

The Roles of Health Practitioners in Strengthening the Saudi Healthcare System: Workforce Integration and Health System Transformation under Vision 2030

Adylah Mohamed Salem Alsudayri¹, Sami Thari Mutliq Alrashidi², Amal Salem Alfaidi³, Dalal Ali Eilaqi⁴, Fisal Ali Almotery⁵, Jawahar Ibrahim Hamed Al Rashidi⁶, Fatimah Abdullah Al Shahab⁷, Ali Ahmed Alsiddiqi⁸, Salman Abdulrahman Alorimah⁹, Mamdouh Salman Hussein Almutiri¹⁰, Yahya Saleh Aldebassy¹¹, Bdoor Nafea Alrashidi¹², Ali Abdulaziz Ali Alsalem¹³, Saleh Zaal Alrashidi¹⁴, Sarah Nafe Alrashidi¹⁵, Faisal Hameed Al-Sulami¹⁶, Samir Yousef Gadaah¹⁷, Khalid Abdullah Alghamdi¹⁸

¹. King Abdulaziz Hospital Jeddah First Settlement

². Eradah And Mental Health Hospital Qassim

³. Tabuk Health Cluster

⁴. Ministry of Health in Riyadh Region

⁵. Qassim Health Cluster

⁶. Qassim Health Cluster

⁷. Eradah Complex for Mental Health

⁸. Eastern Health Cluster

⁹. Qassim Health Cluster

¹⁰. Riyadh Second Health Cluster

¹¹. MOH

¹². Ministry of Health Qassim Branch

¹³. Qassim Health Cluster

¹⁴. Qassim Health Cluster

¹⁵. Qassim Health Cluster

¹⁶. Jeddah Second Health Cluster-King Fahad Hospital

¹⁷. Second Health Cluster Jeddah

¹⁸. Jeddah Second Health Cluster

Abstract

Healthcare professionals are essential to the efficacy and resilience of the health system. In Saudi Arabia, changes under **Vision 2030** have made it more important to have a skilled, multidisciplinary workforce to meet the needs of a growing population, changing health trends, and higher expectations for quality, patient-centered care. This report reviews the roles of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, allied health professionals, public health practitioners, and healthcare administrators in the Saudi healthcare system. It focuses on the value of cooperative effort, workforce development, and system integration in providing excellent care. The article also discusses current challenges and future directions for healthcare professionals in Saudi Arabia, with an emphasis on meeting national health transformation goals.

Keywords: Saudi Arabia, healthcare workforce, interprofessional practice, Vision 2030, health system transformation

Introduction

Healthcare in Saudi Arabia has changed in the past decade because of population growth, longer life expectancy, and a shift from infectious to chronic diseases. These changes have increased demands on healthcare workers and highlighted the need for integrated, team-based care.

The Ministry of Health oversees Saudi Arabia's healthcare system, along with other government and private providers. For health reforms to succeed, it is important to use medical professionals' skills and teamwork. Understanding how healthcare workers collaborate is key to achieving universal health coverage and the goals of Vision 2030.

Physicians and Medical Practitioners in Saudi Arabia

Physicians play a central role in Saudi healthcare, providing care at all levels in public and private sectors. The country has invested in medical education, advanced training, and specialty services to rely less on foreign doctors and build local expertise.

As part of Vision 2030, physicians are more involved in integrated care, digital health, and results-focused care models. Their work now includes diagnosis and treatment, as well as quality improvement, leadership, research, and health policy, especially in new health clusters.

Nursing Workforce and Professional Practice

Nurses are the backbone of healthcare in Saudi Arabia. They provide patient care, coordinate services, and play a key role in patient safety and quality improvement.

National policies support hiring more local nurses, empowering them, and expanding advanced roles to keep the workforce strong. Saudi nurses are taking on more leadership, teaching, and community care, helping move toward preventive and population-focused healthcare as planned in Vision 2030.

Pharmacy Professionals and Medication Safety

Pharmacists in Saudi Arabia are important for patient safety and healthcare quality by managing medications, providing clinical pharmacy services, and monitoring drug safety. Expanding clinical pharmacy roles in hospitals shows a national focus on reducing medication errors and improving treatment outcomes.

Community pharmacists also help public health by educating the public, handling chronic diseases, and supporting vaccination. These growing roles align with broader health sector goals focused on prevention and patient involvement.

Allied Professionals and Multidisciplinary Care

Allied health professionals, such as physiotherapists, radiographers, lab specialists, dietitians, occupational therapists, and psychologists, are vital to integrated healthcare in Saudi Arabia. Their skills support diagnosis, rehabilitation, mental health, and management of long-term diseases.

With the growth of rehabilitation, mental health, and home care in Saudi Arabia, allied health professionals are joining more team-based care. Their work leads to better patient outcomes, higher quality of life, and shorter hospital stays.

Public Health and Preventive Health Professionals

Public health professionals play a key role in improving health in Saudi Arabia by tracking diseases, promoting health, and running prevention programs. National efforts to address obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and tobacco use rely on their expertise.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed the importance of epidemiologists, infection control experts, and health policy specialists in handling emergencies. Strengthening teamwork between public health and clinical staff remains a national priority to improve the health system.

Healthcare Administration, Leadership, and Support Workforce

Healthcare administrators, informatics specialists, and support staff deliver effective services in Saudi healthcare. They handle planning, manage health information, follow regulations, and monitor performance. Vision 2030 has made developing healthcare leaders a national priority, recognizing that strong leadership is key to efficiency, accountability, and patient-focused care in a complex healthcare system.

Cross-Professional Partnership in the Saudi Context

Teamwork across professions is a core part of current healthcare in Saudi Arabia. These teams coordinate care, reduce gaps, and improve patient outcomes, especially for chronic and complex cases. Saudi health reforms focus on team-based care, using digital health tools, shared care plans, and training across professions. These methods follow global standards and improve healthcare quality.

Workforce Difficulties and Possibilities

Even with progress, Saudi Arabia still faces staffing issues like shortages in some specialties, burnout, and the need for ongoing training. Saudization, education reform, and staff well-being are key to dealing with these problems.

There are opportunities to expand advanced roles, use artificial intelligence and digital health tools, and build research and innovation among medical professionals.

Conclusion

Healthcare professionals are the backbone of Saudi Arabia's healthcare system and lead its transformation. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, allied health workers, public health experts, and administrators work together to provide safe, effective, and fair care.

To reach the goals of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia needs to keep investing in human resource development, teamwork, and supportive work environments. By promoting cooperation and uniting different roles, the country can build a strong, high-quality healthcare system ready for today's and tomorrow's challenges.

References

1. Ministry of Health (Saudi Arabia). (2023). *Health Sector Transformation Program Strategy*. Riyadh: MOH.
2. Ministry of Health (Saudi Arabia). (2024). *Saudi Health Workforce Statistical Yearbook*. Riyadh: MOH.
3. Vision 2030. (2023). *Health Sector Transformation Program Overview*. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
4. Al-Harbi, M., Almutairi, A., & Alshammari, F. (2022). Healthcare workforce challenges in Saudi Arabia: A systematic review. *Journal of Health Management*, 24(4), 567–581.
5. Alotaibi, Y., & Federico, F. (2023). The impact of digital health on healthcare quality in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 35(2), mzad012.
6. World Health Organization. (2022). *Health workforce policy and management in the Eastern Mediterranean Region*. WHO EMRO.
7. Al-Dossary, R. (2024). Nursing leadership and workforce sustainability in Saudi Arabia under Vision 2030. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 32(1), 45–53.
8. Balkhi, B., et al. (2023). Clinical pharmacy practice and medication safety in Saudi hospitals. *Saudi Pharmaceutical Journal*, 31(6), 812–820.