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Research Article

**STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEM RESEARCH:
OPPORTUNITIES, BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES****¹Dr. Jamil Ahmed Lakhia, ²Dr. Muhammad Arif Khan, ³Dr. Amina Sadia, ⁴Dr. Muhammad Imran**¹QIMS, Quetta Cantonment, Baluchistan, Pakistan, ²Health Administrator, Rawalpindi, ³Tehsil Head Quarters Hospital P.D. Khan, ⁴MSPH, DHQ Hospital, Layyah, Punjab.**Article Received:** March 2019**Accepted:** April 2019**Published:** May 2019**Abstract:**

Health system is strengthened by health research systems in order to achieve cost-effective treatment for the needy and better global health status. However, significant confusion and ambiguity lie in terms of boundaries, features, methods and definitions. Production, translation, reproduction and implementation are different barriers which add to the complexity of the health research system. Other challenges include comparative, generalizability, transferability, applicability, standards, community diversity and priority-setting. We can support health systems research by taking it as a field of scientific endeavor that has shared a language, cross-jurisdictional learning, interdisciplinary approaches and international society. We can also strengthen national capacity at individual, national and organizational level. We can also take health system research a major health system function. By arresting such issues and barriers the health system research can be supported to meet global health challenges and outcomes.

Corresponding author:**Dr. Jamil Ahmed Lakhia,**

QIMS, Quetta Cantonment, Baluchistan, Pakistan.

QR code



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INTRODUCTION:

Various pragmatic solutions are already available to counter global health challenges but progress is still frustrating as a number of health systems are constrained without full control [1, 2]. The world can control increased maternal and fetal mortality through effective support of the available interventions [3]. New knowledge is inevitable for better healthcare services along with biochemical innovations discovery with actually delivering system. The dependence of MDG largely relies on health priorities [4]. There are many descriptions of health systems; according to WHO “activities primarily promoting, maintaining and restoring health are health systems” [5]. There are further six groups of such activities which include health workforce, service provision, technologies, vaccines, medical products, financing, health information systems and governance [6]. We carried out this research to find out best possible conceptualized frameworks published in the last fifteen years describing reforms, opportunities, goals, actors and functions of the healthcare systems. Different frameworks are used in this research classified as system frameworks, sub-frameworks or supra-frameworks. Main reliance is on system frameworks with comparative and illustrative purpose carried out by supra-frameworks. The further classification was also made for the better comprehension of health systems offering different comparative ways with information shifts in the health systems. Another reason for classification was to outline evaluating methods to assess the performance of the health system.

THE PROMISE OF HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH:

Although the definition is ambiguous, global census is developing about strengthening health systems for the provision of better healthcare services with the support of institutions. New knowledge exploration is only possible through reliable research works in order to generate new evidence in a certain field. Research is a systemic process of studying sources, processes and objects to establish facts, explore ideas, test hypotheses, evaluate interventions, draw conclusions and develop theories. It poses questions, collects information and also proposes answers to the raised questions. Decisions and conclusion help in the process of policy making [7]. Research enhances the health system image with by strong governance, delivery and financial arrangements for various topics like AIDS/HIV. Health system research depends on ten points which include enhancement of health system research image, broadcasting scientific inquiry, focus on the long-term health system nature,

generalization of research outcomes, encouragement of dedicated funding, spreading awareness about the complex nature of the health system inquiry, taking every opportunity for health system evaluation, expanding research capacity and asking right questions for required improvement.

CONCEPTUALIZING HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH:

We can conceptualize health systems in different ways; it is essential to have better health system knowledge which is crucial for health improvement through knowledge exploration and generation. Functionally, the health system research can better be understood for knowledge exploration that contributes to the development of the health system [8]. It increases understanding and strengthens health systems. Health systems research requires equal attention as other fields of health system among all countries of different socioeconomic status. However, there is a difference in the research domains across various disciplines and countries with low, middle and high economic status. Quality is easy to observe but difficult to define; the same is true for health systems research. The field of research is difficult to define and describe. We can describe its different features and characteristics and boundaries for the proposed definition of health system research.

FEATURES OF HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH:

Health systems research is largely dependent on the questions and their respective answers which strengthen the better understanding of the health system and its functioning. Its strength lies within knowledge paradigms, multiple disciplines, research methods and designs. It is a multidisciplinary field which needs interdisciplinary culture. A true interdisciplinary ethos refers to various traditions with information about each other’s position along with an understanding of others perspective. It judges the complementary perspective in the light of authors disciplinary standards. The greater divide lies between the selection of qualitative and quantitative approach selected by the author for respectively positivist and relativist paradigms. Understanding is increasing about scientific challenges and academic complexity about the research process. Healthcare professionals are of the view that non-development of advanced technologies is greatly hampering health system improvement. The implementation, delivery and integration are also a question for the system and organizational structures. On the other hand, the health sector is expanding rapidly while representing power societal relationship and addressing inequities to

relieve poverty. Conflict tendencies also exist as one group is of the opinion of generalizable, rigorous and robust research and other argue about the context of research.

BOUNDARIES OF HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH:

Health systems research is a subpart of a larger domain which comes under health research. Majority opines that it overlaps behavioral, clinical and population-based health research except for biochemical research. The overlap with behavioral and clinical research is mostly apparent in associated sub-domains of delivery services improvement and improvement in the implementation of science. Not much known in about overlapping of population health research; however, it includes general health system related to general public and interventions. Population health research focuses on describing and measuring health, examining health determinants and assessment of the promotion of health interventions. Majority of health policy research comes under the field of health system research which is related to population and clinical health domains including safety measures and policies on the environment [9].

DEFINING HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH:

Health systems research refers to a multidisciplinary health research field which aims to study delivery, financial and governance arrangements for public services and health care services along with consideration of reforms implementations and strengthening broader legal, economic, social and economic contexts. Its purpose is to understand and improve health system performance. Health systems research encompasses all health services research, population research, clinical research and health policy research except biomedical research.

STUDY DESIGNS AND METHODS:

A broad range of methods and designs are featured in health systems research. There are fixed designs and flexible designs. Fixed designs are established before the collection of data and information; whereas, flexible designs evolve in the course of the research process. Normally, fixed strategies are positive in their approach with quantitative data basically seeking phenomenon and impact measurement under controlled and specific conditions. Experimental modelling and designs are connected to statistical analysis. Various techniques are also utilized for data collection such as reviews, interviews, structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and surveys [10].

CONCEPTUAL BARRIERS:

Various challenges include features, characteristics, methods and boundaries which restrict health system improvement, implementation, reproduction, translation and production. All these barriers are offshoots of health system complex nature and health system research complexities.

The structure of health systems is socially extraordinarily complex as it is multilayered, highly sophisticated and non-linear. Even with the inclusion of increasing technological innovation and repeated reorganization the resistance of health systems is still strong as it opposes planned change due to independent players, zealously guarded interests, established policies, divergent cultures and entrenched professional silos that together help in the characterization of its complex nature. Questions posed in research are often difficult to answer through various methods such as randomization and control groups. Such approaches are common in clinical and biomedical research. Working is even difficult in an evolving political environment. Researcher normally faces challenges due to the complex nature of health systems which are comparativity, generalizability, applicability and transferability. Another challenge lies in the communal differences.

STRENGTHENING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH:

Luckily, challenges presented in the point of conceptual barriers highlight strengthening opportunities in the health systems research contributions. In addition to mitigating options of any negative aspects and effects of such conceptual barriers may also act as a unique strength of the field. To support the health system, research a joint scientific endeavour is required along with a shared language, cross-disciplinary learning and cross-jurisdictional learning, requirement for an international society supporting research, capacity building of health research system along with the building of individual, organization and national level capacities.

CONCLUSION:

Health system is strengthened by health research systems in order to achieve cost-effective treatment for the needy and better global health status. However, significant confusion and ambiguity lie in terms of boundaries, features, methods and definitions. Production, translation, reproduction and implementation are different barriers which add to the complexity of the health research system. Other challenges include comparative, generalizability, transferability, applicability, standards, community

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