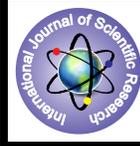


Analysis of Turnover Rates in Romanian Healthcare System



Management

KEYWORDS : healthcare, human resource management, job satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

After Romania has become a member of the European Union, back in 2007, the member states have become a real benchmark in terms of the quality of services provided by the healthcare system. An analysis of the statistical data show that although significant improvements have been made over the past 20 years, in terms of life expectancy and also disease incidence, there is still a long way till comparing with the healthcare systems from western countries. The study analyzes the perception of the medical personnel from Romanian hospitals regarding the work condition, the financial remuneration and the prospects of promotion, and the degree by which they are influenced by age and gender of the respondents. The results show that the young professionals are the most dissatisfied with the remuneration, facilities and career development prospects.

Introduction

The human resources are the essential factor and the most important resource for creating a performing healthcare system (Torraco and Swanson, 1995). The human resources are represented by the medical or nonmedical personnel making the individual or collective intervention possible. In the past years the turnover rates for the medical personnel in Romanian hospitals have met a sharp increase. Authorities talk about the insufficient funds for a better financing of the health care system, but the causes are deeper and lots of factors influence the decision of medical personnel to leave the system, in search for better opportunities. Once Romania entered the European Union, its citizens gained the free movement right within the member states, as the signed treaty stipulates. According to Eurostat statistics more than six thousands medical doctors leave the Romanian healthcare system every year, while only five thousands new professionals graduate from the certified universities. Considering the total number of medical doctors working in the Romanian healthcare system is 35000, if the trend doesn't improve, there will be no trained professionals working in the medical field just before 2040.

2. Literature review

New challenges for the public health care system come from the increasing number of private clinics and hospitals which realized the business potential, considering the increasing demand for high quality medical services of the educated population with high income, as well as the vast pool of patients suffering from various conditions. Although great progress has been made over the past 25 years, in terms of life expectancy (in 2015 life expectancy in Romania is 74.9 years, as compared to 69.8 in 1995, according to Eurostat), it is hard to discern if it is a result of the increase of GDP per capita or because of the reforms that have been implemented in the health care system. In addition, the mortality rates have decreased, as well as other indicators that prove the upward trend of the system's performance. However, considering the poor starting base, it is essential that new measures and reforms are implemented to consolidate the life quality of the citizens (Engerstrom, 1995). The World Health Organization enumerates the main determinants for health, as follows: hereditary factors (age, sex), social groups, agriculture, education, working conditions, water and personal hygiene, healthcare services and so on. One thing is certain; the World Health Organization conducted an exhaustive study that analyzes the performance of health systems worldwide that ranks Romania on the 99th place from 191 countries, France being on first place, and lagging behind Albania, Hungary and other Eastern European nations, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Performance of national healthcare systems

Country	Rank
Romania	99
France	1
Germany	25
Hungary	66

Source: World Health Organization (2000)

Moreover, statistics show that Romania allocates about 5% of its GDP to the healthcare system, as compared to the 8% which is the European Union average. This is just another reality that highlights the importance of spending the resources efficiently, so the services can be comparable with the high benchmark set by the western countries. Last but not least, Romania has one of the lowest rates of medical personnel per capita, the shortage being even more dramatic in rural areas. New policies have to be implemented, so that the professionals are encouraged to work in areas with deficit of personnel. These policies should focus mainly on motivation tactics, such as offering of stimulations, improving the working conditions, as well as giving them prospects of promotion (Dobre, 2013). The young medical professionals are even more skeptical and they lack the necessary motivation to enter the system, having the much easier option to emigrate. This clearly shows some dysfunctions of human resource management in the Romanian healthcare system. Reforms are required, especially regarding modifications of the number of professionals in the medical field, as well as regarding the education, distribution and management of human resources.

3. Research methodology

The main objective of my research is to analyze the perception of the medical personnel from Romania about the work conditions, the financial remuneration of their work and the prospects of promotion. This research is based on non-probabilistic sampling, more specifically on rational theoretical guided sampling. I have selected the 86 respondents that work in hospitals located in Bucharest, Romania, and used questionnaires to collect the primary data. The studied population is represented by medical personnel working in public hospitals, aging 25 to 68. Out of the 86 filled up questionnaires, only 82 were valid. The H0 is that the young professionals are more dissatisfied with the working conditions, remuneration and prospects of promotion, where H1 is that age is not a factor that has a direct correlation on the employee satisfaction. The questionnaires were checked for validity before numbering and loading them in a SPSS 17, data processing software.

4. The results of the research

After analyzing the data, there can be noticed significant differences between the perception of the young professionals and the perception of senior professionals regarding the work conditions, remuneration and the prospects of promotion. The influence on the independent variable gender has also been tested, but there is no correlation between it and the answers given. This clearly shows that the occupational culture among professionals working in the medical field is really strong. However, differences appear when analyzing the influence of independent variable age on work conditions (54% of the variation can be explained by the age factor), remuneration (76% of the variation can be explained by age factor) and prospects of promotion (56% of variation can be explained by the age factor).

Table 2: Correlation between age, gender and work conditions, remuneration and prospects

	Work Conditions	Remuneration	Prospects of promotion
Age	0.543	0.767	0.558
Gender	0.000	0.01	0.068

Source: made by author

The generational culture has a high impact on the perception of professionals, as the shared assumptions and beliefs between the young and senior professionals are different.

Therefore, 85% of the respondents under age 35 are dissatisfied with the remuneration, 72% with the facilities and a staggering 91% with the job prospects. The respondents over age 35 are satisfied with the remuneration (62%), with the job prospects (71%), but dissatisfied with the facilities (64%). This can be explained by the fact that most of the seniors have lived most of their lives in communist period, while the young professionals have been educated in the capitalist spirit.

In order to increase the employee involvement and motivation, the managers should value the opinions of the professionals, as they are the ones that have the direct contact with the patients and eventually, they are the most important resource of the system. It would be a win-win situation, as a high level of motivation is correlated with high performance, and the information can be used to provide better healthcare services for the population. Even if by the nature of the activity, the medical field is extremely regulated by norms and rigid, the main goal being avoiding uncertainty and human errors, the management should also pay more attention to the organizational culture of the healthcare units, as it can play a significant role in the strategy for decreasing turnover rates (Dorothy, 2008).

5. Conclusions

In the public healthcare sector, the turnover rates for the professionals have been increasing at a steady pace over the past years. The opportunities found in the western European countries, both from a financial point of view, as well as from a career development perspective, have speed up the process. The low allocation of resources to the healthcare system, as compared to the European Union average translates in dated facilities, lack of personnel especially in the rural areas and also a tense work climate. The scientific literature shows that a low level of employee motivation leads to poor involvement of the personnel and poor organizational performance.

The empirical study shows that the age of the respondents

is a factor that has a direct correlation with the perception of the professionals regarding the work condition, the level of remuneration and the prospects of promotion. This confirms the initial hypothesis and can be explained by the fact that your professionals have been brought up in a different culture and can see easily the differences between Romanian health system and the corresponding ones from other EU member states (McAlearney, 2005). In addition, with seniority, the level of financial remuneration increases, as well as the professional status. This explains why the older respondents have a different perception.

The management should focus on giving more financial stimulants and offer more prospects for career development for your professionals, as well as investing more in the facilities and medical equipments. This can be achieved by a more efficient utilization of the funds and by a national strategy that should allocate a larger percent from GDP to the healthcare system. Last but not least, spending more on healthcare is an investment as studies show that increasing the life expectancy of the population also has a positive impact on GDP.

The limitations of this research refer to the number of respondents and their location, as the primary data were collected from medical personnel working in several hospitals located in Bucharest.

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