

HAS MEDICINE BECOME A BUSINESS TODAY

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1. ABSTRACT

This work aims to investigate the shift of healthcare from the traditional clinical patient centred model to the business model with reference to its ethical, professional and social impact. Analysing interviews with doctors and nurses and focusing on the results of the survey, the study reveals conflicts between business interests and human-oriented values. Topics covered are privatisation of the health care system players including BHP Billiton's private health care providers, pharmaceutical pricing models, and shifts surrounding the business of health care and health care as a public utility. The results therefore highlight the need to adopt a mixed model that can simultaneously provide financial profitability for the practice and fair delivery of and affordable care to patients. In doing so, this study enriches the conversation about how best to synergise efficiency with morality in globalised healthcare systems.

Key words: privatization of healthcare, dual healthcare model, profit-driven medicine, pharmaceutical pricing ethics.

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of the healthcare industry can be most vividly described as the movement from a medical and clinical model to a business and financial model. As these changes have brought the innovations and accessibility enhancements in many respects, they have simultaneously cast serious concerns and question about the ethical proportion between the financial and patients' interests. This has changed the landscape of HC systems eliminating barriers between physicians and patients and changing the overall delivery services.

This qualitative study will attempt to identify the impacts business has on health care values such as doctor patient relationship, quality health care access and ethical duties of health care providers. Thus, an attempt is made to explain the subject of the research in a broader perspective by considering the positive and negative possible effects of this change.

To this end, the study will use both the primary and secondary research techniques. The first type of data collection will be the interviews with health care professionals alongside the quantitative data collection in form of questionnaires, in as much as the focus is to garner different views about the subject. Secondary research is also meant to involve a review of the existing literature and case study to formulate theory. Therefore, adopting the mixed-method approach, the article will present the cross-sectional study of the contemporary development of business practices in medicine for critique of their affordances and constraints.

2. Literature Review

The Transformation of Medicine into Business Model

Recently the shift of the systems of healthcare from the patient-centered clinical model to a business model has been an area of interest of many people. This literature review synthesizes findings from three key articles exploring this phenomenon: The five reliable sources of

information for this topic include; “The Big Business Of Medicine: A Doctor Speaks The Truth” by Dr. Suzanne Steinbaum, “Medicine is a Profession, but Healthcare is a Business” from Healthcare Success and “When Medicine Becomes a Business” by LifeCraft.

“The Big Business Of Medicine: A Doctor Speaks The Truth”

In her article, Dr. Suzanne Steinbaum discusses the change in focus of healthcare organizations based on the major concept of profit. She points out that while facilities that are supposed to provide needed medical attention, such as hospitals, have shifted focus to more monetary gains. This concern with the profit is also inherent in the quality of offerings being made available to patients as well as the conditions under which personnel operate. To uphold the integrity of healthcare Steinbaum calls for systems solutions stating that the economic model of healthcare has erred (Steinbaum, 2019).

“While Medicine is a Profession, Health care is Business”

The article from Healthcare Success describes the tension between being a doctor and acting medicinally, and being a part of the large healthcare system masterfully. It states, for example, that physicians are inevitably organized into a profit-making set of structures while still striving to have the essence of a professions. The piece describes the difficult work roles and tasks of the practitioners exposed to such types of conflicts of interest and propose that the enhancement of business wisdom in the process of educating medical personnel could help to decrease some of the problems (Healthcare Success, n.d.).

Attitudes to Health Care: ‘When Medicine Becomes a Business’

Analyzing various aspects and features of the business-oriented transformation of medicine, LifeCraft’s article enlarges upon the latter’s social consequences. Of this, it elaborates on the impact it has on the doctor patient relationship whereby in most cases, business factors end up influencing clinical ones. A similar analysis is also done on the conflicts of interest since the innovation revenue generating ideas bring worries since they could be against the patient’s benefit. According to LifeCraft, the focus of the health care industry needs to be shifted so that the patient’s interest can stay as a main focus (LifeCraft, n.d.).

3. Research Methodology

This research tries to satisfy this gap by using primary and secondary data collection methods to assess the implications of business dealings on health providers and consumers. Combined approaches of qualitative and quantitative research means provide a rich understanding of the topic of the study.

Primary Research

Primary data was collected through a combination of interviews and surveys:

1. Qualitative Research:

SIX participants from the healthcare sector were interviewed via semi structured interviews, which included the selection of a GP, a nurse, an ms/PhD student, a policy analyst, a

patient and a healthcare administrator. These interviews were designed to elicit the participants' opinions on revenue generating strategies in contrast to the benefit to the client.

The method used in this analysis was thematic analysis applied to the pattern and themes of the interview response.

2. Quantitative Research:

A questionnaire was also administered to 110 healthcare practitioners and patients to obtain statistical analysis of opinion on profit-oriented health care. Hypothesis-based questions concerning the role of private players especially healthcare service providers, the power of the drug companies and participants' perceptions of whether healthcare should be a business or service. The result obtained was then used in descriptive analysis whereby probably the most frequent overall trends and deviations were outlined.

Secondary Research

Secondary data was collected from published peer reviewed articles, published policies and published reports from the health care systems. Convenience literature regarding the development of business in medicine, fiscal policies impacting health professionals, and new paradigms like concierge medicine acted as the theoretical foundation for the study. This approach helps to understand the identified research problem at the intersection of empirical and theoretical levels and provides a more comprehensive approach to analyzing the issue.

4. Survey questions

The questions set for this study, therefore seek to investigate tensions and ethical dilemmas associated with the commodification of health.

- **Have you ever thought that healthcare is now an industry chiefly motivated by the generation of profit?** - These set questions explore if the patient care interest or self-interest is the order de jour in today's health structures.

- **What is your attitude to the increased demand for private healthcare organizations?** – This query aims at tapping the perception of the people and the professional regarding privatization and impact of privatization on health care utilization and rationing.

- **In your opinion, do the representatives of the pharmaceutical companies give more importance to making money as against the people's health?** – This looks at the main ethical concerns within the pharmacy wholesale suppliers and manufacturers and effects on patients.

- **Should healthcare be a business or should it continue being a public service?** – This question raises questions in arguing the best organizational administrative health care system.

- **In your opinion what is the ultimate aim of contemporary healthcare?** – It is for this reason that by asking a question that aspires to grasp what is considered as a priority level in the contemporary healthcare system, this question is designed to compare and contrast the expectations of stakeholders and the realities of the system that they expect to deliver .

Together, these questions allow for an understanding of the contours of health care as both a commodity and a service, giving a starting point for future analysis in the study.

5. Interview questions

Profit-Driven Healthcare:

Do you feel healthcare today is more focused on making profits or providing quality care? Why?

Private Healthcare Providers:

What are your thoughts on the increasing number of private healthcare providers? Do they improve or harm access to healthcare?

Pharmaceutical Companies:

In your opinion, do pharmaceutical companies prioritize profits over the health and well-being of patients? How does this affect healthcare overall?

Healthcare as a Business or Public Service:

Should healthcare operate more like a business or stay as a public service? What do you think is the best way to balance these approaches?

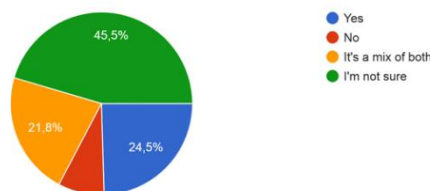
Goal of Modern Healthcare:

What do you think the main goal of modern healthcare should be: providing care for everyone, generating profits, or balancing both?

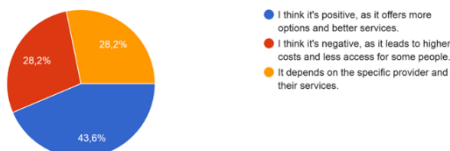
6. Research Findings

● Primary research results

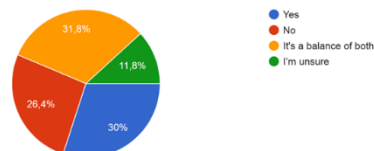
Do you believe that healthcare is primarily driven by profit today?
110 ответов



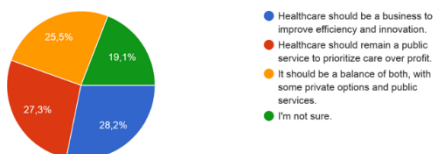
How do you feel about the growing number of private healthcare providers?
110 ответов



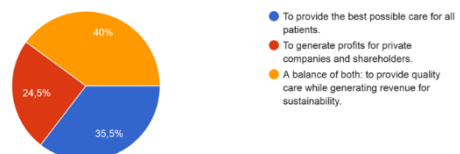
Do you think pharmaceutical companies prioritize profits over the health and well-being of patients?
110 ответов



Do you think healthcare should be a business or should it remain a public service?
110 ответов



In your opinion, what is the main goal of modern healthcare?
110 ответов



● Interview results

Interviewee 1: Dr. Iskandar Tursunov - General practitioner

1. Profit-Driven Healthcare:

“Healthcare, today, is more and more a commercial business venture.” That is why in my practice, I found out that administration is often inclined towards making savings than in delivering appropriate patient care. For instance, while employing strategies to reduce costs such as downsizing the workforce, hospitals will affect the amount and quality of care we afford patients.”

2. Private Healthcare Providers:

“Private providers have clearly set the pace in regard to technology and infrastructure. But they only allow specific patients who can afford the high costs involved and this makes inequality. For instance, while the individuals with money can get more superior treatment, others continue waiting in poorly endowed public hospitals.”

3. Pharmaceutical Companies:

“This means pharmaceutical companies may set the cost of life-saving drugs at levels that are prohibitive to most common MDC patient. As much as I agreed that investments should be made through profits for the funding of research, I have realized that patients would abandon necessary treatments because of expensive bills.”

4. Healthcare as a Business or Public Service:

“Healthcare is supposed to be a public asset in the first place. The needs of the vulnerable populations are least of concerns as soon as profit becomes the focal point of an organization. Public healthcare delivery ensures access by all, a factor which may not be well captured by private systems of care delivery.”

5. Goal of Modern Healthcare:

“An ideal model of future healthcare system should be available to everyone, irrespective of status, and financial input to develop an effective mechanism of financial sustainability”.

Interviewee 2: Nilufar Ahmedova - Nurse

1. Profit-Driven Healthcare:

“It’s a mix. Even though rational incentives are essential to secure financial resources and run the facilities, they result in choices that endanger patients. For example, patient quotas neglect time for each patient and imply a decrease in the quality of the interactions.”

2. Private Healthcare Providers:

“Getting health care from a private health care provider has its pros and cons. While, they have short waiting time and provide better remuneration package for its staff, they disadvantage patients with low income by making health care less affordable to them.”

3. Pharmaceutical Companies:

“They know that they can make a lot of money while their generic drugs harm more people. I’ve seen patients even squandalizable afford generics, and that is frustrating to imagine, that drugs are necessary for people’s lives.”

4. Healthcare as a Business or Public Service:

“I would like to see a combination where government is responsible for service delivery across the country while markets instigate competition. Like this, the Government will be able to conserve equity while also moving forward at the same time.”

5. Goal of Modern Healthcare:

“The main aim should always be to give maximum care possible but such a system should in equal measure be able to run for there to be maximum services running for maximum people.”

Interviewee 3: Shakhzod Karimov-Medical Student

1.Profit-Driven Healthcare:

“In my internships I have perceived that the pecuniary interest comes first. For instance, this means that patients who have insurance companies that can pay the hospital more are treated prioritarly to patients who have serious diseases that can worsen if treated later.”

2.Private Healthcare Providers:

“Private healthcare can offer considerable dynamism and first-rate provision; in like manner, it means the existence of two systems – one for the growing middle classes and another for the comparatively well-off population. Such inequality is unreasonable, particularly in instances when people’s lives depend on the speed of their treatment.”

3.Pharmaceutical Companies:

“Pharmaceutical firms occupy a very delicate balance as far as I am concerned. It enhances research on profits but at the same time demoralizes patient since they cannot afford to pay for expensive drugs.”

4.Healthcare as a Business or Public Service:

“Health care ought to be much more public utilities oriented. The internet should be accessible to everyone, without regard for their ability to pay.”

5.Goal of Modern Healthcare:

“It should be aimed at making equity, innovation, as well as sustainability the goals of the development of the field while promoting its progress and not forgetting about people who might become victims of innovative processes.”

Interviewee 4: Mahliyo Abdurahmonova - Health Policy Analyst

1.Profit-Driven Healthcare:

“In the current world, financial motivated systems have become popular in today’s health facilities especially in the private sectors. These models tend to focus on such variables as indicated by the bed turnover rates and attempting to reduce the costs as much as possible all through negating on the welfare of the patients.”

2.Private Healthcare Providers:

“The personal national suppliers enhance competition and therefore quality and innovation is enhanced. However, they also therefore deepen inequalities within a system that has both winners and losers, the haves and the have-nots of expensive healthcare services.”

3.Pharmaceutical Companies:

“Pharmaceutical firms often get motivated by the desire to make profits; at the expense of the societies in most cases.”

4.Healthcare as a Business or Public Service:

“That then gives an impression that a blended approach is the only way forward. What I believe is that the fundamentals of health care should be free for all people of the society and should be strong while other private firms and companies should just work on the advancement of these fundamental health care services.”

5.Goal of Modern Healthcare:

”As much as it works to provide quality health care to everyone, modern health care should also work towards being fiscally responsible and the proliferation of innovative practical solutions for long term efficiency.”

Interviewee 5:Akmal Saidov-
Patient

1.Profit-Driven Healthcare:

”Especially with all these politics with the students – I feel like everything is about money now. In the current society, I have come across women who elected between paying rent or buying their medicine. My life was not what it used to be, it’s painful when everything that keeps you alive is in your pocket, bank account that is.”

2.Private Healthcare Providers:

”The use of private clinics are easy, but the poor such as me cannot be able to afford the payments. This is why I use the public hospitals most of which are poorly equipped and manned by a shortage of qualified staff.”

3.Pharmaceutical Companies:

”Profits for producers appear to be more important than patients, is what many people are making known. My medication is expensive than what I can afford, insurance sometimes do not even fund the cost of this medication.”

4.Healthcare as a Business or Public Service:

”This is the case; therefore, healthcare should be a public service. Not a single individual should have to endure or pass away because they cannot afford their medical costs.”

5.Goal of Modern Healthcare:

”The notion underlying this should be that every person should be able to afford good quality of care in his or her times of ill-health at any given time.”

Interviewee 6: Dildora Rasulova-Healthcare Administrator

1.Profit-Driven Healthcare:

”It is imperative for health care institutions to achieved with profit motives but these motives should not be achieve at the detriment of the patients. For instance, while managing the operational costs it becomes difficult to meet the needs of all the patients as noticed by the researcher in his or her everyday practice.”

2.Private Healthcare Providers:

”They conclude that private providers introduce innovation and effective strategies of managing the resources and that there must be compatibility of private providers with the public systems in order to make them available to all.”

3.Pharmaceutical Companies:

”This means while pharmaceutical firms have a celebrated role in the development of new drugs their pricing mechanisms are regressive, lesser thought needs to be given to patients.”

4.Healthcare as a Business or Public Service:

“A dual system would be appropriate, that is the public sector for the primary needs and the private sector for the more advanced health care services. This approach makes access possible while promoting innovation simultaneously.

5.Goal of Modern Healthcare:

“They stated it as to provide excellent patient care in the most cost effective manner and in equal measure provide for the financial imperative and fair coverage for every patient.”

7. Discussion

1. Culture of Healthcare as Business Organization

In the survey it was established that 24.5% of the respondents agree that health care is mainly profit oriented and 45.5% of them hold no opinion about the same. A considerable 21.8% of the respondents’ feel that it is both profit and service oriented organisation. Evident from this data is a high level of unclear or doubted intention of modern health systems. It reflects popular attitudes toward a future commercialization of the system and its effects on balancing access to good healthcare for everyone. This finding will conform and contribute to continuing discussions on whether or not profit motives erode the ethical delivery of care.

2. Perceptions on Private Health Care Organizations

When it comes to an increase in the number of private health care providers the response was somewhat positive as 43.6% respondents favoured the situation because of scaled up options and better quality of services. Yet, an equal percentage of respondents (28,2%) consider it as negative trends because it could be more costly and some populations have less access to it. They suggest that there is a clear conflict between opportunities generated by innovation and threats stemming from the widening inequality. This polarization means that the countries need to have policies that will foster private sector development while sustaining the gains made on affordability and access.

3. Motivation of Pharmaceutical Companies and Profit Making

A clearly raised 31.8% of respondents expressed that the pharmaceutical companies instead of extending the patients’ care, they seek revenue, while 30% agreed on moderate in the middle of the two extreme. In turn, arguing that some participants do trust these companies’ intentions, 26.4% of the participants disagree with it. Thus, the insights under discussion evidence a rather complex public image of the pharmaceutical business, in which profit-making interests are both recognised and doubted. When people and businesses are transparent and engage in ethically correct practices they trust that the public will pitch in.

4. The future of Healthcare as a Business or Public Service

The respondents were divided as to whether the health care sector should continue to offer service as a public service or not as a business. Thus, whereas 28.2% of responders pointed toward more of a business model as the way to foster innovation and efficiency, 27.3% pointed toward keeping it nearer to a public service model. Another 25.5% support the model half and half. This variety of approaches is quite understandable given the fact that it is very hard to reconcile such economic rationality with the principle of the organization’s ethical Charter based on the provision of healthcare for everybody.

5. Concerning the main goal of modern healthcare:

40 percent quoted the organization to offer both quality health care services as well as make revenue, 35.5 percent considered the organization’s health care services provision, and the rest

24.5 percent were in a way that do not necessarily have to focus on making revenue. It is the implication that a paradigm change wherein healthcare entities need to embrace the duality of goals is now acceptable. This change in perception among the consumer should be acknowledged to provide a powerful impetus for the erection of structures that fit patient needs as well as long-term approaches to healthcare delivery.

Discussion of interview

The semi-structured interviews conducted with six participants including health care professionals, a policy analyst, a patient and an administrator give a exhaustive insight into the effects of profit motivated HC and PP.

Profit-Driven Healthcare

There was a consensus among all the respondents about the fact that, unfortunately, the profit motive has expanded its role in contemporary healthcare systems, but views varied in relation to this. Dr. Iskandar Tursunov and Shakhzod Karimov also noted that there is an idea of the financial priority interfering with the patient care priorities, for instance, resources allocation between cost effective measures, or rich patients. Likewise, Akmal Saidov expressed pains of a patient who is forced to balance between basic needs such as feeding, clothing among other things, and the costs of getting medical bills showing that profit motivated models come with socioeconomic realities. On the other hand, Dildora Rasulova agreed with the need for profits to be made to fund operations while stressing the need to keep the patient at the heart of those operations. This division emphasises the various essential yet rocky relationship of profitability and accessibility.

Private Healthcare Providers

Private healthcare providers' responsibilities came out to be on the positive side with a twist. More of the participants like from the case of Nilufar Ahmedova Mahliyo Abdurahmonova -welcomed private providers for encouraging innovation, providing better technologies and most importantly short waiting time. But they also approved that private institutions increase healthcare inequality because they termed they are more relevant to the rich. This was also expressed by Karimov who pointed at the "two-tier system" that discriminates on the subject of access to affordable and quality healthcare, vulnerable groups of people. Speaking as an inpatient who has to receive treatment in public facilities, Saidov could not help but see crowded hospitals as the result of setting up a large number of highly paid private clinics. Such reflections suggest that efforts toward public-private partnerships should be more intense with the goal of narrowing the gaps.

Evaluations of Pharmaceutical Companies In all the interviews, the pharmaceutical firms were regarded as being motivated by profit rather than the well being of the patients.e. Dr. Tursunov and Ahmedova described expensive prices of medicines as one of the forms of healthcare access, explained personally with reference to Saidov. They appreciate the fact that patented drugs profits fund new inventions, but they spoke of ethical pricing. According to Rasulova, increasing transparency and developing patient-oriented notions can help to resolve this problem; however, a regulatory approach is apparently needed to ensure the coordination between the orientations in the sphere of innovations and prices.

Healthcare As Business or Service

An issue that emerged time and again during the interviews was dichotomy between healthcare as a public service or a business. Whereas Dr. Tursonov and Karimov seem to argue for the public service model to guarantee access for all, Ahmedova and Rasulova propose the concept of integrating public accessibility together with private initiatives. This point of view recognizes the interdependency between both sectors in realizing the principles of health systems, which necessarily call for equitable and sustainability.

Goal of Modern Healthcare

Specifically, equity, innovation and financial sustainability were identified among the participants as the main goals of modern healthcare. Ahmedova and Karimov also cherish these principles as an ideal model of nurses' work, which, however, takes into account patients' needs and economic constraints. Abdurahmonova also stressed the necessity for systemic cooperation in the provision of services focused on eradicating inequality. While Rasulova emphasized the effectiveness of creating services that actively deliver quality diversified healthcare services. Altogether, it is possible to outline the following approaches that still can see a healthcare system ready to develop innovations and at the same time, serve its population.

8. Conclusion

This paper attempts to explain the interactive patterns of the healthcare sector in transformation from patient oriented services to business oriented medical services. Forums have discovered the accelerated privatization and business strategies in health have brought in the innovations, efficiency, and improving technology but paralled by magnifying disparities in access, affordability, and equity. The views from the surveys and interviews corroborated establish that healthcare is both a service delivery arm and a business organization thus exposing the ethical questions and social economic issues derived there from.

Many views expressed by respondents showed that although profit incentives are as important to ensure survival and delivery of health services, they add to the erosion of quality patient treatment and contribute to inequity through the high cost of drugs as well as access to private health facilities. The research raises a concern on the system in which healthcare facilities can operate, suggesting a need to develop a dual model that has both economic viability and social justice component. This model should be a means of linking public sector openness and private sector creativity to meet two distinct goals, that is, the concerns of efficiency and the patient.

Finally, this work signals for structural changes in the financial sector that respect clarity, integrity, and partnership of government and business. With nursing economic values properly aligned with nursing patient advocacy values, healthcare systems could change direction with expectations of modern society without sacrificing patient outcomes for any nurse or healthcare consumer.

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