



Healthcare Management goes global

by

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Preface

Healthcare is one of the most challenging services for individuals globally. It is not only crossing borders, but culture, legal regulations, ethical conventions and highly specialized knowledge and skills as well. It is providing people better chances to stay healthy, to ensure access to advanced medical care and treatment, to help for chronically ill and is to support for disabled individuals.

Besides of offering treatments and services based on best evidence based knowledge and skills, nowadays healthcare is in need of best management practice, too.

In this respect two entirely different perspectives have to be considered. The first one - the macro perspective - relates to a region's or a country's ability and established mechanisms enabling access to healthcare for citizens, both nationals and expatriates as well. This perspective raises issues like the responsibility for protecting people from harm, for providing assess the medical care and for finding solutions for coping with the individual and social consequences of chronic diseases and disablement. In this perspective the question on a nation's self-understanding and its preferred way of life has to be issued for successful management.

The second aspect – the micro perspective - issues how to manage provider institutions and organizations or their assets. Both perspectives are different in responsibility and complexity but are framed and netted by national health politics, regarding policies and legal regulations.

The globalization of healthcare is one of the relating aspects. It can be seen is a driving force towards the healthcare of tomorrow. The authors' intention is briefly to compile international experiences and methods that might help the public, the decision-makers, the administrators and the managers with finding ways in that comprehensive, conflicting and changing environment. And, of course, healthcare services are providing skilled jobs and are making these services sharing the most important portion of economy in many of the economically developed countries.

Both the authors cannot foresee to what extend the management of healthcare will gain importance as a global issue within the next decade. But we are convinced globalization will guide a growing proportion of offers and utilization of healthcare, particularly of medical care. That will put pressure on many of the traditional mechanisms to organize and to reward for health and medical services. Also, healthcare managers may cross borders to a growing extend. It will be of impact for research and teaching on related

subjects if this assumption comes true and will make healthcare in cross-border issue of growing importance. Insofar globalization first of all needs growing national competencies how to do best for the advantage of the country and its people.

But national health politics are undergoing important transformations in many countries, too. The reasons are manifold but rooted both in comprehensive global political and in socio-economic transformations. These changes will strike all of the globally varying financing systems, the management of healthcare coverage and the mechanisms of utilization.

The authors, besides of coming from different national and cultural background, share medicine as their professional major but have added studies and research regarding the book's main focus. That focus is to make healthcare and related services assessable for those being in need. We want to bring this compilation to readers that just start a career in managing healthcare but also to those already working in that field.

The compendium's perspective is globally focused. This makes it the readers' task to adopt the content to national conditions, individual experiences and surrounding discussions.

"Knowledge is a social product dependent on the social activity of real world actors. It is not just

intellectual discourse." (Salmon, JW *Alternative Medicines. Tavistock Publications New York, London 1984, page 277*)

This is it what the authors want to encourage: the formation of healthcare managers as a professional identity in a global perception of healthcare.

The vast concentration of capital in the healthcare sector, respectively in the healthcare industry as defined by the *International Standard Industry Classification*, has been brought both general managerial and new organizational conceptions into the delivery of care. This also signals the change from organizing healthcare as a matter of public administration towards healthcare management as an entrepreneurial activity.

Prof. Dr. med. habil. Jens-Uwe Niehoff

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Introduction

Healthcare needs infrastructures, pharmaceuticals, devices and supply. But it also needs professionals, such as doctors, nurses and other medical staff being educated to decide on what is necessary and appropriate under particular health conditions and indications. These professionals need being skilled and trained to apply medicine and care. Not at least, healthcare has to be framed by legal, financial and contractual regulations and supervision.

All these relating particularities make healthcare management a specific and unique profession different from managing other services or production. The difference is earmarked by the fact that caring for health makes individuals the center of concern, individuals, which contribute to results pro-actively and interact with professionals. Healthcare management is to fulfill the requirements of patients suffering from diseases or disability. Professionals do that according to given compromised standards within the scientific community and by offers that must be accepted by patients.

The healthcare manager of tomorrow needs to be seriously committed to the fundamentals of the subject to be managed if not wanting to blow tremendous investments and resources into the air. But the rapidly developing field of managing healthcare needs

more than sampling tools being assumed to make a provider organization profitable.

Healthcare management works globally but under varying national infrastructures and regulations. Making necessary and appropriate healthcare available for everybody in need is the fundamental task of healthcare management in most the countries round the world and may set managers in conflicts between patients', providers' or paying third parties' interests. Therefore complex regulations for access, coverage and reimbursements are facing healthcare management.

The understanding of health and of healthcare is deeply rooted in culture and will only meet requirements if being accepted by people, caregivers included. But life and health sciences, including medicine are also undergoing important progress in understanding the etiology and pathogenesis of diseases. Sciences are providing new opportunities of prevention, of scopes of treatment and rehabilitation. Medicine permanently learns from limits, deficits and failures – if being managed that way. The authors see it the challenge for healthcare management to use best scientific knowledge and skills both for making decisions and for performing best practice in delivering care. This in particular makes “change” a top priority for management and identifies any ap-

plied medicine a *today's healthcare*.

The practice of healthcare brings together both natural and social sciences. It is moving from individual attitudes of doctors and nurses towards evidence based practice and shared decision making. That is not only true for diagnostics, treatments and rehabilitation. This is also true for managing healthcare and its organizational frames.

The ultimate challenge for healthcare managers is react sufficiently on

- changing needs resulting from socio-economic-demographic transitions
- labor-division in specialized medicine by managed cooperation and coordination of services
- the globalization of requirements and national legal regulations
- the demand for necessary and appropriate healthcare under limited resources

Healthcare increasingly uses advanced scientific evidence and best assessed technologies. Healthcare becomes the interaction of advanced health and life sciences with applied techniques and technologies seeking for effective and efficient organizational infrastructures for processing utilization.

What is – in the authors' view – *Current Healthcare*, a term we

prefer to the often used word of a *Modern Healthcare*?

Current Healthcare is driven by results and by transparent evaluation using standardized outcome measures against goals. It wants permanently to improve through rapid changes.

Current Healthcare is the cooperation and coordination of a wired infrastructure of professionals connected through the exchange of information (more and more based on advanced technology).

Current Healthcare needs data exchange, sophisticated technologies and devices, or supply but always safeguards the patients' rights.

We often hear the question what basic profession would fit best if wanting to educate and to train healthcare managers. According to our experience, the answer will not depend on the primer academic education but on the capability to cross the border between all the different professions involved in healthcare. Healthcare management will be absolutely necessary as a subject of a supplemental study and can successfully be pasted by many different professions. The key to success is not primarily the original kind of education but the ability of crossing borders in thinking, communicating and cooperating for and with people, managing different qualifications, financial resources and assets. Insofar, management organizes different competencies

and experiences towards a set of defined strategic targets under a single umbrella.

Also the vast field of managing healthcare practice will certainly run towards specialization, for example in order to manage

- the provision and utilization of what is necessary and appropriate to meet the demands, wishes and attitudes of patients or the requirements of legal norms or contract
- the healthcare providing teams and more specifically, prevention, medical care and rehabilitation or nursing
- the administration of facilities and human, financial and technical resources
- the financing and the re-financing of investments
- the formation, the advertising and the purchasing of healthcare insurance plans and services

Some argue healthcare management would be only and simply to gain profits. But one may also discuss healthcare management as the competency to avoid the simplicity of making money but to contribute to a nation's social coherence and prosperity, instead.

What healthcare management finally is depends certainly on goals and intentions of healthcare services beyond the required skills of professionalized entrepreneurial management.

Or in other words: If healthcare management is supportive to raise the benefits of treatment and care or if it is a nightmare for doctors, nurses and patients will not depend on management but on the managers' attitudes, on notions and goals.

But what is in particular *Global Healthcare Management*?

The mission of managing healthcare in an international perspective is to manage the access to and the utilization of cross-border healthcare. This goal includes the offer of best global expertise to the national healthcare industry.

International healthcare management is not something new. But context and complexity are changing.

The authors see at least four characteristics of "globalization" worth to be mentioned:

1. Helping each other has always been conditioning a group's or a population's survival and has been developed as a globally shared social value.
2. The global exchange of goods, experiences and knowledge has been had impact on healthcare practice since ever. Healthcare can truly be seen having developed globally already far back in history. Only to mention some examples, the Arabs, the Chinese, the Egypt, the Greek, the Romans, but also

the Europeans or the Native Americans, have contributed to the evolution of mankind's current understanding of diseases and illness or treatment. The inclusion of global knowledge into recent healthcare practice is climbing up to new tops. The future of medicine integrates knowledge from researchers and developers operating globally.

3. The barbarity and cruelty of fighting against each other and of subduing peoples and of stealing their treasures is also part of mankind's history and still part of the present, too. But healthcare has also always been a nucleus of developing humanitarianism as a global basic-culture. Both these aspects of spreading dangers to health globally and of exchanging actions of humanitarian help and assistance are part of global healthcare and its management.
4. Even cross-border utilization of healthcare and related services, also called medical tourism, is nothing new. Especially rehabilitation and the offer of spots for recovery in case of chronic illness was used cross-border already in past.

International healthcare gives evidence for mainstreaming the underlying health sciences, ethics and cultures as something bring-

ing both experts and patients together.

Nevertheless, the existence of a World Health Organization gives evidence for the importance of a global Healthcare Management. In this light the WHO is the most comprehensive expression of internationality regarding healthcare.

In fact, the view on Healthcare Management is not free from conflicts, but nothing is. While some intent to develop, to implement and to meet the goals of the future through cooperation and exchange of experiences, others see healthcare delivery simply a business of free markets, which are selling healthcare according to an individual's financial resources and desires. Both these trunks have been developed different practices of performance and of regulation. It is not the authors' intention to decide on the right ways. But we want to clarify differences for practicing healthcare and its management. We see this particularly important for the fact that nearly in any country we find both these basic conceptions at the same time.

If healthcare wants to operate globally it has clearly to analyze and to understand what the national frame of concern and performance really is. There cannot be any successful global management of healthcare without a profound understanding of national practice.

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Healthcare is one of the most challenging services for individuals globally. It is not only crossing borders, but culture, legal regulations, ethical conventions and highly specialized knowledge and skills as well. It is providing people better chances to stay healthy, to ensure access to advanced medical care and treatment, to help for chronically ill and is to support for disabled individuals.

Besides of offering treatments and services based on best evidence based knowledge and skills, nowadays healthcare is in need of best management practice, too.

In this respect two entirely different perspectives have to be considered. The first one – the macro perspective – relates to a region's or a country's ability and established mechanisms enabling access to healthcare for citizens, both nationals and expatriates as well. This perspective raises issues like the responsibility for protecting people from harm, for providing assess the medical care and for finding solutions for coping with the individual and social consequences of chronic diseases and disablement. In this perspective the question on a nation's self-understanding and its preferred way of life has to be issued for successful management....



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