

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

BUILDING CAPACITY AND ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE OF THE HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS REGARDING HEALTHCARE FINANCING IN PAKISTAN

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Background: The Office of Research, Innovation, And Commercialization (ORIC) of the Health Services Academy in Collaboration with the Punjab Employees Social Security Institution (PESSI) and the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) organized and conducted a 2-day training workshop on “Healthcare Financing”. This was intended to learn about healthcare finance by analyzing government regulations, private companies, and international collaboration. Explore various funding sources for healthcare, observe how healthcare operates around the world, and devise effective money management strategies so that healthcare can expand and benefit everyone.

Aims: This paper reports on the training program, which aims to train healthcare providers on the concepts of healthcare financing and build their understanding and knowledge of healthcare systems, models, and implementation of intelligent financing strategies for sustainable financial growth and organizational success. **Methods:** A team of experts developed the curriculum and its accompanying material. Initial training was given to the healthcare providers of all participating institutions. Staff from public and private hospitals enrolled in the training and other frontline healthcare workers were invited. Four types of educational material were produced and used; a guidance booklet, a training video, and a set of PowerPoint presentations to explain the HCF and its importance. **Results:** A 2-day training workshop was conducted in which the pre- and post-knowledge regarding the HCF of all the participants was assessed. All the participants belonged to public health fields and all of the participants were public health experts. **Conclusion:** With limited resources and in a short period, the ORIC with the collaboration of PESSI and GIZ trained a good amount of healthcare workers to address the complex challenges and opportunities within the industry and key aspects of healthcare financing, from the evolving payment mechanisms and emerging trends to the global perspective on funding health initiatives

Keywords: Healthcare; Trainings; Workers; Health

Citation: Naeem N, Aslam R, Kumar N, Raza I, Naeem K, Kumar R. Building capacity and enhancing knowledge of the healthcare providers regarding healthcare financing in Pakistan. J Ayub Med Coll Abbottabad 2024;36(4):841–3.

DOI: 10.55519/JAMC-04-13995

INTRODUCTION

Health financing is concerned with the generation, allocation, and utilization of financial resources in healthcare systems. One of the key changes confronting the national health system is the scarcity of funds to deliver health services. Pakistan's total per capita expenditure in 2013 was US\$ 37, with the government spending 37% (US\$ 13.7), the remainder being out-of-pocket payments by individuals and households (55%), and those from external sources (7%). Total health expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product are 2.8%.^{1,2}

Implementing national health insurance plans is supposed to minimize individuals' and households' out-of-

pocket expenses and protect against catastrophic costs. Furthermore, the various models of Public-Private Partnerships will play a role in increasing the efficiency of system operations, which are likely to be reproduced and mainstreamed in many service delivery sectors.³

The focus of WHO assistance is to promote and advocate for increased resource allocation and mobilization toward UHC attainment through advocacy, national health finance policy formulation, and promotion of PPP schemes. National and provincial advocacy efforts to boost resource allocations, assistance to national health insurance plans, Examine and encouraging the replication of public-private

partnership projects, and creating a national health finance policy are some of the examples.⁴

Challenges in global health financing include the difficulty in procuring funds for global public goods, health systems strengthening, and long-term investments in global health.⁵ However, when structured well, these types of investments can have robust and sustainable returns. There is also a need to address issues of volatility, fragmentation, and fungibility in health aid. Despite progress, global health financing faces numerous challenges.⁶

To understand these concepts and overcome the financial burden on health systems, the Office of Research, Innovation, And Commercialization (ORIC) in collaboration with Punjab Employees Social Security Institution (PESSI) and the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) arranged and disseminated a two-day training on the healthcare financing. This training aimed at developing a profound understanding of the key principles of healthcare financing, the influence of government policies, private sector involvement, and international collaborations on healthcare financial landscapes, and advanced financial management techniques and implementation of intelligent financing strategies for sustainable financial growth.

METHODS

Training program: The purpose of this training was to train the healthcare workers on healthcare financing techniques and how these techniques can be used to generate and manage funds for the betterment of healthcare systems and communities that they serve.

Program design: The ORIC of Health Services Academy, an established national in-service training, research, and academic institution attached to the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation, and Coordination, in collaboration with PESSI and GIZ, undertook this training program. It called the participants belonging to various fields of medicine and healthcare and from different healthcare institutions such as NIH etc. A team of experts in designing and delivering healthcare training developed the curriculum and its accompanying material. The Health Services Academy maintained a list of registered participants and those who completed the training, and supported activities throughout

Training material: Three educational materials were produced: a curriculum booklet, documentary videos, and PowerPoint presentations to explain the HCF and its importance. The guidance booklet was a reference document for each participant and contained details of HCF that can be practiced according to the type of expenditure, funding, or any financial activity. The training videos were short documentaries on the history and trends of HCF. The

PowerPoint presentation slides had a detailed description and in-depth knowledge about Healthcare Systems and Models, government and private sector financing, healthcare payment mechanisms, global health financing, smart financing strategies, and emerging trends and innovations.

RESULTS

The training was given to the healthcare workers and public health practitioners. The training lasted for 2 days. A pre and post-test was conducted to evaluate their knowledge before they took the training and after the training. Before the onset of the training, a pre-test was conducted on all the participants (Figure-1). Then the training on different modules of HCF was disseminated to them. The knowledge of the participants was built and on day 2 the participants were given a post-test (Figure-2).

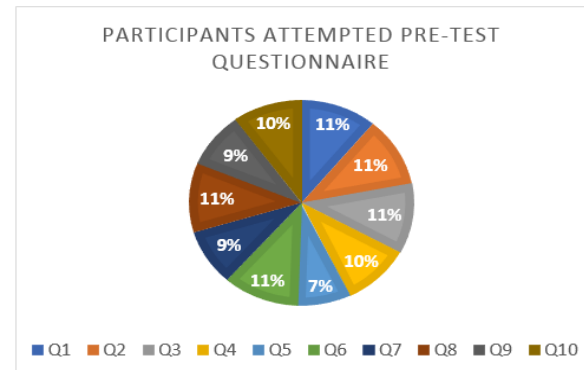


Figure-1

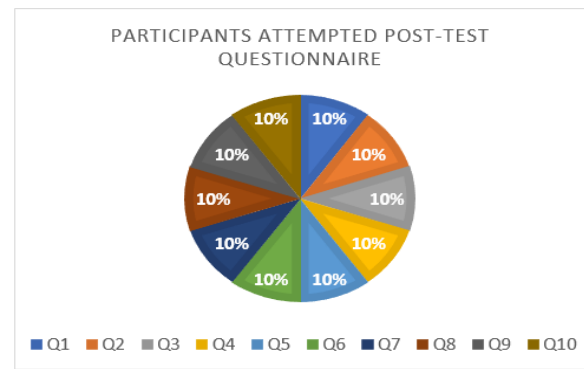


Figure-2

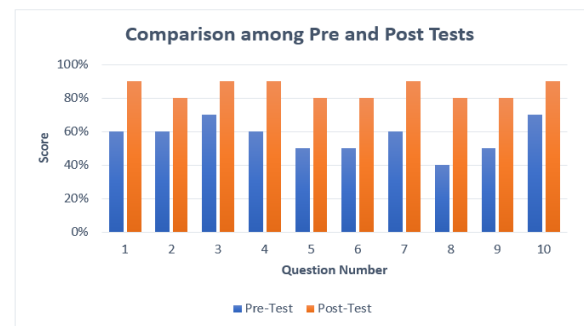


Figure-3

The success of this practice is reflected in the Figure-3. This shows that the knowledge of the participants on HCF before the training was very low which enhanced to an exemplary level after the session. This recommends that if such training sessions are arranged and disseminated, we can produce more knowledgeable healthcare professionals concerning HCF strategies and decision-making.

DISCUSSION

Healthcare staff must be knowledgeable about healthcare financing to allocate resources effectively and make sound decisions. However, research reveals that financial literacy among healthcare workers might be inadequate, emphasizing the necessity for adding finance management into the curriculum of healthcare-linked courses.⁷ This is especially crucial for physician leaders, who face specific financial strains in the healthcare system, particularly in the context of budgetary problems caused by COVID-19.⁸ Improving financial health literacy and knowing the costs of healthcare are also necessary for shared decision-making and patient engagement.⁹ Nurses, in particular, are encouraged to enhance their knowledge of healthcare finance to better grasp its relationship to patient care and organizational financial health.¹⁰ Effective financial management in healthcare is critical for managing the industry's rising complexity and navigating difficulties such as regulatory compliance, cost reduction, and asset management.

This training session aimed at enhancing the knowledge of the healthcare providers regarding the HCF and catastrophic spending and purchasing. Through the 2-day training, using the HCF curriculum, PowerPoint slides, and documentaries, the knowledge of the HCPs was enhanced and that was evident from the results. The knowledge of the participants was enhanced after training.

CONCLUSION

From the literature and practices, it can be seen that how the funding in the healthcare is complicated. Expert insights give light on critical aspects of healthcare financing, such as evolving payment methods, emerging trends, and a global perspective on funding health programs. Policymakers and stakeholders must understand various healthcare models,

funding mechanisms, and the influence of social variables on health outcomes. Smart financing solutions, such as innovative investments and fair healthcare funding, are critical for maximizing resources for long-term and favourable health outcomes. These debates illustrate continuous efforts to strike a balance between economic principles, cost-effectiveness, and the ethical imperative for equitable access to healthcare. In short, navigating the evolving terrain of healthcare funding necessitates collaboration, adaptation, and a complete understanding of how economic forces, social considerations, and ethics work together to produce a healthier and more equitable world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

We extend gratitude to all of the training facilitators who contributed to the sessions.

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Submitted: October 30, 2024

Revised: November 18, 2024

Accepted: November 21, 2024

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