

The Four Golden Threads of Global Healthcare

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Healthcare is one of the largest industries in the world and those employed within it are responsible for ensuring that everyone has access to healthcare in a timely, cost-effective and seamless manner. According to the World Health Organisation, this is a fundamental human right. Healthcare leaders across the globe are facing constant and ever-growing demands across an increasingly complex, multi-faceted healthcare system in a fast-changing global environment. How to achieve the appropriate level of healthcare for all is the first real global challenge for healthcare leaders. The second is that of preventing illness as well as delivering treatment as a priority. Thirdly they must deliver healthcare across a range of public/private and hybrid systems and integrate care across diverse primary, secondary and tertiary providers. Responding to these challenges demands an appropriate combination of self-leadership and collective leadership development. Leaders must gain a wider understanding of the impact of globalization, while retaining the integrity of national healthcare systems. They must also align their values and ethics to transform the vision to the delivery of care, while 'living the values'. Healthcare leaders need to use increasingly innovative practices within an intelligence-based and risk-aware environment, as well as focus on values-based competencies, in promoting patient-centred behaviours.

Developing healthcare leaders means addressing four threads upon which healthcare leadership development should be based.

1. The patient and their carers should be at the heart of all that healthcare leaders do.
2. The delivery of healthcare services should be improved by increasing creativity and innovation.
3. Healthcare leaders should not work within a vacuum and 'networked leadership' should be adopted.
4. The fourth and final thread brings us back to the internationalization of healthcare leadership.

We live in a world where the health of every nation's citizens and residents are inextricably connected across all systems and cultures. The great benefit of this internationalisation is that we can concentrate on encouraging the sharing of good practice through technical cooperation, shared and distributed leadership, and improvement in service design to control and eradicate disease, thereby improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of all humanity.

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