

Health Care Workers Motivation and Retention Approaches of Health Workers in Ethiopia: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Background: Verifying health care workers job satisfaction and motivation in developing countries are important if they must be retained and deliver efficient health services either in the public or private sectors. Nowadays, in Ethiopia issues of accessibility of skilled health care providers were still challenging.

Objective: To identify factors, context, and processes that influence work motivation and retention approaches of health care workers in Ethiopia.

Methods: Scoping review methodology of Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) was used to identify and collate evidence from studies included in the review. PubMed, Cochrane library, Google scholar and Google for articles examining mechanism of motivation and retention of health care workers in public institution in Ethiopia data bases were searched. Titles and abstracts were examined for the following search terms; "motivation", "retention", "mechanism," "satisfaction", "health care worker", "public", "institution", and "Ethiopia".

Results: A total of seven studies were included in the review and the studies are cross-sectional study design. Pleasant nature of work, fair payment/salary, conducive working condition, fair supervision accessible administration and policies, fair workload, care to standard, better achievements, and job content are factors associated with health care workers' motivation. Intrinsic motivation factors like socio demographic variables were found to be significant predictors that explain the variability in the intrinsic motivation factor score; such as age, sex, the professional category of the respondents and type of health facility where they work, professional training, staffing and work schedule, availability of necessary resources and communication. Continuous development of skill and knowledge through training and satisfaction assessment were associated with

staff retention. Intention to leave was associated with job satisfaction.

Conclusion: Economic factors (Incentives), and structural factors (staff promotion through different mechanisms, working environments) were found to be significant association with health workers' motivation to work. Health system interventions should consider also intrinsic factors (age, sex, the professional category) for the retention of health workers in Ethiopia.

Keywords: Motivation; Retention; Health worker; Ethiopia

Abbreviations: JBI: Joanna Briggs Institute; NGO: Non-Governmental Organizations; HRM: Human Resource Management

Introduction

Ensuring health care workers job satisfaction and motivation in developing countries are important if they must be retained and deliver efficient health services either in the public or private sectors. As the backbone of the health system, health workers usually account for the largest share of public expenditure on health. The presence of high quality, motivated staff is a key aspect of health system performance, but also one of the most difficult inputs to ensure [1].

Policy-makers in all countries, regardless of their level of economic development, struggle to achieve health equity and meet the health needs of their populations, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. One of their most complex challenges is ensuring people living in rural and remote areas have access to trained health workers [1].

Skilled and motivated health workers in sufficient numbers at the right place and at the right time are critical to deliver effective health services and improve health outcomes. Insufficient numbers and types of qualified health workers in remote and rural areas impedes access to health care services for a significant percentage of the population; slowing the

progress towards attaining one of the sustainable development goals of ensuring healthy lives and wellbeing for all at all ages [2].

Health worker motivation and retention is critical for a well-functioning health system and remains an important challenge due to absence or shortage of properly trained and motivated workforce, loss of clinical staff from low and middle-income countries to developed countries [3].

The effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of the health care delivery system are closely dependent upon the willingness and capability of health personnel to undertake the tasks assigned to them diligently according to the proposed theory. Different study implies that the compelling factors that would lead health care workers to leave include dissatisfaction with salary, political interference, lack of infrastructure and medicines, dissatisfaction with promotion opportunities, lack of effective planning, limited health budgets, migration of health workers, inadequate numbers of students entering and/or completing professional training, limited employment opportunities, low salaries, poor working conditions, weak support and supervision, and limited opportunities for professional development [4].

The severe shortage of health workers in countries is a critical issue that must be addressed as an integral part of strengthening health systems to work on. Health workers are vital to health systems but are often neglected, this results in inappropriate skill mixes in the health sector as well as gaps in the distribution of health workers, this is especially so in rural and remote areas where the provision of services is difficult because of limited health budgets and scattered populations living in isolated villages [5].

The 2006 World Health Report estimated 57 countries, in exceptional case Sab-Saharan Africa, faced critical shortages of Health personnel totaling 2.4 million doctors, nurses and midwives [6]. Health worker motivation crosses many disciplinary boundaries, including economics, psychology, organizational development, and others, such that the many phases of influences upon health worker motivation suggests that worker motivation will be affected not only by specific incentive schemes, but also by the whole range of health sector reforms which potentially affect organizational culture, reporting structures, channels of accountability [7].

In the analysis of the global workforce, the Joint Learning Initiative a union of more than 100 health leaders conclude that mobilization and strengthening of human resources for health is neglected, yet critical and central to combating health crises in some of the world's poorest countries and for building sustainable health systems in all countries. Nearly all countries are challenged by worker shortage, skill mix imbalance, maldistribution, negative work environment, and weak knowledge base [8].

There is a massive global shortage of health workers estimated to be approximately more than 4 million workers. Sub-Saharan countries must nearly triple their current numbers of workers by increasing the equivalent of one million

workers through retention, recruitment, and training if they are to come close to approaching the goal of health for all [8].

Applying a realist perspective to the review of published human resource management interventions offers an opportunity to gain a better understanding of how different human resource management interventions can improve performance, under which circumstances and for which groups of health workers is needed, So that health managers need insight into the context within which interventions achieved results and an understanding of the mechanisms that triggered change to improve health workers' performance [9].

Through the preliminary search with databases listed, we found no current systematic review or a systematic review that is underway on health worker motivation and retention in Ethiopia. Hence, this review was aimed at mapping and describing evidence on factors affecting motivation and retention of health workers and the mechanism of overcoming these problems in Ethiopia.

Literature Review

Objectives

To map and describe available evidence on mechanism of motivation and retention of health care workers in public institutions of Ethiopia.

Types of participants

In this review the participants considered were health professionals working in public health institutions regardless of their age, sex and profession type.

Concept

The core concept of this review was mechanism used to motivate and retain health professionals in public health care institutions in Ethiopia. The concept of motivation in this review is directed to health care workers' willingness or desire to do their job as needed as per the work place standard. This in turn explained as individual's degree of willingness to exert and maintain an effort towards organizational goals. For instance, health workers' participation on the strategic and annual plan of the facility. Motivation is closely linked to job satisfaction, which retains workers at their jobs over time. The concept of retention in this review is the various policies, measures and practices which let the employees stick to an organization for a longer/maximum period of time.

Context

The context of the review was Ethiopian public health facilities such as health centers and hospitals.

Criteria for inclusion and exclusion

Systematic reviews and primary studies of any design reported in English language were considered for inclusion.

Studies conducted in private or non-governmental organizations (NGO) were not included in the review (Figure 1).

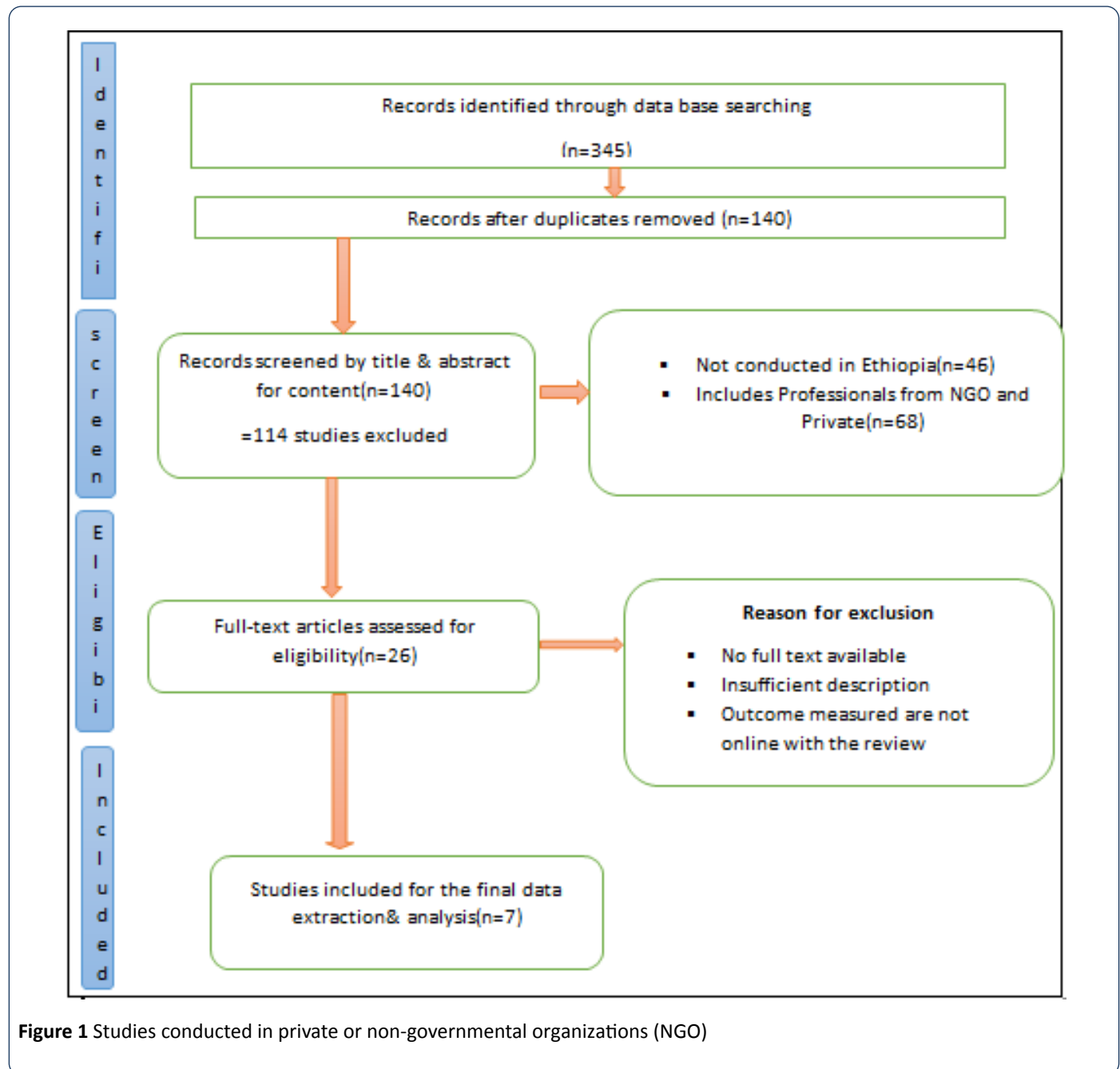


Figure 1 Studies conducted in private or non-governmental organizations (NGO)

Search strategy

A three-step search strategy was utilized in this review. An initial limited search of PubMed was undertaken followed by an analysis of the text words contained in the title and abstract, and of the index terms used to describe article. Then, a second search using all identified keywords and index terms were undertaken across all included databases. Thirdly, the reference list of all identified reports and articles was searched for additional studies. Four databases were searched PubMed, Cochrane library, Google scholar and Google for articles examining mechanism of motivation and retention of health care workers in public institution in Ethiopia. Titles and abstracts were examined for the following search terms;

motivation”, “retention”, “mechanism,” “satisfaction”, “health care worker”, “public”, “institution”, and “Ethiopia”. The search strategy identified 345 citations from three identified data bases. After duplicates were then removed, leaving 140 citations. Titles and abstracts were examined and selected 26 publications for full text review. Thus, a total of 26 full text publications were screened independently by two reviewers based on inclusion criteria, of which 7 were ultimately included in the review see appendix.

Data extraction and analysis

A standard template was developed and used to organize and identify themes in the literature that were aligned with

the research objective. The template contained categories for descriptive characteristics of the included studies: authors, year, study design, method, sample population, sampling, data collection, results, and limitations. This iterative process involved reading, annotating, highlighting, and evaluating the literature in the included studies (**Table 1**).

Table 1 Summary of data extraction and analysis.

Author and year of publication	Country	Aim/purpose	Study population and sample size	Methodology	Outcomes and details of these (e.g. How measured)	Key finding that relate to the scoping review question
Eyasu et al. (2017)	Addis Ababa	To assess job satisfaction and its determinants among midwives working at gov't health facilities	Midwives working in gov't hospitals and health center in Addis Ababa, (n=234)	Institution based cross-sectional study		Among the satisfying factors family/workplace balance, coworker's relation, interaction opportunities and control and responsibility. The dissatisfying factors reported includes; professional opportunity, extrinsic reward, scheduling and praise and recognitions
Zemichael et al. (2016)	West Amhara Public Hospital	To assess the overall health professional's motivation score in public hospitals and factors associated.	Categories of health professionals working in the 8 public hospitals. (n=304)	Facility based cross sectional study, using systematic random sampling method.	Intrinsic motivation factors; age, duration of services, category of health professionals; Five-point Likert scale was used for measuring outcome.	
Tesfaye et al. (2015)	Ambo, Gedo and Gindeberet	To identify the level of motivation and factors affecting it.	All permanently employed health professionals, in three hospitals	Facility based cross-sectional survey	Factors affecting motivation include; Supervisor related, Financial benefits, Job content, Professional qualification and Location of the hospital, the five Likert scale used for measurement. Health professionals earning monthly financial benefits had higher motivation score when compared with health professionals who did not obtain any financial benefits; qualification of health professionals was associated with their motivation.	Health professionals earning monthly financial benefits had higher motivation score when compared with health professionals who did not obtain any financial benefits; qualification of health professionals was associated with their motivation.
Ayele et al. (2015)	Harari region	To assess the level of job satisfaction and associated factors	Randomly selected health care providers; those working for more than 6 months (n=405)	Facility based cross sectional study	Domain of Job Satisfaction; leadership and planning, Institutional culture, and communication, Employee's role, pay and benefits, work environment, training and development, relationship with supervisor, each domain measured by Likert scale	
Hailay et al. (2016)	Jimma zone health Institution	To assess the health work force acquisition, retention, turnover rate and intention to leave	Health care providers working in hospitals and health centers in Jimma zone (n=367)	Cross sectional study with quantitative and qualitative data	Retention activities, Job Satisfaction, Staff turnover measured with different scales such as five sub scales and Cronbatch's alpha	Absence of continuous development of HWs skill and knowledge, absence of training, absence of satisfaction assessment was some of the reasons for frustrating the staff retention. Intention to leave was associated with job satisfaction
Alemshet et al. (2011)	Jimma university specialized hospital	To determine the level and factors affecting job satisfaction and retention	All health professionals who were on job during the study period(n=145)	Cross sectional study	Job satisfaction future plan, suggestion given to retain, reason to stay/leave health institution and intension after leaving the institution was assessed	For retention: incentives, increasing salary and income generating options, free health care, provision of housing/ housing allowance, improve training and further education, more frequent promotion, establish good relationship.

Takele (2014)	Nagele and Adola public Hospitals of Guji Zone	To assess factors affecting health professional ' s motivation	All health professionals who were on their job during study period in two Hospitals. For in depth interview 12 health professionals who have position are purposively selected.	Cross sectional study design with both qualitative and quantitative data	Health professional motivation in relation to social organizational and Individual variable assessed; Five-point Likert scale used	Factors affecting motivation of health professional includes; electricity, water, transfer system, sick live and maternity leave process, opportunity for further education, Incentives, low salaries, lack of frequent promotion housing; intention of job options after leaving public institution is joining; NGO /private, non-health institution, running own business
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Results

All the seven studies are Cross sectional studies and two of the studies used mixed (qualitative and quantitative) data collection method. From the total studies, four study conducted in public hospital and the rest three conducted both in public hospital and health center. The study uses five-point Likert scale with different number of components to measure job satisfaction and measures to increase retention. The included studies all except one which is conducted among midwives working in government health facilities in Addis Abeba the rest involves all types of health professionals working in public health Institutions. The total number of health care professionals participated from the seven studies accounts for 1886 which is collection of variety of health care workers. The socio demographic factors included in the selected articles were Age, Sex, Educational status, profession type, which is uniform throughout all included article.

Factors associated with health workers work motivation and Retention

Findings from the included article reveal that out comes including; pleasant nature of work, fair payment/salary, conducive working condition, fair supervision accessible administration and policies, fair workload, care to standard, better achievements, job content are factors directly associated with health care workers motivation to their Job each factor are measured using 5-point Likert scale having different items.

The study also assessed the intrinsic motivation factors; age, duration of services, category of health professionals, whether these factors are associated with the motivation of health workers using the five-point Likert scale and the result reveal that socio demographic variables were found to be significant predictors that explain the variability in the intrinsic motivation factor score; such as age, sex, the professional category of the respondents and type of hospital where they work, professional training, staffing and work schedule, availability of necessary resources and communication. The result showed that female respondents had higher intrinsic motivation score compared to males and also age was found to be a negative predictor of the intrinsic motivation score as

the age of respondents increased the intrinsic motivation was lowered.

In the study conducted among midwives working at health facilities in Addis Abeba city female health professionals were about four times more likely to be satisfied than male counterparties. Similarly, in the study conducted among health workers in Jimma University specialized hospital male health workers were dissatisfied than female health professionals.

Among the satisfying factors family or workplace balance, coworker's relation, interaction opportunities and control and responsibility. The dissatisfying factors reported includes; professional opportunity, extrinsic reward, scheduling and praise and recognitions. Socio demographic variables were found to be significant predictors that explain the variability in the intrinsic motivation facto score; such as age, sex, the professional category of the respondents and type of hospital where they work, professional training, staffing and work schedule, availability of necessary resources and communication.

Health professionals earning monthly financial benefits had higher motivation score when compared with health professionals who did not obtain any financial benefits, qualification of health professionals was associated with their motivation. Profession, working area, motivation system payment leadership style and communication training and development opportunities are some factors associated with satisfaction or motivation on job. Absence of continuous development of HWs skill and knowledge, absence of training, absence of satisfaction assessment was some of the reasons for frustrating the staff retention. For job satisfaction organizational factor was marginally identified. Intention to leave was associated with job satisfaction.

To retain health professionals the following suggestion was given in these study by the participants of the study; incentives, increasing salary and income generating options, free health care, provision of housing/housing allowance, improve training and further education, more frequent promotion, establish good relationship, majority of health worker plan to leave their job because they want to get chance for further education, job dissatisfaction, family or personal related issue after leaving public health institution health professionals want to join; NGO's, working in non -health institutions, running their own business. Factors affecting

motivation of health professional includes; electricity, water, transfer system, sick leave and maternity leave process, opportunity for further education, Incentives, low salaries, lack of frequent promotion housing; intention of job options after leaving public institution is joining; NGO or private, non-health institution, running own business.

Discussion

The current review identified factors associated with motivation among healthcare workers in Ethiopia public healthcare settings. The studies included in the review were of low-quality design due to absence study conducted with the topic of interest using gold standard designs; mainly the included are cross-sectional studies. The result reveals that human resources are vital to an effective health care system. Any motivation and retention strategy are not complete without a cost-benefit analysis. The result of the study implies that there is high level of job dissatisfaction and intention to leave job in the coming years which can greatly affect the quality of health services provided by the hospital and needs wide scale further study to maintain the quality of the health services [10].

The studies also reveal that more than half of the health professionals were not motivated with their job. The major reasons can be perception of poor fringe benefits received, inadequacy of financial payments, poor in management supportiveness, poor in infrastructures, insufficiency of resources and supplies in the hospitals, lack of continuously recognition and appreciation for those who have good accomplishments in their work and poor Human resource management (HRM) in the hospitals [11].

More than half of health professionals working in public health institutions in different regions were dissatisfied with their job. Payment and benefit, lack of training and development, relationship with organizational leaders, poorly designed working environment and organizational culture and communication were the major factors that decrease the satisfaction level of the health workers. Thus, policy makers and health service managers of the region, if they really need to deliver quality health care, need to pay special attention to improve management system through the application of a health sector reform strategy.

Strengths and Limitations

The review generated strong evidence as it utilized the Joanna Briggs institute (JBI) guidelines for scoping review. The review also addressed the major problems in serving the marginalized parts of community and issue of inequity.

The review is limited for Ethiopian situation only and cannot represent developing countries at all.

Conclusion

Motivating and retaining health care through different approaches were essential to get committed health care

provider. Improving salary, incentives, house allowance/provision of house, relationship with supervisors, opportunities to get training can motivate and retain the health care workers in public healthcare institution. Convincing policy should be designed for the implementation of economic and non-economic interventions in realizing human resource gap especially in emerging regions in Ethiopia. Salary, incentives, house allowance/provision of house, relationship with supervisors, opportunities to get training were factors positively associated with motivation and retention of health care workers in public healthcare institution.

Recommendations

Policy makers may use findings reported in the review to guide practice and to design appropriate health workers retention and job motivation approaches. Capacity building such as training, further education should be incorporated into retention mechanism of health care providers. Due attention should be given for health care workers with lower level of education such as Diploma holders. Further health system studies are required to inform effective interventions for retention of health workers especially in rural parts of the country practice was recommended.

Author Contributions

Abonesh Teye made substantial contributions to conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data and drafting the manuscript. Misra Abdulahi and Bitiya Admasu involved analysis and interpretation of data. Sudhakar Morankar involved in the design and analysis of data. Afework Tadele involved in revising the manuscript it critically for important intellectual content. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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