

Brief Review

Healthcare Management Challenges and Opportunities during COVID Pandemic

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Abstract: This review aimed to analyze some problems and challenges that emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic since it has affected all global business sectors. During the pandemic, remote work was increased in response to social distance requirements to decrease the transmission of disease. In addition, increased delegation, teamwork, supply chains, sales activities, and business operations have all been disrupted. Many challenges have emerged in the management of organizations due to the pandemic including the lack of direct contact as the lockdown made many people work from home and placed restrictions on movement and travel and uncertainty about the future. The healthcare system was also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and faced several difficulties including increased demand for medical supplies and personal protective equipment, a greater need for nurses and other skilled healthcare professionals, and increased pressure on healthcare facilities, emergency services, and critical care departments. These challenges have created some opportunities in the management systems of healthcare organizations and other sectors. It is recommended for leaders prepare and continuously work proactively to be ready for unexpected future crises. Risk management and planning for any unexpected situation are among the very important aspects of organizational management.

Keywords: Challenge, COVID-19, Management, Opportunities, Pandemic, Medical, Healthcare System

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1. Introduction

On March 11, 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak was deemed a global pandemic [1] resulting in a catastrophe that is exceptional in scope and its effects on society, the economy, and the environment. Concerns about employee hazards, organizational best practices, stakeholder pressure, the government shutdown, and recovery strategies have all been complicated and unclear during the pandemic [2]. Global business sectors, including the economy, industry, education, and healthcare institutions have been facing enormous challenges and problems as a result of the economic and social crises brought on by the pandemic [3, 4].

Despite all those consequences and the probable issues brought on by the pandemic, there are opportunities for improvement through the utilization of the challenges of the pandemic in improving and finding solutions. The new strategies will be taken into consideration to sustain institution management [5]. The current paper aimed to identify and describe the most common management problems, challenges, and opportunities in healthcare systems, business industries, and economies that have emerged due to the COVID pandemic.

2. Healthcare Management Problems and Challenges:

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges and healthcare management problems globally. Healthcare management professionals have been grappling with numerous challenges in their efforts to provide quality healthcare services to the public while ensuring the safety of healthcare providers. In this part, we will discuss some of the significant healthcare management problems and challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic [6].

Many problems emerged from the widespread effects of the pandemic on business across industries and its complicated effects on organizational design led to some issues. In general, the pandemic is likely to result in increased remote work, increased delegation, fewer teams, and increased employment of employees who are less closely attached to the firm. The use of remote work may also weaken organizational loyalty. Due to this, there will likely be a tendency to use freelancing, and part-time labour more frequently than full-time, permanent employment, which will lead to a reduction in company limits [7].

Supply chains, sales activities, and business operations have all been hampered. In response to this demand shock, businesses have slashed wages for a significant portion of their workers, plan further salary reductions by the end of 2020, and expect to lower selling prices soon, reduced their predictions for inflation in the upcoming year as well [8].

Numerous challenges faced the management organization due to COVID-19's emergence, which included: a lack of direct contact because the lockdown made many people work from home and placed restrictions on movement and travel which negatively impacted certain workers, particularly those who used to travel occasionally and caused boredom and monotony to them [9]. As has been seen, the onset of the pandemic was for many people a drastic change in lifestyle, an absence of activities, and subsequent slowness. It was frequently linked to feelings of drowsiness, monotony, and even boredom, as well as uncertainty over what might happen next [10].

On the other perspective, the COVID-19 pandemic had also a substantial influence on the healthcare system in a different way that called for management adjustments, especially in the management of infection control standards [11].

The COVID-19 pandemic had presented healthcare delivery companies with a variety of significant management issues. Every fresh influx of patients put an additional burden on already overworked and stressed-out staff, depleted the resources, lowered the hospital's revenue, and had a detrimental impact on many other aspects of healthcare operations [2].

One of the most significant healthcare management problems during the COVID-19 pandemic is the shortage of essential medical supplies such as personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilators, and testing kits. The surge in demand for these medical supplies has outpaced the supply chain's capacity, leaving healthcare providers at risk of infection and unable to adequately test and treat patients. The shortage of these supplies has led to a rise in counterfeit and substandard medical supplies in the market, creating further challenges in the fight against the pandemic [12].

The inability to handle the soaring patient volume due to inadequate capacity is the first major issue. In many locations, the demand for intensive care unit (ICU) beds, ventilators, and staff considerably exceeded the available supply. The financial loss caused by the cancellation of elective surgeries and the disruption of normal care during this pandemic constituted a real financial problem and was trouble for both hospitals and clinics as well, especially for hospitals that were already having financial problems [13].

Along with the rising need for medical supplies and personal protective equipment, dealing with infectious diseases also placed a greater demand on qualified nurses and medical professionals which put more strain on hospitals' emergency rooms and critical care units as well as their financial resources [14].

The development of COVID-19, which influenced all aspects of global health care, was one of the current health transition issues. The spread of this pandemic around the world presented many difficulties, including increased demand for medical supplies and personal protective equipment, a greater need for nurses and other skilled healthcare professionals, increased pressure on healthcare facilities, emergency services, and critical care departments, and increased financial constraints on the part of healthcare organizations [14].

The surge in demand for healthcare services, coupled with the high risk of infection among healthcare workers, has led to many healthcare professionals falling ill or refusing to work, leading to a shortage of healthcare workers. This shortage has strained healthcare facilities' capacity to provide adequate care, leading to rationing of healthcare services and long waiting times for patients [15].

The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought about a significant shift in the delivery of healthcare services, with a massive increase in telehealth services to minimize the risk of infection. This shift has brought with it numerous challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure and technology, limited access to virtual health services in underserved communities, and regulatory barriers that have hindered the adoption of telehealth services in some areas [16].

Another challenge that healthcare management professionals have had to deal with is managing the surge in demand for healthcare services while simultaneously maintaining quality care. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in the number of patients seeking healthcare services, leading to overcrowding in healthcare facilities, overwhelmed healthcare providers, and a decrease in the quality of care [17]. Healthcare management professionals have had to develop innovative strategies such as the establishment of field hospitals and repurposing of non-healthcare facilities to handle the surge in demand for healthcare services [18].

All these challenges called for immediate collaboration and engagement because they pose a risk to an organization's legal, financial, and reputational status. It has also resulted in increased formalization, planning, and usage of individual-level rewards in most of the world's organizations [7].

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant healthcare management problems and challenges globally. These challenges include shortages of essential medical supplies, healthcare workers, and managing the surge in demand for healthcare services while maintaining quality care. Healthcare management professionals have had to develop innovative strategies to overcome these challenges, including the use of telehealth services and the establishment of field hospitals [19]. While the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about numerous challenges in healthcare management, it has also highlighted the need for the development of more robust and sustainable healthcare systems to handle future pandemics and healthcare crises.

3. Healthcare Management Opportunities:

While the COVID-19 pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to the healthcare sector, it has also presented numerous opportunities for healthcare management professionals to innovate and improve healthcare systems. In this part, we will discuss some of the significant healthcare management opportunities presented during the COVID-19 pandemic [19].

One of the significant opportunities presented during the pandemic is the rapid adoption of telehealth services. The pandemic has highlighted the need for alternative healthcare delivery systems, and telehealth services have emerged as a viable alternative to traditional in-person healthcare services [20]. Telehealth services have enabled healthcare providers to deliver healthcare services remotely, minimizing the risk of infection, reducing healthcare costs, and increasing access to healthcare services, especially for patients in remote and underserved communities [21].

Another opportunity presented during the pandemic is the use of digital health technologies. Digital health technologies such as mobile health apps, wearable devices, and remote monitoring systems have emerged as essential tools in the fight against the pandemic [22]. These technologies have enabled healthcare providers to monitor patients remotely, track the spread of the virus, and provide accurate and up-to-date information to patients and the public [23].

The COVID-19 pandemic has also presented an opportunity for healthcare management professionals to collaborate and share best practices. The pandemic has highlighted the need for global cooperation in healthcare management, and healthcare providers have been sharing best practices, treatment protocols, and research findings across borders to improve healthcare services and outcomes [24].

The pandemic has also presented an opportunity for healthcare management professionals to focus on population health management. The pandemic has highlighted the need for healthcare systems to prioritize preventive healthcare services and population health management. Healthcare providers have been working to identify high-risk populations, implement screening and testing programs, and promote public health initiatives such as vaccination campaigns and community health education programs [25].

The challenges that accompanied the emergence of COVID-19 have created some opportunities to improve the management systems of healthcare organizations and other sectors as leaders and managers of the organization had to manage uncertainty, use insights based on daily updates from the public health authority, and try to adapt to the organization's context under the limitations as a result of the need to think creatively and adapt to uncertain circumstances during the pandemic [26].

The COVID-19 pandemic has created some opportunities for improvement in the management systems of organizations, especially the healthcare systems. Due to the emergence of this pandemic, the health sector had the chance to constantly prepare for unforeseen events, create risk management plans, and create backup plans to deal with any pandemic [27]. Moreover, the pandemic helped managers to enhance their leadership techniques to better manage the use of medical resources and supplies efficiently. Also, managers and leaders started to increase the training and education of their medical and nursing staff to ensure that they are oriented and knowledgeable about the most recent information and techniques to serve on the front line against the spread of the pandemic [28]. Managers additionally used strategies for staff retention like professional development, incentives, and salary adjustments, as well as reorganizing the hospital [29].

Finally, the pandemic has presented an opportunity for healthcare management professionals to focus on healthcare system resilience. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of healthcare systems, and healthcare management professionals have been working to develop more robust and sustainable healthcare systems to handle future pandemics and healthcare crises. This includes improving supply chain management, developing emergency response plans, and investing in healthcare infrastructure [30].

In conclusion, while the COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant challenges to the healthcare sector, it has also presented numerous opportunities for healthcare management professionals to innovate and improve healthcare systems. These opportunities include the rapid adoption of telehealth services, the use of digital health technologies, collaboration and sharing of best practices, population health management, and healthcare system resilience [31]. The healthcare sector must continue to seize these opportunities to develop more robust and sustainable healthcare systems to handle future healthcare crises.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant healthcare management issues and obstacles around the world. This included shortages of essential medical supplies, healthcare personnel, and the ability to manage the increase in demand for healthcare services while maintaining quality care. These obstacles have necessitated the use of telehealth services and the establishment of field hospitals, as well as the development of innovative strategies by professionals in healthcare administration. While the COVID-19 pandemic has presented numerous challenges to healthcare management, it has also underscored the need for more robust and sustainable healthcare systems to address future pandemics and healthcare crises.

On the other hand, while the COVID-19 pandemic has presented the healthcare industry with significant challenges, it has also presented numerous opportunities for healthcare management professionals to innovate and enhance healthcare systems. These included the accelerated adoption of telehealth services, the use of digital health technologies, collaboration and the sharing of best practices, population health management, and the resilience of the healthcare system. To address future healthcare crises, the healthcare industry must continue to embrace these opportunities to develop more robust and sustainable healthcare systems.

Organizations and healthcare institutions must be flexible enough to respond to changing needs and expectations in their environment, and healthcare leaders must prepare and continuously work proactively to be prepared for unexpected crises. In the same vein, risk management and planning for any unexpected situation are important aspects of the management of healthcare organizations. Working on strengthening collaborative teamwork and the sense of togetherness can ease and prepare the organization to deal with and overcome any external negative consequences or unavoidable future catastrophes.

To sum up, despite the challenges faced by the global economy during the Corona pandemic, these problems were a reason for improving performance in the public and private sectors, healthcare systems, and the management system in institutions around the world. These challenges are a source and a real opportunity to improve the organizational performance and the administrative system to ensure the continuity of management systems and to prevent discontinuity of the services to the public if the world faces similar major challenges in future generations.

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