

Kyrgyzstan: in need for finding alternatives to public primary health care in COVID-19-exacerbated crisis

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Introduction

Present paper aims to shed the light from the insider on the current situation of healthcare in Kyrgyzstan and discuss possible solutions.

Methodology

The author of the paper has a unique experience of exposure to various clinical settings and worked independently during the worst months of COVID-19 pandemics, providing care to the rural and urban community. Seeing the problems from within, the author has gained an insider's vision of a major dysfunction of a current healthcare system.

Results and discussions

The overwhelming majority of the population mistrust public PHC (Family Medicine Centers) and address to private sector. When doing this, people self-refer themselves to the specialists basing on their own preference. It may take from 2 to 5 specialists and large scale of diagnostic procedures and lab analyses to make a simple diagnosis, followed by many unnecessary prescriptions. The most "expensive" patients are NCD patients with anxiety and psychosomatic patients who tend to make numerous visits to numerous number of specialists which do not results in improvement of care at all. Such care provides the patient with a fragmented vision of his/her health and treatment.

Within the last 2 years the number of all kinds of private health services, including clinics, consultations, labs, CT-scan sites, pharmacies – increased several times in response to increasing demands of patients and inability of the public sector to meet these demands. The private sector seemed to be a timely backup for the weak and unprepared public system in the pandemics conditions, however in reality it even exacerbated the problem, providing fragmented, expensive care which is not controlled for its quality and safety. The research should be done assessing the impact of private services on people's health.

Conclusions: Private health sector has never been so important for healthcare system in a history of Kyrgyzstan as now. It is now dominating over the public sector by its popularity, use, prestige, opinion making. It also poses big danger, being not controlled and assessed. The solution is to develop and pilot private PHC (family medicine principles) models as a healthy and safe alternative to public PHC.