

## EDITORIAL

**Public Health Management a Curative Tool for the Public Health Related Problems****Surya Bali**

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Health always remains a core component in the life of human beings and considered as a major instrument of overall socio-economic development. Concept of health has been defined and understood in different ways by different cultures. The two major division of medicine namely curative and preventive medicine came into light at the close of 19th century. Although origin of Medicine and Public health goes back to ancient Greek mythology, Asclepius was the Greek god of Healing. He was the son of Apollo and the Coronis. Asclepius was married to Epione, with whom he had five daughters: Hygieia, Panacea, Aceso, Iaso, and Aglaea. Hygieia was the goddess of health, cleanliness and hygiene. Follower of panacea practiced curative medicine and were called healer and followers of Hygieia were called as Hygienist or Public Health experts (1). Concept of Public Health came from this hygienist category of healthcare personals.

The Constitution of the World Health Organization, which came into force on April 7, 1948, defines health “as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.”(2) In today’s world more emphasis is given on physical health and most of the resources are diverted for the care of physical health especially for the medical treatment. Other domains of health care remain neglected.

Public health applies to the holistic approach for the care of health. Physical health is best taken care by the judicious mix of public health and medical domain of health. The evolution of concepts of public health tries to address new challenges of population health like non communicable diseases, cancers, accidents, injuries, inequities, increasing cost of care, poor quality of care, and poor patient satisfaction etc. The New Public Health addresses overall health policy, resource allocation, as well as the organization, management, and provision of medical care and of health systems in general within a framework of overall social policy and in a community, state, national, transnational, and global context(3).

Now public health has evolved as a full-grown discipline and healthcare science. Public health demands sophisticated professional and managerial skills, the ability to address a health problem. It also needs reasoning to define the boundaries of public health issues. A trained public health professional should be able to advocate, initiate, develop, and implement new and revised programs for the healthy community. Public Health professionals should have profound humanistic values and a sense of responsibility towards protecting and improving the health of communities and every individual.

Public health is concerned with the health of populations, rather than specific care for individual patients. The first accepted definition of Public Health was given by C.E.A. Winslow in 1887 and the definition was based on the concept of health and determinants of that era(4). In Winslow’s classic 1920 definition, Public health is defined as “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private, communities and individuals” (Winslow 1920)(5)

There are two types of sciences Intramural science and extra mural sciences. Study of human body (Medical science) comes under the intramural sciences and study of Public health comes under the extramural sciences because it tries to control determinants outside the human body.

Public Health is a specialised domain and totally different from the Medical Sciences. Many Schools of Public Health and Colleges of Public Health are running undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level courses in Public Health. These courses provide basic knowledge and skill in various domains of Public health.

Just like the Medical Sciences, subjects of Public Health are also divided into three main core groups

Basic Sciences	Diagnostic Sciences	Curative Sciences
Principles and practice of Public Health	Epidemiology	Public Health Management
Health Care Delivery system	Biostatistics	Health Insurance
Anthropology in Public Health	Health economics	Health Promotions
Social and Behavioural Sciences	Public health Financing	Health Administration
Environment and occupational health	Public Health Accounting	Public Health Nutrition
Demography and Population Sciences		Public Health Education
		Public Health Policy, Planning and Advocacy
		Public Health Law and ethics

The public health management can be defined as the mobilization and management of society's resources to improve the health of populations. Public health management brings the efficiency and effectiveness in the health care delivery system through appropriate management of available scarce resources.

Public health management is a pillar of public health practice. Only through effective management research, theory, and scientific innovation can be translated into successful public health action(6). Public health management is very important subject under the Public Health which is equivalent to Surgery & Medicine in Medical sciences. It provides the tools and techniques to solve various resource centric public health problem. It teaches optimal utilization of scarce resources and brings efficiency in the public health actions. Country like India needs many public health professionals to manage the public healthcare system but unfortunately very few trained healthcare professionals are available. Currently India needs smart public health professional to take part in building a strong and healthy nation. National Rural Health Mission, Urban Health Mission and Health insurance sector also needs trained health management professionals. Many developing partners, NGO and International Healthcare Agencies also demand large number of public health professionals. Demand is high but supply of trained public health managers is very low.

Seeing the scarcity of trained public health professionals and high demands of public health managers, more and more emphasis should be given to train existing medical, dental and nursing professionals. There is strong need for the standardized Public Health Management courses at different Institutes of National importance (INIs) who can further produce large number of trained public health manager from existing medical, dental and nursing professionals. These newly trained health care managers will work locally and will be able to make a change in the Health Scenario of India and contribute positively.

The goal of public health management is to identify and control threats to public health, and to create policy which supports public health and the development of healthy populations. It helps to develop the managerial capacity of health professionals to strengthen the public health care delivery system and bring the efficiency in the utilization of resources for better healthcare services.

Specific objectives of Public Health Management course are to prepare skilled health managers who can-

1. Deliver affordable & good quality of public healthcare services,
2. Plan and organize the public health services in their working areas
3. Plan and effectively manage the key human resource functions within the organizations
4. Understand the system of budgeting, source of financing, cash flow, banking, expenditure, accounting, loan, investments etc in the healthcare setting
5. Apply financial management concepts and tools to make quick financial decisions in healthcare setting
6. Understand and smoothly run the inventory/ material management in the supply chain

Public Health and Management is a highly impactful and rewarding career path. The course offers job security, opportunities for growth and versatility. Public Health and Management course prepares students for administrative and managerial positions needed to finance, manager and deliver health services efficiently. Public Health Management experts are employed as hospital administrators, heads of public health departments, public health consultants, and representatives of agencies which research and prevent disease(7).

In India, healthcare system is mostly managed by the medical doctors who are not well trained in the managerial aspect of healthcare. Public health management prepare trained and competent public health professionals who are capable in dealing with various public health problems. Public Health Management professionals focus on the various resources like human resources, material resources, financial resources etc and ensure that problems arising from the mismanagement of these resources can be handled efficiently and timely.

Health Care delivery system is heavily resource-oriented system which needs specialised health managers. These public health managers are capable to understand, diagnose and treat the resource related public health problems. So Full- and short-term Public Health Management courses should be conducted across the healthcare institution. When these trained public health managers will be placed at the different nodes of public healthcare delivery system they will be able to diagnose and solve the public health problem. Thus Public Health Management Course will be an effective tool to solve the public health care problems in India.

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