Human resources management at primary care level : Thailand experiences

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The definition of Primary care in this paper means the first line health services of the total health care system that based on the primary health care principle.

The key issues relating to the human resource management at primary care level are relating to how to retain the health professional motivated working in primary care for longer time and how to improve their competencies. These are linked to the concept and skills of health personnel that correspond to the unique character of primary care and how to promote their career in term of the academic and financial support.

In some countries that primary care is not strong and has been perceived as the second class or low grade care. Therefore, the health personnel at the primary care level are not proud of their position and the career. So the quality and retention of health personnel is still the problem. Then to manage the human resource at this level it needs to renew the Concept and attitude towards primary care of providers and people to be more valuable and identical.

The latter importance issue is the multifunctional skills and skill mixed of the health team to work at this level. Since the wide variety of task and comprehensive work at this level, so the team should be multifunctional or have good skill mix among medical techniques and psycho-social skill. Then the balance of the composition and the good team work is one of considerable issues.

The number and distribution of health personnel to primary care is also the chronic problem especially in the lower and middle income country. Now Thailand, the health personnel at primary care is around 2.8 person per one health center. Around 50 % of primary care unit have health staff below the standard (1:1,250 population). Most of the staffs are health workers and nurses, only 2% of the primary care units that have physicians operating full time. The appropriate mix of health professions at the primary care is still the research questions that should be explored. In the high income country, mostly has adequate number of health personnel but there are some gaps among different professions and the integration of various health professionals

In term of human development, sharing experiences among themselves as the network to share tacit knowledge for working with families and communities in various topics is one of effective methods that they do not only learn on knowledge and skill on working but also get moral support among each other that make them motivated and open their perspectives.