

Health Care Administration: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract:

Purpose

The aim of this systematic review is to highlight the significance of the health care administration to the health care setting by synthesizing the evidence on the roles and responsibilities discharged by these professionals.

Methodology

After a methodical search process, ten articles meeting inclusion criteria were analysed using a textual analysis technique.

Practical implications

Implementation of policies in the health sector requires support by up to date evidence. Proof scientifically built from a laborious systematic review process that benefits communities in favour of improving quality of their health care services.

Findings

The results of the analysis verified that health care system administrators have a responsibility to improve the processes of health care. Additionally, they are responsible for managing complicated and complex organizational issues. They are also expected to implement the policies, technologies, and evidence-based practices required to improve the wellbeing of patients. The training of health care professionals and application of cost-effective strategies are also included in their accountabilities.

Originality

These findings will add value to existing health care administration education programs as well as create better policies for organizations to provide improved health care quality-assurance services.

Limitations

This paper analyses recent published research primarily from developed nations. Hence, the conclusion cannot be generalized to the developing countries.

Keywords: Administration, Health care, Systematic review, Community, Responsibility.

INTRODUCTION:

The domain of health care is considered to be among the most important disciplines within community settings (Berwick and Finkelstein, 2010, p. 56). Health care administrators are a section of health care professionals. Health care administrators are responsible for the working and performance of the health care system as a whole (Teno *et al.*, 2013, p. 477). Supporting positive changes, the wellness of the patients, the welfare of the professionals, achievement of goals and objectives, as well as making effective decisions and building partnerships with other stakeholders are all common staff responsibilities in health care system administration (Moro *et al.*, 2011, p. 146).

Health care administrators have a great responsibility for regulating service processes within clinical settings; however, this is often overlooked. The professionals who most often come to mind while thinking about health care are physicians, nurses, lab technicians, and radiologists. The aim of this rigorous systematic review is to highlight the significance of health care administration within the community setting. The review provides fresh updated information about roles and responsibilities that they perform. This information is beneficial for educational institutions offering health care administration training programs, and policy makers in community health organizations, as well as aspiring health care administrators.

Objectives

1. The leading purpose of this systematic review is to promote the significance of health care system administration within the community.
2. Secondly, it identifies key up-to-date aspects in relation to health care system administration today.

PROCEDURES:

Search Strategy

Medline, Embase, Cochrane, ProQuest, Scholar, Cinahl, Ebasco, and Psycinfo were the most common databases used for the search. Different keywords were used to search for research-based publications. Search terms included health care, health system, administration, health care administration and management, health system management, organizational management, health care organizations, and health care processes.

Inclusion Criteria

The only publications considered were research-based studies completed between 2010 and 2015, relevant to the area of health care system administration, and having credible information. Poor standard researches, unauthenticated information, and irrelevant to the clinical or administrative side of health care were among exclusion reasons.

Study Selection Process

The selection process of the papers was guided by the inclusion benchmarks. Two academics extracted the data independently. Reading and assessment of the abstracts was the initial approach used for shortlisting. Reviewers made decisions regarding the eligibility of a majority of the articles after reading the titles, abstracts and conclusions. In questionable cases, the entire script was taken into consideration. Finally, a third experienced reviewer was included, one responsible for the verification of decisions.

Data Extraction

The investigators who selected the manuscript extracted relevant data independently. The abstraction process was not as simple as the studies selection; the articles were reviewed in full and data excavated based on elements such as titles, objectives of the study, research methods, and outcomes. Data entirely relevant to health care administration and processes were immediately extracted. The investigators carefully examined the methods used to derive information in order to decision the credibility of the information and avoid bias risks. Conclusions and major objectives of selected studies were also identified for the further processing of the papers.

Quality Assessment

Critical assessment approaches were used to assess the quality of the selected researches (Wehbe *et al.*, 2014, p. 145). The methods and procedures of these studies were reviewed to assess the excellence of the papers in relation to the reliability and validity of the information presented. Additionally, investigators applied a criteria scale for use in difficult cases. This quality benchmark focused on supplementary factors such as date of publications, reputation of the publishing organization, relevance of the study to the topic, methods strength, citation index and affiliations of authors.

Data Analysis

Articles meeting inclusion criteria were subjected to a critical interpretative synthesis process (Dixon *et al.* 2006 p 35), additionally a discourse and textual analysis technique was used to analyse their contents. This technique enhanced the validity of the study as it does not entail the inclusion of the reviewer's own opinion. The content of the studies was analysed from an objective perspective with the aim of identifying the roles that health care system administrators played.

RESULTS:

Identified Studies

Initially, 200 research-based articles were identified for this review. They were somehow relevant to the health care administration topic, but 120 were excluded because of their confusing statements. Fifty-four studies out of the remaining 80 publications did not reach the expected standard as their findings were not suitably presented and thus eliminated. The remaining 26 studies were moved to the rigorous quality assessment process.

After critical assessment of the remaining studies, 16 were excluded because of poor quality. Therefore, ten studies were finally included in this review.

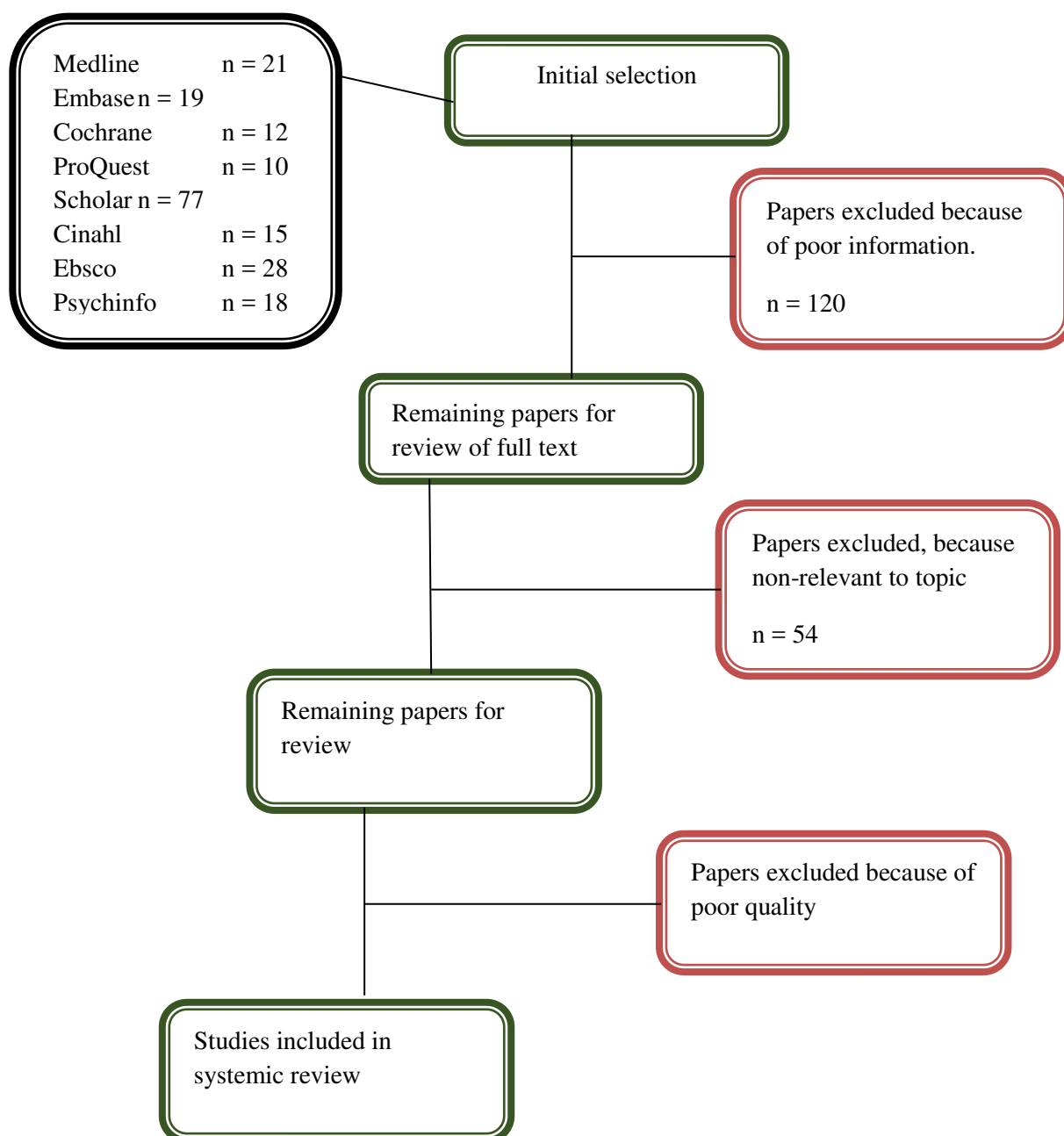
Studies Characteristics and Quality of Evidence

All ten studies chosen had high levels of credibility, because they had excellent standards and the methods used to generate their findings were clearly elaborated upon and thus found to be highly reliable. These studies are discussed in the successive sections discursively and by using appropriate analytical techniques.

Construction of the Theoretical Argument

This exhaustive process of the selection of the studies helped the investigators discover the most appropriate evidence relevant to current trends and debates about the domain of health care administration. In summary, integrated information provides a basis for rational decision making that is based on the totality of the available evidence synthesized using the appropriate protocol; a contribution which withstands scientific scrutiny and is highly valid for new original knowledge. By far systematic reviews are rated highest for levels of proof (Rooney *et al.* 2014 pp.711-718).

Figure 1 shows the Systematic Review Flowchart



Roles and Responsibilities of Health Care Administrators

Adashi *et al.* (2010) conducted a comprehensive research-based study focused on primary and health reforms (p. 2017). The study elaborated that the health care system administration played a positive role in the maintenance and application of reforms in health care settings. Health care administration requires using different strategies and approaches to implement positive changes when deriving positive outcomes.

Another study clearly shows that health care system administrators are working hard to make health care delivery processes effective and efficient (Bethell *et al.*, 2011, p. 22). For this purpose, administration has applied various advanced technologies and several optimistic service acts for positive outcomes. A significant number of supplementary studies have also supported these as responsibilities of health care system administration (Tseng *et al.*, 2011, p. 3632). It is also a true that health care system administrations have made similar standards and guidelines fill the gaps between rural and urban areas. Therefore, these studies clearly conclude that the positive performance of health care administrations is directly associated with the increased demands of health care centers and organizations (Adashi *et al.*, 2010, p. 2047).

The importance and significance of the health care system administration is that different laws (Yuen and Ng, 2012, p. 421) have declared that the government of every country has the core responsibility to effectively maintain the quality of health care processes. Moreover, governmental authorities should use various processes and strategies to fulfill both major and minor demands of patients. For this purpose, government officials have developed various laws for quality improved operation within clinical settings (Huntington *et al.*, 2011, p. 35).

Health care system administrations have the responsibility of implementing these laws within clinical settings. Health care organizations and officials are required to make the best possible processes and services for the patients. Choo *et al.* (2013 pp. 101-108) have also supported the concept of this study. This study discusses the very clear example of “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.” This act was developed by government officials for the protection of patients and their welfare. However, major steps and strategies were ruled out by the health care system administration for the effective application of this law. Positive outcomes were derived by health care system administrations. Therefore, the study concluded that health care administration played an effective role in the application of rulings within clinical settings (Huntington *et al.*, 2011, p. 35).

Academic Brody (2010) zoom lensed on the ethical responsibilities of administration in relation to health care reforms. Porter (2010) has argued that the approach of health care reforms is used for making positive changes in health care processes effectively (p. 2477). Brody (2010, p. 283) claims that health care system administration has a moral and ethical responsibility to support appropriate changes with the help of different approaches (see also Ebrun-Harris *et al.*, 2013, p. 992). The administration of each health care system should use every possible resource to implement health care reforms in their settings (Brody, 2010, p. 283). Other studies have also supported this statement (Mugavero *et al.*, 2011, p. 238).

The work by de Voursney *et al.* (2013) is also a research-based study, focusing on required improvements in the community-based health care organizations. The major focus of this study regarded mental-health conditions (de Voursney *et al.*, 2013, p. 33). Chan (2010 p.2) has confirmed that those medical conditions that can influence the mental state of individuals are known as mental health conditions. The initial study further described the proper set of improvements necessary for the delivery of quality health care to mentally ill patients (Craig, 2010, p. 145). For this purpose, the study shows that proper workforce, policies, implementation support, evidence-based strategies, and care-quality processes are required to make positive improvements in community health care centers (de Voursney *et al.*, 2013, pp 33-38).

Authors Glynn *et al.* (2011) focused on another important responsibility of the health care system administration. The core focus of this study is multi-morbidity within primary care and its impact over the costs. It is a fact that maintenance of financial aspects is a very important responsibility of health care system administration (Cutler *et al.*, 2012, pp. 1875-1878). The work judges that health care system administrations

should use different approaches and strategies to fulfill the financial demands of health care organizations and health care centers (Glynn *et al.*, 2011, p. 516).

The use of information technology is a very common approach for the improved outcomes of health care organizations. For this purpose, a research-based study was conducted by Holden and Karsh (2010) that was focused on the application of IT for deriving appropriate outcomes within clinical settings. The study states that it is a major role of health care system administration to use, implement, and maintain advanced technologies for the delivery of ideal health (Martin *et al.*, 2012, p. 208). This study has used various theories and models to make a clear relationship between IT and ideal health care. It used the Technology Acceptance Model to relate the factor of information technology with the delivery of quality health care (Holden and Karsh, 2010, p. 159).

This study clearly shows that the health care system administration should use new and advanced technologies for deriving health results. It is the responsibility of health care system administration to analyze and implement advanced information technologies for the delivery of quality health care (Kumar *et al.*, 2011, p. 668). A proper set of policies and recommendations is required for the implementation of advanced technologies. Therefore, the role of health care system administration is quite prominent in the application and implementation of the advanced information technologies within clinical settings (Holden and Karsh, 2010, p. 159).

Several examples of the use of information and technology in clinical settings exist. The implementation of electronic health records systems brought a revolution in the clinical settings in relation with the maintenance of records and data. Yang *et al.* (2012, p. 43) focused on the use of information technology for the improved practices in clinical settings. Their work discusses that there are various examples of electronic systems that have a direct impact on the clinical practice of health care professionals (Cicardi *et al.*, 2013, pp. 3-9). This study used the example of the Electronic Medication Administration System for the delivery of quality health care (Yang *et al.*, 2012,).

This research clearly showed that the health care administrations have implemented this system to reduce human errors in relation with the administration of drugs and medicines. The study clearly identified that electronic medication administration systems will be significant for patients and health care professionals to reduce the risk of mistakes within clinical settings. Therefore, health care administration should use proper techniques and strategies to implement such technologies within clinical settings for the attainment of goals and objectives (Yang *et al.*, 2012, p. 43).

Another paper was by Bickman *et al.* (2011, pp.1423-1429), which also demonstrated the importance and significance of health care administration. A very common approach is used in different clinical settings for making accurate and sudden changes in the process of health care (Basinga *et al.*, 2011, p. 1421). Different institutions and higher-level officials note that most administrations use a feedback approach for making effective changes in their processes (Jackson *et al.*, 2013, p. 431). This study also focuses on the importance and effects of routine feedback from clinicians over outcomes. After conducting comprehensive study, investigators concluded that the attainment of feedback will be significant to know about the negative aspects of a particular discipline. Therefore, it can be said that the use of feedback by administrations has been a positive step for providing quality health care services (Bickman *et al.*, 2011 p. 1423).

The domains of mental health care and pediatric health care are considered two serious and sensitive departments in the health and social care sector. Mentally ill patients and pediatric patients require intensive and focused care, with proper compliance. Therefore, the administrations of such units are prepared with advanced skills and capabilities. Innovative and healthy steps are usually taken by the health care administrations of both units (Eapen *et al.*, 2013, p. 151). Garland *et al.* (2010) focused on improvements within mental health care organizations. This work mentioned that the administrations of such organizations have to make positive and prompt decisions to implement positive outcomes (Garland *et al.*, 2010, p. 15). Similarly, Foy *et al.* (2010) conducted a study that focused on the pediatric care and organizations. Another study also noted that positive outcomes can be easily attained with the help of focused and evidence-based approaches (Ellingson *et al.*, 2014, p. 937). Therefore, the administrations play a key role in maintaining and regulating health care processes effectively in two sensitive sub-domains (Foy *et al.*, 2010, p. 87).

Table 1 -- Table-Based Systematic Literature Review

Author(s) and year	Objectives of the studies	Main Outcomes
Adashi <i>et al.</i> (2010)	The objective of the study was to analyze the role of the administration while implementing reforms.	The study concluded from its findings that administrations of health care organizations were responsible for implementing policies and reforms.
Huntington <i>et al.</i> (2011)	The purpose of this study was to describe the importance of health care administration during the implementation of legislative frameworks.	The findings of this study mentioned that the organizational administration should implement legislations and acts in the form of self-made policies for improved outcomes.
Brody (2010)	This study aimed to analyze the ethical responsibility of the administration in relation with the implementation of policies.	It was the ethical responsibility of healthcare system administration to implement policies for the promotion of health care.
de Voursney <i>et al.</i> (2013)	The purpose of this study was to know about the strategies of administration in relation with improvements within community health care centers.	Administrations of community health care centers should bring up positive changes with the help of effective decision making and visionary capabilities.
Glynn <i>et al.</i> (2011)	The objective of the study was to analyze the impact of multi-morbidities over the health and costs. The study also analyzed the role of the administration from this aspect.	The outcomes of the study revealed that multi-morbidity is common in primary care. It was related to high cost and health care utilization among the health care system.

Implications for Research, Practice, and Society

The administrative aspects of health care organizations have a significant effect on their success and prosperity (Mitchell *et al.*, 2012, pp. 651-658). The most important responsibility being implementing the policies of the organization (Guerrero *et al.*, 2014, p. 1). Numerous studies have shown that the development of such policies has always been the duty of governmental and administrative officials (Blosnich *et al.*, 2013, pp. 27-32). Effective implementation of these policies and legislative frameworks do improve the quality of services (Robbins *et al.*, 2011, pp. 78-97).

A number of medical conditions remain persistent in community settings, and every patient require distinct needs (Shore *et al.*, 2014, pp. 810-817). “It is the obligation of health care administrators to develop a general framework for deriving effective outcomes.” (Sudan *et al.*, 2011, pp. 71-76). It is also obvious that use evidence-based approaches to deliver ideal health care to their patients is a need (Bernstein *et al.*, 2013, pp. 1456-1461). The administrations have implemented various policies and legislations in order to improve systems of delivering care (Blasco *et al.*, 2013, pp. 1-11).

Administrators of community health centers have the additional responsibility of regulating care delivery processes (Grundmann and Yoon 2010, pp. 691-699). At the same time, health care administrators at the

community centers are responsible for managing the costs and financial aspects (Leung *et al.*, 2010, pp. 47-551). It is necessary for health care professionals and health care administrations to implement cost-effective strategies for stable financial conditions of organizations (Garland *et al.*, 2010, pp. 788-795).

Synthesis

These findings have important values for education institutions offering health care administration programs. They highlight areas in which health care administration educational curricula should focus on in order to prepare candidates for practice. The results suggest that the syllabus should focus on providing such students with bold skills that will enable them to implement policies, improve health care processes, manage financial aspects, and maintain health facilities standards. This work offers evidence-based information that health organizations are able to upgrade standards and benchmarks, as well as evaluate the performance of their health care administrators. Health care organizations can also use these findings to design training programs for enhancing health care administration. Finally, the findings will be beneficial to existing and aspiring health care administrators as they highlight what is expected of these professionals. Existing and aspiring health care administrators can use this information to conduct a self-assessment, identify their strength and gaps, and come up with strategies that will help the address their weaknesses.

CONCLUSIONS:

Health care system administration plays a very important role in the regulation of health care processes within communities. A significant number of research-based articles have shown that health care system administrations have various responsibilities within the health sector. Implementation of the policies for improved health-care processes, application of the information technology, maintenance of community health care centers, and addressing the complications of patients are core responsibilities of administrations. Similarly, proper regulation of processes, making positive changes, and focus on the financial aspects are some other duties of health care system administrations. Therefore, there is proof that health care administrations should be comprised of motivated, bold, and confident officials for the promotion of health care within community settings.

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