

Health Communication in Iran

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Health communication is a relatively new concept in communication studies. The goal of health communication studies is to understand the health situation in a country and determine the best way to manage policy-making in public health. Communication involves transferring a message from a sender to a receiver to convey the same meaning. Health communication is the method used to communicate in the field of health, encompassing interpersonal or mass communication activities focused on improving the health of individuals and populations.

The aim of health communication is to establish connections within different parts of society to enhance the overall health situation. This includes fighting pandemic diseases, preventing illnesses, promoting health, and creating policies in public health. Other relevant domains within this concept include health professional-patient relations, exposure to, search for, and use of health information, adherence to clinical recommendations and regimens, and the construction of public health messages and campaigns.

Health communication assists policymakers in the health field by promoting the dissemination of individual and public health risk information, known as risk communication, and publishing health-related images in the mass media. Education and application development are also key functions of health communication.

Iran, as a developing country, has been working to improve its healthcare system and health education, positioning itself as a pioneer in the Middle East. The increase in health tourists visiting Iran in recent years, especially from neighboring countries, indicates that Iran has made significant advancements in its health and cure system.

In this regard, Iran aims to improve the healthcare system through the development of health communication and promote health-oriented behavior.

The main aspect of improving public health in every society is studying the social factors that affect health and hygiene. Over the last four decades, the government has made efforts to encourage people to participate in health and healing progress, as well as to research the social factors that impact public health development. In this regard, 27 research and study centers have been established as part of medical universities across the country. Additionally, the Iranian Social Health Index has been defined, marking a significant step in promoting social health in Iran. However, despite these efforts, there is no integrated program outlining the roadmap for improving social health. It appears that the government lacks a program utilizing the power of media and communication tools in this area.

Furthermore, the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran are trying to ratify various laws and rules to establish legislation in the healthcare system. The Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis) has approved more than 153 laws and rules in the field of healthcare and related topics in the last four decades. These rules pertain to social health insurance, financial resources for patient

treatment, air pollution control, maternal and child health, and education within the healthcare system. To assist in managing public health and food and nutrition security, a "policy council" was established in the Ministry of Health and Medical Education by the government of Iran, playing an advisory role in the healthcare system and assisting other authorities, particularly media and justice, in health issues.

Moreover, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, medical universities and health centers in all cities play a role in collecting data and information about health in society. The relationship between citizens and these organizations helps the government collect data about the health situation in cities and provinces. Based on this information, decision-makers define various programs for cities and provinces, providing specific programs tailored to the issues in each city.

Despite efforts to collect data to gain a correct perspective on the public health situation in the country, it seems that the government needs to use better methods.

Therefore, "introducing appropriate rules and regulations to compel different data sources to provide data" and "allocating sufficient resources, including human resources and appropriate staff training," are necessary to create a practical vision of the health system in the country.

In this way, the Islamic Republic of Iran provides a system to achieve justice in health services. "Justice in health" is the name of the major healthcare program in Iran. In this plan, eliminating the service gap in health in various parts of the country and different social classes, and providing health services for all Iranians are the main goals.

These are some parts of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to improve health-oriented behavior in society and upgrade the healthcare system. Since development is a branch of health communication, the authorities of Iran aim to illustrate the aspects of Iran's health communication system.