



Professional article

ACTA FAC MED NAISS 2009; 26 (3): 143-149

Roberta Marković¹, Milena Vasić²,
 Čedomir Šagrić³, Zorana Deljanin³,
 Nataša Rančić¹, Stanko Marjanović¹

¹Public Health Institute Niš,
 Niš, Serbia

²Public Health Institute Belgrade,
 Belgrade, Serbia

³Faculty of Medicine in Niš,
 Niš, Serbia

NEED FOR SYSTEMATIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN HEALTH MANAGEMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

SUMMARY

The aim of the paper was to do a comprehensive situation analysis and to clarify main gaps in education and training related to Health Management in Serbia and to propose possible directions for solving such situation. The study was performed in 2007 as a part of Ministry of Health/EAR CEEN/ECORIS Project "Training in Health Management", and gathered information provided by more of 80 key professionals working in the field of Health and Education. A mixture of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, literature review and qualitative analysis were used to triangulate and come up with common conclusions.

The conclusions reached by all groups of professionals are the following: there is a big gap in knowledge and skills regarding the Health Management across Serbia and a real need for such education, especially acknowledgment on application and use of managerial tools; Health Management education and trainings have been developed and implemented through formal institutions and various kinds of ad-hoc, short-term education in recent years, but there is no unified database on these educational courses; schools of medicine in Serbia, as well as the Faculty of Organizational Sciences (FOS) do have capacities to develop and implement educational programs related to management in Health; Healthcare law and University law need to be harmonized.

Key words: management, education and training

INTRODUCTION

Management, health management and manager in the health system were frequently mentioned terms in the Republic of Serbia in the last ten years. Non-understanding and wrong perception of these terms were the reasons for not accepting management as the phrase, but also as a process and the group of skills needed for practical work. At the same time, the majority of the population in Serbia has been recognizing just leadership in Health Management, and the term *manager* to the majority was equivalent to *leader, or director of health facility*. For

a long period of time, the lack of adequate information and systematic education in Health Management has postponed the forming of *critical mass* of health professionals who understand the core and importance of Health Management, and have needed knowledge and managerial skills that could be used for better organization of work and new style of managing. Structuring this *critical mass* of health professionals became one of the main objectives of the Ministry of Health of Serbia&EAR Project regarding education and training in Health Management (1).

According to the 2007 Decree on Health Institutions, there are 343 health institutions at

different levels of care: 208 at primary, 76 at secondary, 27 at tertiary and 32 which cross more than one level of care. There are over 112.000 permanent staff working in the public healthcare provider network in Serbia (according to the Public Health Institute database from June 2006).

Serbia has an extensive network of public health facilities that basically provide free healthcare for all citizens, and a parallel private sector that is developing rapidly but which is poorly regulated and serves only a small, but rising, percentage of the population. There is considerable inefficiency in the system. The public health system is financed by earmarked payroll taxes via the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) and out-of-pocket payments. Providers are mostly public and contracted by the NHIF. The viability of the system is challenged by the reduced financial basis of health insurance contributions and transparency of both public and private sector (2 million employed financing 7 million insured) (2).

Serbia has no formal definition of health manager, nor any official definition of or delineation between senior and middle managers; the majority is doctors (3).

At present, there is no clear career pathway for health managers, nor entry-level positions and ongoing professional development for them. There is no dedicated national professional body they can join. The assumption that management is best done by doctors is rarely challenged.

New legislation enacted in 2005 will significantly impact on the responsibilities, selection of, and professional development of health managers. The 2005 Health law decentralises primary health care services to municipal level and begins a trend of decentralisation of services that is likely to continue. Open recruitment for directors has commenced, and non-medical applicants are required to have recognised qualifications in health management. The first national tertiary level education accreditation is underway and encompasses institutions, curricula and staff; this will impact on future degree level courses in health management. Professional associations have new responsibilities that will include monitoring the current compulsory continuous professional development of health staff (4).

In 2000, all international agencies working in the field of health in Serbia agreed there was a big gap in Serbian Health Management in health facilities (5).

From 2001, with the aid of the European Union (EU), World Bank (WB), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), etc., the

Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia is in the process of expanding the capacities and skills of the health workforce in order to achieve the successful healthcare reform and accomplish necessary steps for EU integration (6).

The aim of the work was to do a comprehensive situation analysis and to clarify the main gaps in education and training related to Health Management in Serbia and to propose possible directions for solving such situation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was performed in 2007 as a part of CEEN/ECORIS, EAR/Ministry of Health Project "Training in Health Management".

A mixture of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, desk review and qualitative analysis were used to triangulate and test findings.

On the whole, over 100 crucial people working in the field of health system and in the field of education in Serbia, were consulted directly during the project (assistants in the Ministry of Health, State secretary for Health, representatives of Health Insurance Fund of Serbia, deans of four medical schools, rectors of four universities, directors of Public Health Institutes, representative of Nurse Chamber, representatives of several international agencies working in Serbia in the field of health-WHO, WB, EPOS, Carl Bro, SOFRECO, Euro Health Group).

Four focus groups gathered more than 80 professionals, with groups in Belgrade, Kragujevac, Niš and Novi Sad in order to clarify the situation in Serbia related to the Health Management in practice, as well education, and what our objectives are.

First two focus groups included the leading figures from the Academy, deans of medical schools (Niš, Belgrade, Kragujevac and Novi Sad), rectors of four Universities, dean of the Faculty for Organizational Sciences, professors working in the field of Public Health, and the Ministry of Health representatives. Each lasted for two hours. Focus of discussion was on the present situation in education system, present educations in Health Management which are implemented in the field, capacities of educational institutions to develop such education and trainings, ways of possible cooperation. Of special importance was to recognize the weaknesses and strong points.

Two following focus groups gathered more than 40 educators and EU funded project staff and representatives of international agencies which have run some educations in Management with support of Ministry of Health (WHO, WB, EPOS, Carl Bro, SOFRECO, Euro Health Group). It was originally

scheduled for two hours but was extended to three at the request of the participants who wished to continue the discussions. Main topics of discussion were experiences from programs of education, needs for trainings in Health Management, methodology of education and training, targeting to potential participants).

Semi-structured interviews with previously prepared list of questions were made with 22 professionals who just met in one-way discussion (Minister assistants and representatives of the Ministry of Health, State secretary for Health, representatives of Health Insurance Fund of Serbia, representative of Nurse Chamber, health professional who obtained diplomas in different types of education in Health Management). These people were seen as crucial for supporting strengthening education environment in Serbia. All interviewed professionals were asked the following questions:

1. What is the present situation in the Health Management in Serbia?
2. What are the weaknesses in education related to management?
3. Are there some educational organizations that have capacities to develop and lead some educational programs related to Health Management?

Through these discussions, gathering academic professionals, international educators and trainers, and health system professionals, few fields of perception could be gathered. The feedback that rose from these workshops, focus groups and semi-structured interviews were used for coming up with conclusions and results presented in this work.

All available written resources were used, including a review of current and draft legislation, related projects in the health sector and relevant local and international literature.

RESULTS

Results of focus group discussion organized with international agencies, supported by numerous documents and reports are as following:

In the period from 2001, series of different Health Management education and trainings have been organized and implemented by international agencies working with and without the Ministry of Health involvement. Management educational programs were developed at some schools of medicine and private faculties in Serbia, too. In 2001, WHO ran the course provided by Boston University School of Public Health, few months after EAR provided basic education on Health Management through the Project "Support to Public Health Development". Carl Bro/ Euro Health Group effectuated the education through the Project

"Capacity building of the Ministry of Health". In order to foster health practitioner's capacities and skills in four regional hospitals in Kraljevo, Valjevo, Zrenjanin and Vranje, the World Bank organized trainings in Health Management. UNDP has provided training in project management and human resources management assisting the Ministry of Health with improving its capacity to carry out reform (Table 1) (7).

Conclusions of the firstly organized focus groups were as following:

There were also several teaching institutions in Serbia that have established and run different types of Health Management education and trainings: Faculty for Organizational Science, Schools of Medicine in Niš and Kragujevac, School of Public Health Belgrade, Megatrend University (Table 2) (8).

Common conclusions

Conclusions resulted as common opinion of all groups of professionals is grouped in following topics:

I Analyses of present situation in Health Management in Serbia have shown:

- There is a big gap in knowledge and skills regarding Health Management in Serbia and real need for such educations.

- Education and training in Health Management is absolutely needed.

- Political environment has strong influence on all segments of work.

- Health Care Law and University law are not harmonized.

- Health Care System has problems recognizing qualifications (problems of recognizing certificates and diplomas from some schools and faculties that have been established in recent years).

- Problem of centralization and lack of decentralization (managers face problems addressing resource allocation).

- Some Health Management education and trainings have been developed and led through formal institutions and many non-formal, short-term educational activities have been organized as well.

- Ministry of Health Sector for International cooperation did not have unified database on Health Management education and training provided in the period 2000-2001.

II Following points have been recognized as crucial for further work:

- Decentralization of trainings (trainings should be organized in all University centers, not just in Belgrade).

- Education should be comprehensive and should cover all hierarchy levels of management in

Table 1: Education and trainings related to Management in Health held in Serbia in 2001-2007

Organization	Basic characteristics
WHO	In 2001, WHO ran a five-day course provided by Boston University School of Public Health for 30 senior health staff on Health Management; School of Public Health was established through the Project.
EAR	Education was continued through the Project "Support to Public Health Development" which had provided the basic education on Health Management, targeting health professionals from different health facilities. The total number of participants included in all training activities thus far is approximately 1.090.
Carl Bro/ Euro Health Group	During the Project "Capacity building of the Ministry of Health", Carl Bro/Euro Health Group has implemented Health Management educations/trainings based on active learning. 250 health professionals from MOH and 21 hospitals participated.
WB	Through WB programme, fostering restructuring of four regional hospitals: Kraljevo, Valjevo, Zrenjanin and Vranje, Health Management trainings were organized in order to foster health practitioner's capacities and skills.
UNICEF	1.195 doctors and 1.900 nurses working in the primary health care of women and children were trained by UNICEF, as a part of "Economic assistance to the EES affected by the developments in the Balkans" as a part of Project of Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses.
ACDI/VOCA, ADF, CHF, IRD, Mercy Corps, IRD-USAID	Four CRDA Agencies (<i>ACDI/VOCA, ADF, CHF, IRD, Mercy Corps and IRD</i>) in the period 2002-2005 organized series of educational activities for health and non-health staff, targeting general managerial issues regarding reproductive health. A three-day lasting seminar for 35 journalists focusing Management of information related to RH/FP was organized, too.
Clinical centre Belgrade/EHMA	The first South Eastern Europe Conference on Health Service Management (SEE Hospital 1) was organized in Belgrade (November 2006) by Clinical Centre Belgrade/EHMA, under auspice of MOH and School of Medicine University of Belgrade. Conference brought contemporary overview of selected managerial issues, applicable in local settings on short- or mid-term, to health professionals holding managerial positions.
UNDP	UNDP has provided training in project management and human resources management assisting the Ministry of Health with improving its capacity to carry out reform. The Minister's cabinet reorganization proposal has been developed throughout the Project. Two-day workshop on "Negotiation Skills and Techniques" was organized in Belgrade in September 2005 for 27 participants from various national and federal ministries, and MOH, too.
Educations/Trainings related to General Management	
Agency for drugs and medical means	Several one-day seminars targeting "Improvement of internal business communication in Health", and "Applied communication in Pharmacy" was organized for more than 50 participants .
Pharmaceutical Association in Serbia	In cooperation with Pharmaceutical Association in Serbia, the Association of pharmaceutical technicians in Serbia organized one-day and two-day seminars "Management and Marketing", targeting importance and application of management and marketing principles in pharmacy.
Education/Trainings more oriented to Public Health with overview on managerial topics	
SMDP in partnership with CSPH, SPH and OSI	Since 2004, Sustainable Management Development Program (SMDP) has partnered with the Centre School of Public Health at the University of Belgrade, School of Medicine, and the Open Society Institute (OSI) in Serbia to implement a three-year community health development project endorsed by the Serbia and Montenegro Ministry of Health. In the first phase of the program, multidisciplinary teams under the leadership of the regional Institutes of Public Health (IPH) were formed in four pilot regions: Pancevo, Sabac, Sombor, and Leskovac.

Table 2: Education in Health Management led in official teaching institutions in Serbia in 1999-2007

Education in Health Management implemented in official teaching institutions in Serbia in 1999 - 2007	
Organization	Basic characteristics
School for Health Management at the Institute „Dr Jovan Jovanovic Batut“	In 1999, director of the Institute „Dr Jovan Jovanovic Batut“ established the very first School for Health Management. Participants were mostly directors of different health facilities. Work of the School lasted just for a year.
School of Public Health at Faculty of Medicine in Belgrade	„Master of Public Health“ lasts for two years, and it is conducted in the form of modules, according to ECTS. There are 11 obligatory and 7 elective modules. Methodology of work is based on: problem-solving, decision-making and team work. Master fosters interdisciplinary and multi-professional approach, international cooperation and ethical cooperation. Professional title obtained after completion of the MPH study is Specialist of Public Health ¹ .
Faculty for Organizational Sciences	From 2001 till the present time, FOS has launched different types of courses and educational programs: One-year specialization studies “Management in Health services”, several types of three-day seminars: “Management in Health services”, “Public relations in Health Facilities”, “Business Plan in Health” and education in Management for nurses. Methodology of work is mostly unique for all types of educational programs: interactive lectures, workshops, roll play, practical examples presentation.
Faculty of Medicine in Niš	Till 2007, Health Management education was provided through one semester lasting obligatory subject “Health Management and Informatics”, at the College of Nursing. It is a subject with 60 theory and 60 practical classes. Methodology of work is interactive learning and workshops for groups of students. Objective of “Health Management and Informatics” is adoption of modern managerial approach, significant for Health system functioning. Subject covers main Health Management topics, issues and processes vital for health program implementation through integration of health system, control, monitoring, and evaluation. Preparation of seminars is obligatory. Health Management education is also provided through one-semester lasting elective subject “Health Management”, at the School of Dentistry in Niš.
Faculty of Medicine in Kragujevac	There are three-year doctoral PHD studies in Health Management. PHD studies started in 2006, defined and implemented according to Bologna principles. After two years of preparation, PHD studies are accredited by the Ministry of Education. Thirteen health and non-health professionals are involved.
Faculty of Medicine in Novi Sad	Health Management training is provided through one-seminar lasting obligatory subject “Health Management” at four-year College of Nursing “Nurses Care”. It is a subject, lasting two semesters, provided through theoretical and practical work. Methodology of work is based on interactive lectures and workshops. Subject covers main Health Management topics, especially building of good communication provider-client skills.
Megatrend University	Megatrend University has established several schools that provide education related to Health Management: Faculty for Management, High school for Management, College Management, and Master in Health Management. Curriculum of subjects is not quite related to Management in Health; it mostly covers information and topics on Management in general.

health facilities (and adapted to needs of these hierarchy levels of management).

- To involve as much professionals/trainees as is possible (to provide comprehensive HM education and trainings that could fulfill gaps and improve the present level of management in health facilities)

- Significant legislative and policy framework for health management will drive a demand for

both degree and non-degree training and education. A significant barrier will be the available pipeline of trainers who have both a theoretical and practice knowledge of health management, developed and customised curricula suitable for Serbia (10).

- Empowerment of medical doctors, but nursing management capacities, too.

- Schools of medicine as well FOS do have capacities to develop and implement education

programs related to Management in Health.

III Crucial topics that should be covered by Health Management education and training:

- Team work and team building
- Leadership
- Communication skills
- Financial management

IV Proposed methodology of work at Health Management education and training:

- Active learning
- Multidisciplinary approach
- Training of trainers (TOT) using cascade system

V Suggested type of education:

- Short-term courses covering some specific Health Management topics
- Specialization
- Master studies

VI Challenges that we could face:

- Sustainability of the Project
- Need for decentralization and how to reach it
- Transfer of European expertise and Establishment of standards across Serbian universities
- Need for MOH and MOE support

Proposed measures

1. Preparation of draft training programmes at appropriate levels for the identified key target groups taking into consideration the training programmes implemented in this area to date.

2. The appropriate format and types of suitable training programmes, necessary to close the management gap (11).

3. Draft curricula for future training programmes, which can be accredited with the European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS), where possible and appropriate (12).

4. Minimal entrance criteria for future health managers at the different health service levels.

5. With the assistance of the Ministry of Health, development of a set of entry criteria for the selection of training participants, this is comprehensive, sustainable, fair and transparent. This set will include a sound estimate of future numbers of trainees in the relevant areas of envisaged training programmes within the parameters of the new training project.

6. Building network and continuous work of appropriate teaching institutions-schools of medicine in Serbia for the envisaged training programme, taking into consideration the existing facilities, and having prepared suggestions for the sustainability of the training programmes. Teaching institutions (faculties of Medicine in Niš, Kragujevac, Belgrade and Novi Sad, FOS) do have required capacities for developing and leading educations.

7. Identification of a suitable building (as suggested by the MOH) to host the major components of a training programme and will have identified the necessary physical requirements.

8. Decentralization of trainings (trainings should be organized in all four University centres, not only in Belgrade)(13).

9. Education should be comprehensive and should cover all levels of management in health facilities (and adapted to the needs of these levels of management)(14).

10. Involvement of as many professionals/trainees as possible (to provide comprehensive HM education and trainings that could fulfill gaps and improve the present level of management in health facilities, and to reach a critical mass)

11. Improvement of management capacities related to both doctors and nurses.

The key elements that will ensure success of the HME and training project will be: a consortium of a consultancy firm and an educational institution that can offer accredited master's level MBA/MHA courses; a distance learning skeleton system that can be customized for Serbia, and that will allow the use of all their materials after the project ends. The umbrella of the Ministry of Health in consultation with the Ministry of Education and Sports is expected for the HME and training, with agreements signed with relevant universities.

A network model which actively includes universities outside Belgrade is strongly encouraged and proposed.

Finally, the policy and legislative framework that will support the professional development of health managers in Serbia will be an important part of the future activities. A common effort is needed to set standards for HME and utilization of all aspects of the European Credit Transfer Scheme.

REFERENCES

1. Rosi L. Mission report. Istituto Superiore di Sanita, Roma, Ital, November 25th – November 30th 2002.
2. Cochrane D. Human Resource Strategy For Support Services, Technical and administrative staff, Final Report to Serbia and Montenegro Ministry of Health. Cochrane consulting Ltd. June 2004: 2-6.
3. Health Management conference Report, EHMA and CCS, Belgrade 9-11 November 2006.
4. CHF Workshop overview “Capacity building of monitoring skills”, December 2004.
5. UNITAR Newsletter, October 2005; 3 (4): 5-6.
6. Capacity building Fund-Support to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia. http://www2.undp.org.yu/facts_sheets/fs_cbf_moh.html
7. UNICEF input into the Secretary general report on “Economic Assistance to the Eastern European States affected by the Development in the Balkans”. <http://www.un.org/esa/policy/reports/inputs/sgbalkans.pdf>
8. Evaluation Report on Master in Public Health, School of Public Health, Belgrade. <http://www.med.bg.ac.yu/index.php?sid=204>
9. Final report-Preparation for HEALTH management TRAINING programme in Serbia, ECORIS Health Consortium, 2007: 10-16.
10. UNITAR Newsletter, October 2005; 3 (4): 11-12. http://www.unitar.org/diplomacy/Newsletter/news_4_2005.pdf
11. Radak Dj, Dedovic S, Nikolic R. Continuous medical education, Belgrade 2003.
12. The European Credit Transfer System, http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/index_en.html
13. Boulton G. The system of Healthcare Provider Management Training and Education in the Slovak Republic in Comparison with Exemplar European Countries, Health Sector Modernisation Project, Grant No: TF 026121, MOH SK, 2002: 21-25.
14. European Quality Improvement System EQUIS. http://www.efmd.org/html/Accreditations/cont_detail.asp?id=041004geyi&aid=041027igbk&tid=1

POTREBA ZA SISTEMATIČNIM OBRAZOVANJEM IZ ZDRAVSTVENOG MENADŽMENTA U REPUBLICI SRBIJI

Roberta Marković¹, Milena Vasić², Čedomir Šagrić², Zorana Deljanin²,
Nataša Rančić¹, Stanko Marjanović¹

¹Institut za javno zdravlje Niš, ²Medicinski fakultet Univerziteta u Nišu, Niš, Srbija

SAŽETAK

Cilj ovog rada bio je da se uradi analiza situacije i prepoznaju glavni nedostaci edukacija i treninga iz oblasti zdravstvenog menadžmenta u Srbiji.

Studija je rađena 2007. godine kao deo projekta Ministarstva zdravlja i Evropske Agencije za Rekonstrukciju CEEN/ECORIS „Trening iz Zdravstvenog Menadžmenta“ i objedinila je podatke dobijene od više od 80 ključnih ljudi iz oblasti zdravstva i edukacije u Srbiji.

U radu je korišćena kombinacija strukturiranog intervjuja, fokus grupe, pregleda literature i kvalitativne analize.

Zaključci dobijeni kao zajednički stav različitih grupa profesionalaca su sledeći: postoje veliki nedostaci u znanju i primeni menadžmenta u zdravstvu u Srbiji i realna potreba za unapređenjem znanja iz ove oblasti, posebno o primeni menadžerskih veština i sredstava za rad; poslednjih godina, edukacije iz zdravstvenog menadžmenta bile su razvijene i sprovedene u nekim zvaničnim institucijama, kao i kroz ad-hok programe, ali ne postoji jedinstvena baza podataka o ovim edukacijama; Medicinski fakulteti u Srbiji, kao i Fakultet organizacionih nauka, imaju kapacitete da razviju i vode programe edukacije iz oblasti Menadžmenta u zdravstvu; Zakon o zdravstvenoj zaštiti i Zakon o edukaciji treba usaglasiti.

Ključne reči: menadžment, edukacije, treninzi