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Empowering Healthcare: WHO / EMRO Impact on Advancing Nursing Practices in Iraq

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Abstract

This article explores the pivotal role played by the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office of the World Health Organisation (WHO / EMRO) in addressing Iraq's complex healthcare challenges, explicitly focussing on the nursing sector. Iraq, marked by decades of conflict and political instability, struggles with a strained healthcare infrastructure, particularly evident in the nursing domain due to shortages, resource disparities, and training impediments. WHO/EMRO emerges as a crucial ally, undertaking a comprehensive and sustainable approach to improve the nursing situation in Iraq.

The essay delves into WHO/EMRO's multifaceted initiatives, including technical assistance, policy development, training programs, and advocacy efforts to fortify the nursing ecosystem. The organization collaborates with local authorities, educational institutions, and the nursing workforce to address immediate concerns and cultivate long-term sustainability. The significant contributions of WHO/EMRO encompass capacity building, policy formulation, emergency preparedness, research support, infrastructure enhancement, and community participation.

Through these efforts, WHO / EMRO strives to bridge gaps in nursing education, improve workforce competency, advocate for nurses' rights, and enhance overall healthcare care resilience. The organization's emphasis on collaboration, data-driven interventions, and long-term sustainability positions it as a key driver in shaping the trajectory of healthcare in Iraq. Ultimately, WHO/EMRO's commitment to nursing development contributes to improved health outcomes and establishing a robust and adaptive healthcare system in the region.

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INTRODUCTION

The healthcare challenges in Iraq have been complex and marked by a complex interplay of geopolitical, socioeconomic, and public health factors. In navigating this complicated landscape, international organisations have appeared as essential allies in fortifying healthcare systems and addressing unique needs. Among these organizations, the World Health

Organization's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office of the World Health Organisation (WHO / EMRO) has assumed a significant role in the promotion of advancements, particularly in the critical realm of nursing (Lafta & Al-Nuaimi, 2019).

Iraq, devastated by decades of conflict and political instability, struggles with a healthcare infrastructure that has often been stretched to its limits (Boyd et al.,

2013). The impact is acutely felt in the nursing sector, where shortages, uneven distribution of resources, and challenges in training and professional development have posed significant hurdles (Sinyard et al., 2022). WHO/EMRO, mindful of these challenges, has stepped up with a mission to alleviate immediate concerns and enact transformative changes that can elevate the nursing situation in Iraq to new heights (Region, 2005).

In the next sections of this essay, we delve into the multifaceted approach employed by WHO/EMRO, examining its efforts to provide technical assistance, shape policies, conduct training programs, and advocate for the nursing profession. This exploration will shed light on the comprehensive nature of WHO/EMRO's commitment to nursing development in Iraq and underscore its significance in steering the region's healthcare trajectory. Through collaborative efforts with local authorities, educational institutions, and the nursing workforce, WHO/EMRO initiatives aim to address today's pressing issues and cultivate a sustainable and resilient nursing ecosystem for the future.

Significant contributions and initiatives undertaken by WHO/EMRO in developing the nursing situation in Iraq.

1. **Technical Assistance and Capacity Building:** WHO / EMRO provides technical assistance to Iraq to strengthen its healthcare infrastructure, explicitly focusing on nursing. This involves working with local health authorities to find gaps in nursing education, practice, and management. The organization offers the ability to enhance the quality and relevance of nursing education programmes, ensuring they meet international standards (Al Hilfi et al., 2013).
2. **Policy Development and Implementation:** The development and implementation of effective healthcare policies are essential to advance nursing in Iraq. WHO/EMRO collaborates with Iraqi health officials to formulate policies that address the unique challenges facing the nursing workforce. This includes policies related to staffing levels, training requirements, and career

- advancement opportunities for nurses (Organisation, 2011).
3. **Training Programmes and Workshops:** WHO/EMRO conducts training programs and workshops for nurses in Iraq to improve their skills and keep them up to date with the latest advancements in healthcare. These initiatives aim to improve the competency of the nursing workforce, enabling them to provide high-quality and evidence-based care to the Iraqi population (Jawaid, 2003).
4. **Emergency Response and Preparedness:** WHO/EMRO collaborates with Iraqi health authorities to strengthen nursing resilience and preparedness in a region prone to geopolitical tensions and health emergencies. This involves developing contingency plans, training nurses in emergency response protocols, and ensuring that the nursing workforce can effectively manage crises (Organization, 2015).
5. **Research and data collection:** WHO/EMRO supports research initiatives to collect data on the nursing situation in Iraq. By conducting studies on the demographics of the workforce, healthcare needs, and nursing effectiveness, the organization helps shape evidence-based policies and interventions that address the specific challenges faced by Iraqi nurses.
6. **Infrastructure and Resource Support:** WHO/EMRO recognizes the importance of adequate infrastructure and resources in helping effective nursing care. The organization works closely with Iraqi health authorities to identify and address gaps in healthcare facilities, ensuring that nurses have the necessary tools and environment to provide quality patient care. This includes advocating for adequate medical equipment, technology, and a safe and supportive working environment for nurses (Organisation, 2004).
7. **Advocacy for the Nursing Profession:** WHO/EMRO plays a crucial role in advocating for the rights and recognition of nurses in Iraq. The Organisation promotes a positive image of nursing by promoting the value of the nursing profession at the local, national, and international levels. This advocacy includes addressing issues such as

workload, professional recognition, and fair reward, ultimately elevating the status of nurses in the healthcare system (Organisation, 2006).

8. **Collaboration with Educational Institutions:** Recognizing that the quality of nursing education directly influences the competency of the workforce, WHO/EMRO collaborates with educational institutions in Iraq. This collaboration involves supporting curriculum development, providing faculty training, and ensuring that academic programs are aligned with the evolving needs of the healthcare system. WHO/EMRO produces well-prepared and qualified nursing professionals by strengthening the link between academia and practice.
9. **Community Engagement and Public Health Education:** WHO/EMRO recognizes the importance of community involvement in healthcare. The organization supports initiatives that involve nurses in community outreach programs and health education campaigns. By empowering nurses to play a more active role in public health, WHO/EMRO contributes to preventive care and health promotion, ultimately reducing the burden on the healthcare system (Mohamed et al., 2020).
10. **Long-Term Sustainability Initiatives:** In addition to immediate interventions, WHO / EMRO promotes long-term sustainability in nursing development. This includes support for the establishment of continuous professional development programs, mentoring initiatives, and networks that allow nurses to stay up-to-date on best practices. By investing in the ongoing growth and development of the nursing workforce, WHO/EMRO ensures a resilient and adaptive healthcare system in Iraq (Aboul-Serour, 2016).

In conclusion, WHO/EMRO's role in developing the nursing situation in Iraq extends beyond immediate interventions to encompass a comprehensive and sustainable approach. Through collaboration with local authorities, educational institutions and the nursing workforce, WHO/EMRO contributes to the building of a robust healthcare system that can

effectively address current challenges and adapt to future needs. The multifaceted efforts are integral to the development and advancement of nursing in Iraq, ultimately improving the overall health outcomes of the population.

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