(A313) Integrating Paramedics into the Health System — Israel as a Case Study

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Background: Since its development in the 1970s, the paramedic profession has tried to expand its traditional role of providing prehospital emergency care in ambulances into new fields of practice (e.g. community care). Paramedics in Israel are employed almost exclusively in the emergency medical services (EMS). Similar to other countries, the manpower shortage in the Israeli health system forced policy-makers to consider the expansion of traditional roles of various healthcare professions including paramedics.

Objectives: This presentation seeks to: (1) map the current situation and challenges facing paramedics in Israel; (2) examine paramedics’ professional status among policy-makers; and (3) examine the best way to integrate paramedics in the Israeli health-system.

Methods: Qualitative interviews were conducted with 20 senior policy-makers in the Israeli EMS system, Academia, Health Ministry, and military. A policy analysis of documents, laws, regulations, and public media was conducted.

Results: The Ministry of Health in Israel did not play a significant role in the regulation of the profession. Nevertheless, according to the interviewees, paramedics have gained considerable professional recognition among policy-makers, healthcare professionals, and the general public. Following the medical manpower crisis that is evolving in Israel, and the trends that are common in many western countries of expanding the traditional roles of allied health professions, most policy-makers in Israel see the paramedic role evolving into new field of practice. According to policy-makers, legislators, and EMS officials, the major challenges that the paramedic profession faces deal with legislative and professional (mainly academization) issues.

Conclusions: The paramedic profession must adapt itself to the new medical environment. More research should be conducted to build a model, adapted for different local national context, to expand the traditional role of paramedics. This will influence training, research and policy-making regarding the paramedic profession, and will change the traditional professional medical borders.


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The existence of a prehospital emergency care system signifies how secure an area is in aftermath of a health-related emergency. The systems save lives during most out-of-hospital health emergencies. Until 2010, there was no regular prehospital care system in Anuradhapura, or even in the entire north central region of Sri Lanka. Trauma patients were brought to the hospital generally with little or no prehospital care. They were transported to hospital by relatives or other people at the scene with using whatever vehicle was available at the time, which in many occasions was a trishaw. The concept of developing a prehospital emergency ambulance service to cover the municipality of Anuradhapura as a pilot project was formulated in 2009. The objectives were to: (1) provide emergency prehospital care in the municipality; (2) identify the difficulties; and (3) assess the feasibility of implementing it in the entire district. Some of the challenges faced in the process from the initial draft of the concept up to now include: 1. Studying an established emergency medical services (EMS) system; 2. Developing a pressure group in hospital; 3. Convincing the need to administration; 4. Funding in the initial period; 5. Selecting the proper team and supportive peers; 6. Providing standard training to selected staff; 7. Formulating duty norms and standard operating procedures; 8. Infrastructure development, acquiring instruments, and vehicles with limited fund capacities; 9. Cooperating with the trade unions and external/internal negative forces; 10. Rallying the collaborators with same interest; 11. Handling donors; 12. Getting the support of other key institutions (police/municipal council); 13. Utilizing local media to help promote the project; 14. Social mobilization to ensure sustainability; and 15. Ensuring worker satisfaction, encouragement, and liaison with other units of hospital.