

Towards Universal Health Coverage: Analyzing HWAR Policies in Palestine's Complex Health Landscape [Letter]

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Dear editor

The research conducted by Alkhalidi et al presents a compelling analysis of evidence-based Health Worker Accreditation and Regulation (HWAR) policies in Palestine, a region facing unique healthcare challenges due to ongoing conflict.¹ This study is particularly noteworthy as it addresses the complexities of maintaining a functional health system in a fragile environment characterized by compromised health facilities and a limited healthcare workforce.²

The research methodology demonstrates several strengths:

1. The qualitative approach employs semi-structured interviews with 22 experts from diverse sectors, including government, academia, and non-governmental organizations in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. This multi-stakeholder perspective, drawing on participants with over five years of field experience, provides a robust foundation for future policy evaluation and program reform.
2. The utilization of a thematic analysis framework offers a structured approach to data interpretation. This method facilitates the deconstruction of complex data into manageable themes and subthemes, thereby streamlining the analysis process and enabling the identification of key insights and relationships. These findings subsequently inform the theoretical development of the HWAR evaluation.
3. The research findings reveal that while HWAR implementation includes a licensing process, there are notable gaps in addressing rare and emerging specialties.

However, several limitations warrant consideration:

1. The paucity of literature on HWAR in Palestine may impede readers' access to relevant contextual information.
2. The absence of quantitative data for triangulation potentially limits the study's ability to mitigate stakeholder bias.
3. The diversity of backgrounds and interests among policy stakeholders may introduce complexities in interpreting and implementing findings.

To address these limitations and further advance the field, future research could:

1. Adopt a cross-sector approach to HWAR challenges, incorporating perspectives from street-level bureaucracy and policy communication to enrich the thematic landscape.

2. Implement a mixed-methods approach, combining fieldwork with quantitative studies like policy support organizations (PSOs) in Ellen and Ben-Sheleg's research.³ This would serve to reduce potential bias, validate results through methodological triangulation, and provide statistically analyzable data.
3. Expand the diversity of respondents to include media practitioners, health worker groups, and advocacy institutions. This broader perspective could offer valuable insights into policy advocacy and enrich the concept of collaborative governance in policymaking.^{4,5}

Despite its limitations, this paper underscores the critical importance of HWAR within the context of Palestine's fragile health system, particularly in Gaza. The authors convincingly argue for comprehensive reform and strategic investment in HWAR as a means to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Palestine. The researchers' successful completion of this study in such a challenging environment is commendable and contributes significantly to the body of knowledge in this crucial area of health policy.

Disclosure

There is no conflict of interest related to this communication.

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