

Preface

Healthcare is changing more rapidly than almost any other field. It is changing in terms of how and where the care is delivered, who is providing those services, and how it is financed. In fact, healthcare services increased for 30 percent from 1996 until 2006 and accounted for 3.1 million new jobs, which is the largest increase of any industry. Effective providing of the healthcare services requires multidimensional comprehension of a patient's situation. Skills and abilities of the medical staff, material infrastructure of a healthcare unit, social, psychological and economical context of a patient, and dynamics of diseases themselves co-create a framework for designing action strategy. Complexity of the issues is reflected by development of administrative posts related to health management.

Health management as a scientific discipline is an example of the interdisciplinary approach – it uses output of medicine, psychology, sociology, marketing and management. Its issues are considered on different levels of generality, appropriate for every science constituting this discipline:

- new ways of implementation of treatment utilizing the latest medicine achievements are developed,
- psychological reactions of a patient and his/her environment, decision-making processes by doctors, nurses, and other medical and paramedical staff are subjects of analysis aiming at finding factors facilitating and inhibiting recovery, improving patients and their families' quality of life, etc.,
- behaviors of whole social groups, their adaptation to illnesses found among its members are observed; effectiveness of strategies for solving healthcare problems implemented on a local, national or even worldwide level are analyzed.

This book contains a few chapters focusing on issues related to health management. The chapters are arranged in an order reflecting multidimensionality of issues constituting this theoretical and practical area – starting from the studies focusing on a general, administrative level, to considerations related to situations of individuals suffering from a specific illness. The discussed problems concern different age groups – children, adults and the elderly.

Among other things, the readers will find a description of tools for measurement of a healthcare project implementation rate. In chapter two issues related to care of patients suffering from chronic diseases are discussed. The third chapter partially continues the thought of the second one: the questions related to management of pain in patients with dementia are discussed - dementia is an example of a long-lasting disease, and the pain itself usually has a multifactorial background. The fourth chapter focuses on childhood pneumonia

among the children from developing countries. This document aims to provide guidelines for diagnosis and effective management of children with community acquired pneumonia so as to improve pneumonia-associated morbidity and mortality. Chapter five illustrates the advantages of focusing on early stages of a disease – the chronic kidney disease in this case. The final chapter comes from a very different thematic area – the motor industry. It describes the notion of Integrated Vehicle Health Management.

We hope you will enjoy reading this book and that it will be a useful source of information and inspiration for you and your work.

Editor

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