

Middle East Needs to Develop Leadership to Meet the Challenges Facing the International Industry

Dr Stephen Brookes is a senior fellow in public policy and management, specializing in leadership and organizational development with a focus on healthcare management at The University of Manchester

Middle East needs to develop leadership to meet the challenges facing the international industry

The Middle East healthcare sector is vibrant and active, and continues to attract investment as private and public-sector investors build the capacity needed to serve both a growing population and healthcare tourists.

The global industry still faces a number of challenges, such as (according to the World Economic Forum), the spiraling cost of healthcare delivery, which is reaching unsustainable levels. With the rising cost comes the need to transform the industry and improve efficiencies, patient outcomes and financial sustainability. Factors affecting success include sharing and learning from international practice and experience, global perspectives, and individual and collective leadership.

Healthcare is transforming rapidly. Healthcare systems are being continuously modernized and reformed, whether they be public, private or hybrid. The need to demonstrate improved outcomes will continue. Transformational change will be needed more than ever, with a focus on health outcomes based on an evidence-based approach.

With changing demographics and new technologies, leaders will need to be more adaptive and prepared to be creative and opportunistic, within an appropriate risk assessment climate. These issues present a significant leadership challenge within healthcare systems.

The opportunity to learn from other systems offers real benefits to healthcare leadership, in equipping leaders and managers with cutting-edge knowledge and practice from around the world while retaining a strong emphasis on regional, national and local systems and practices, putting the patient at the heart of all that healthcare leaders do.

Healthcare leadership exists at multiple levels with each level defining the type of leadership required through a collective vision. It is most certainly collective at the level of the patient as often the health and well-being of the carers and nuclear family often depends on this.

Collective leadership must build the capacity and capability of the people within the healthcare system through improved skills and the development of appropriate behaviours. The focus should be on how you lead within a collective healthcare system, always putting the patient first.

Given the global nature of healthcare leadership, leaders need to adapt to changing markets and the potential for change in a complex and uncertain world. Leaders unable to do this will remain rooted in the traditional form of leadership, facing difficulties currently associated with cost, quality and access, with patients isolated from the leadership decisions and practices. The concept of the patient 'as leader' is starting to emerge.

There are four major global leadership challenges in any healthcare system across the world:

- access to different levels of healthcare in a timely, cost-effective and seamless manner
- giving prevention as much priority as treatment and recognising long term benefits
- delivering healthcare across a range of public/private and hybrid systems
- integrating care across diverse primary, secondary and tertiary providers.

In the GCC, there are many similarities in the healthcare systems of the member states, but there are also differences. The balance between public and private provision of healthcare, while ultimately working towards a common standard of health and well-being, is one.

<https://forbesmiddleeast.com/middle-east-needs-to-develop-leadership-to-meet-the-challenges-facing-the-international-industry>