reform Plan. After sharing these goals with senior and middle managers of Nemazee hospital (as the place of research), they were converted to a questionnaire including 20 questions. The questionnaire included the goals that must be achieved in Nemazee hospital of Shiraz during the implementation of the plan. After designing the questionnaire, a preliminary test was taken to assess the reliability.

Results: Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.88) showed a high rate of reliability in the above questionnaire. After the final data collection, the questionnaire was tested in a sample of 100 senior and middle managers; the results showed that about six packages were specified by the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education. The majority of respondents (about 57%) believed that the HTP has greatly achieved its goals, and about 43% of them believed that the success of this plan was average.

Conclusion: In ranking among the six main packages which was considered as sub-goals of this plan, the results showed that the studied packages were ranked respectively as follows: Package number 1, Package number 2, Package number 6, Package number 3, Package number 5 and Package number 4.

Keywords: Health System Reform Plan, Ministry of Health, Hospital, Managers

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Introduction

Human being is perfectionist and attempts to live his life better than before and have a healthier life with more exhilaration. This will be possible when health services are provided with a better quality than before. Although with increased human knowledge, equipment and facilities, achieving the above goals is within the reach of individuals, health systems have to reform their planning systems and service delivery according to the daily and continuous changes of the societies (1).

Health system is founded based on a set of fundamental political, economic, scientific and technical factors of a country, which is called health infrastructure. Study of health infrastructure, or in other words, study of how

material and non-material factors are combined and totally impact each other and then form the structural basis of the health system by communicating with each other, gives us a deeper intuition in analyzing healthcare issues. These factors consist of the historical process of human and material resources, and social, economic and cultural institutions of a society have an important role in foundation of a country's policy making and planning. On the other hand, the role of health as a dynamic process that provides well being of the society is of great importance in social and economic development of the country (2).

Therefore, in order to implement the second phase of targeting subsidies by the eleventh government, "health" was given a special priority and since September 2013, several meetings have been held to determine a list of

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priorities in HTP. The base of determining these priorities was the current status of health system, main demands of the people from this system and upstream documents such as Outlook Document of the Fifth Development Plan and plans of government of wisdom and hope (11th government). In November 2014, the parliament approved implementation of HTP following 15000 people/hours of expert activity and holding professional conferences, and bylaws were issued on 27.4.2014. The implementation of the plan began on 5.5.2014 all over the country in the presence of the president in public hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health. The main purpose of HTP was financial protection of citizens as to health costs, organization of hospital services and improvement of their quality, and equitable access of people to health services. These goals are arranged in seven packages, each one including guidelines and sub-goals. So, according to what was stated previously, HTP could be an effective attempt in improving the health (3).

Today, we live in the world of reforms and continuous changes and also it is the era of discontinuity which had deep impact on organizations. Therefore, it is necessary for an organization to accommodate itself directly or indirectly with the changes to which it is encountered with threats for its perseverance, survival and life. Health System is also not exempted from this rule and without changes, management of this system will not be able to change and reform the organization with what health policy goals require (4).

Thus, since the risk of failure in new projects is high in the early stages of implementation, and HTP is also in its early stages of implementation, due to the cited reasons, the researcher aimed to study the challenges of Health System Reform Plan and achievement of its goals.

Methods

This study is a cross sectional survey conducted on all of managers of different departments of Nemazee hospital (about 100 samples in senior and middle levels). Because the subject of the study was new and there was no appropriate background, a researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect the data. This instrument was designed to assess the achievement of goals in Health Transformation Plan (HTP).

To edit the questionnaire, after reviewing the executive version of HTP guidelines, among macro-goals of these guidelines that had been notified in the form of seven packages, sub-goals related to activities of Nemazee hospital were extracted and shared with hospital managers for assessment. After assessing the viewpoints of managers and accommodation of operational goals with the type of activities in Nemazee hospital (as the place of research), a questionnaire with 20 questions was extracted. Questions included sub-goals stipulated in executive package of Health System Reform Plan, which was measured using Likert rating scale. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, it was distributed among 20 managers to respond. After completing the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha test was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. According to Cronbach's alpha coefficient

(0.88), the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed at a high level.

The above questionnaire included six notified packages and definition of each package is presented in following section:

- The first package: guidelines for the plan of reducing payments of hospitalized patients in public hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education including the following sub-goals:

- Prevention of referring patients to purchase medicines, medical equipment and consumables out of the hospital
- Prevention of referring patients for diagnostic-therapeutic services out of the hospital

And questions number one, two and three in the questionnaire assessed the above points.

- The second package: guidelines for the plan of supporting presence of physicians in underprivileged areas including the following sub-goals:

- Reduction of payments directly by people
- Better organization of the referral system

And questions number four and five in the questionnaire assessed them.

- The third package: guidelines for the plan of the presence of resident doctors in the hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education, including the following sub-goals:

- Providing timely health care services (reducing the visiting time in the public sector)
- round the clock response of teaching - therapeutic hospitals

- Determining the patients' status by specialists in the emergency at the shortest possible time

- Timely visiting of patients, performing surgeries and emergency procedures

- Increasing public satisfaction

And questions number six, seven, eight, nine and ten in the questionnaire assessed them.

- The fourth package: guidelines for improving the quality of visiting services in hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education, including the following sub-goals:

- Increasing motivation of service providers
- Maintaining and increasing the number of full-time members of the University of Medical Sciences
- Standardizing and improving the quality of service delivery for outpatient visits
- Increasing satisfaction of referred patients
- Improving the educational processes

And questions number eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen and seventeen in the questionnaire assessed them.

- The fifth package: guidelines for improving hoteling quality in hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education including the following sub-goals:

- Improving the quality of hoteling services in all of the hospitals and obtaining the minimal standard rating (three stars)

- Meeting the expectations of patients with hoteling services

And questions number eighteen and nineteen in the

questionnaire assessed them.

- The sixth package: guidelines for the plan of protection of refractory, specific and poor patients, including the following sub-goals:

- Coverage of franchise and costs of non-insurance services, such as diagnostic, therapeutic and pharmaceutical measures, consumables for outpatient cases and hospitalization of poor patients with specific and non-specific diseases (5).

And the question number twenty in the questionnaire assessed them.

Results

* assessing availability of goals in package 1:

Package 1 included services for reducing payments of hospitalized patients in public hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education. This package, according to the special objectives that were announced in the guidelines for Health System Reform Plan, was assessed using three questions in the questionnaire. The following results were obtained regarding the viewpoints of respondents about achievement of goals.

Table 1. Description of achievement of goals in package 1 based on the respondents' views

	Frequency	Percent
Medium	8	8.1
High	91	91.9
Total	99	100

According to the obtained data, the majority of respondents believed that the goals of HTP in package 1 (which was described above) had been greatly achieved.

* assessing availability of goals in package 2:

Package number 2 included services for supporting the presence of physicians in underprivileged areas. This package, according to the special objectives that were announced in guidelines for Health System Reform Plan, was assessed using two questions in the questionnaire. The following results have been obtained based on the respondents' viewpoints about achievement of goals.

Table 2. Description of achievement of goals in package 2 based on the respondents' views

	Frequency	Percent
Low	4	4.3
Medium	19	20.7
High	69	75.0
Total	92	100

According to the obtained data, the majority of respondents (about 75%) believed that the goals of HTP in package 2 (as described above) had been greatly achieved. However, 20% of them believed that these goals had been moderately achieved and only about 4% believed that these goals had been slightly achieved.

* assessing availability of goals in package 3:

Package 3 included plans in the field of the presence of resident doctors in the hospitals affiliated to the Ministry

of Health, Treatment and Medical Education. This package, according to the special objectives announced in the guidelines for Health System Reform Plan, was assessed using five questions in the questionnaire. The following results were obtained from the respondents' viewpoints about achievement of goals.

Table 3. Description of achievement of goals in package 3 based on respondents' views

	Frequency	Percent
Low	3	3.7
Medium	25	30.9
High	53	65.4
Total	81	100

According to the obtained data, the majority of the respondents (about 65%) believed that the goals of HTP in package number 3, (which was described above), had been greatly achieved. However, 30% of them believed that these goals had been moderately achieved and only about 3.7% believed that these goals had been slightly achieved.

* assessing availability of goals in package 4:

Package 4 included plans to improve the quality of visiting services in hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education and also the quality of business services in hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Medical Education. This package, according to the special objectives mentioned in the guidelines for HTP, was assessed using seven questions in the questionnaire. The following results reveal the viewpoints of the respondents about achievement of goals.

Table 4. Description of achievement of goals in package 4 based on respondents' opinion

	Frequency	Percent
Low	6	8.1
Medium	38	51.4
High	30	40.5
Total	74	100

According to the obtained data, the majority of respondents (about 51%) believed that the goals of HTP in package number 4, (which was described above), had been greatly achieved. However, 40.5% of them believed that these goals had been averagely achieved and only about 8.1% believed that these goals had been slightly achieved.

* assessing availability of goals in package 5:

Package 5 included plans for improving hoteling quality in hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education. This package, according to the special objectives that were announced in guidelines for Health System Reform Plan, was assessed using two questions in the questionnaire. The following results obtained the viewpoints of respondents about achievement of goals.

According to the obtained data, the majority of the respondents (about 55%) believed that the goals of HTP in package number 5, (which was described above), had been greatly achieved. However, 37.1% of them believed that these goals had been averagely achieved and only about

7.4% believed that they had been slightly achieved.

Table 5. Description of achievement of goals in package 5 based on respondents' opinion

	Frequency	Percent
Low	7	7.4
Medium	33	35.1
High	54	57.4
Total	94	100

* assessing availability of goals in package 6:

Package 6 included plans of financial protection of refractory, specific and poor patients in hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Medical Education. This package, according to the special objectives that were announced in guidelines for Health System Reform Plan, was assessed using two questions in the questionnaire. The following Table shows the results obtained as to the respondents' viewpoints of about achievement of goals.

Table 6. Description of achievement of goals in package 6 based on the respondents' viewpoints

	Frequency	Percent
Low	5	5.2
Medium	22	22.9
High	69	71.9
Total	96	100

According to the obtained data, the majority of the respondents (about 71%) believed that the goals of HTP in package number 6, (which was described above), had been greatly achieved. However, 22.9% of them believed that these goals have been averagely achieved and only about 5.2% believed that they had been slightly achieved.

* Comparison of the average position of studied packages: According to the ranking of achievement of goals in this study, the average position of each package was measured using the Friedman test, and the obtained results showed a significant difference between the considered packages, as seen in the Table below:

Average Position		Test Statistics ^a	
Package 1	4.41	Samples	64
Package 2	3.77	Chi-square	60.826
Package 3	3.47	Degrees of Freedom	5
Package 4	2.77	Significance level	0.000
Package 5	3.05	a. Friedman Test	
Package 6	3.54		

Table 8. Relationship between work experience and belief in achievement of the goals in Health System Reform Plan

		Package 1	Package 2	Package 3	Package 4	Package 5	Package 6
Work Experience	Pearson Correlation	0.001	0.170	0.281*	0.235*	0.264*	0.108
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.988	0.106	0.011	0.044	0.010	0.294
	N	99	92	81	74	94	96

The results of Friedman test showed that achievement of goals in the studied packages occurred respectively as the following: Package 1, Package 2, Package 6, Package 3, Package 5, and Package 4

There was no significant relationship between work experience and achievement of the goals in the packages 1, 2 and 6, but there was a significant and positive relationship between work experience and achievement of the goals of HTP in packages 3, 4 and 5, so that according to the respondents, the more the work experience, the more the achievement of the goals.

Discussion and Conclusions

According to the obtained data from the plan and the tests in the ranking of the special objectives, the entire packages related to delivery of services in the Health System Reform Plan, including services related to patients, were allocated the positions from 3 to 4.4. These results showed that service providers, for achievement of service providing goals, have obtained almost favorable results. But in the packages about meeting the needs of service providers, the lowest position had been achieved (7.2) and this indicates these people's dissatisfaction.

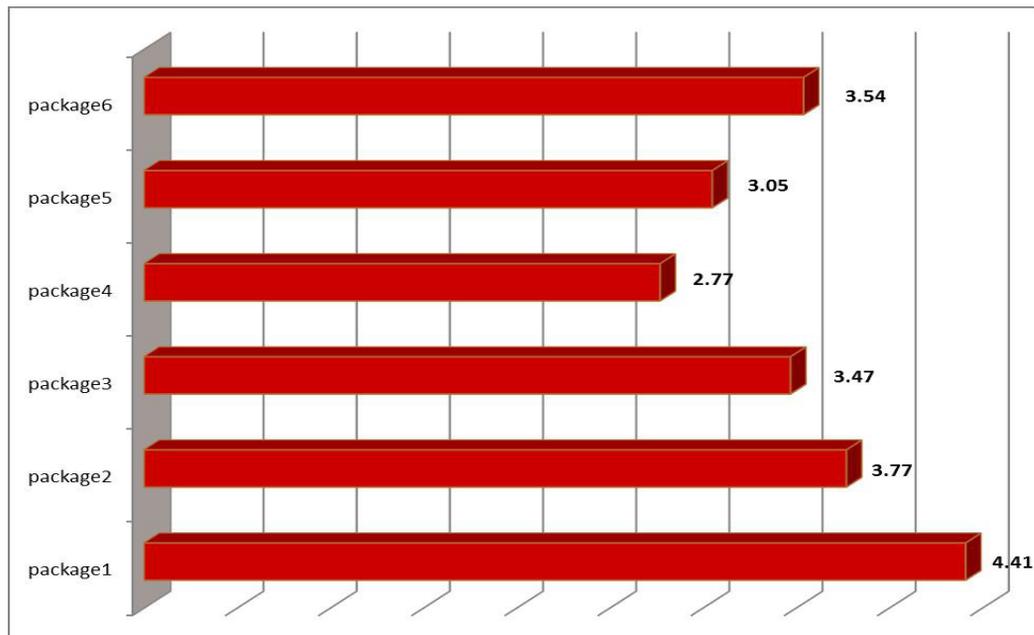
In addition, this package includes the standardization and improvement of the quality of outpatient services and also the educational processes. Accordingly, as the managers declared, it seems that less attention has been paid to the infrastructures and the required backgrounds of the plan, while the success of a project requires considering its facilities and different dimensions, including attention to the human resources, as the capital of the organization, and also technical and mechanical facilities (4).

Although the obtained results in this study indicated success in implementation stages of the project to upper intermediate levels, regarding the importance of this matter, it seems that for implementation of projects that have a great impact on health and people's satisfaction, it is better to provide the infrastructures and avoid hastiness in implementation process; as many of the managers participating in the project considered hastiness as one of the most important threats in achievement of the goals of this project.

A real and effective change requires establishing a plan that considers all the aspects. One of the reasons that some people were not hopeful about achievement of the goals in this project could be ignoring many aspects of the health. For example, in the examined viewpoints that were highly considered by the managers, the following aspects were cited: mismatch of a large number of referred patients with available facilities, equipment and manpower for delivery of health care services.

Along with the main purpose of this study, one of the obtained results is the income gap among different service providers in the health system.

Figure 1. Diagram of average position of the studied packages in Health System Reform Plan



Since in general meeting the needs and new changing expectations in the field of health is the main purpose of any reforming system (6) in the Health System Reform Plan, demands and expectations of all beneficiaries in this field must be considered.

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Conflict of Interest

None Declared.

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