



# Should medical students learn the principles of health service management?

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## BACKGROUND:

- A new course Challenges in Health Service Management, developed under the coordinator of the school of Public Health, offers an opportunity to MBBS Y5 students to become more aware of the role of health service management and leadership in health care service delivery.
- Case studies and Team based learning (TBL) are used to introduce the basic managerial principles necessary for young doctors in their future professional role such as resources allocation, change management, prioritisation and team building.

## Leaner style trims wait times for cataract ops

**Candy Chan**

More efficient management has meant shorter waiting time for patients and happier staff at the Eye Hospital, according to a consultant.

The hospital on Argyle Street has increased the number of cataract surgeries it can do in a year from 4,000 to 6,000.

The new management style means waiting times have dropped from an average of four or five years to only 18 months at the most.

Consultant ophthalmologist Lam Nai-man said that it is "more like a hot-stop reform rather than a top-down approach."

Some of the changes are simple, such as re-facing service stations before surgery from 12 to seven.

"The stations are used to register the patient's details, issue waiting time slip, and do primary pre-surgery eye checks (among others). We just position an all-in-one service point," he added.

Operating rooms are now reserved for large-scale cataract surgeries, while other less complex operations are moved to other rooms.

Operating rooms are spacious and well-equipped with an operating table, anaesthesia cart and overhead surgical lights, and may have viewing screens and monitors. Lam said he and his team means more workload for the doctors and theatre staff but their work now goes smoothly, with fewer patients' complaints.

"Patients are happy and we are even happier," he said. Monthly complaints are down from six to one.

The lean management approach was first developed in the late 1980s through the work in 1990s by top Toyota executives to improve the company's manufacturing processes.

It is now used by numerous companies across various industries to reduce inefficiencies and improve the overall value of their end product to customers.

Some key goals of lean production such as eliminating waste and valuing employees may be applied to service providers such as hospitals, candy.chun@hku.hk



**AIM:** To evaluate the course effectiveness

## Method:

- (1) Self-perceived rating was used to evaluate teaching and learning effectiveness and acquisition of core competences in health service management.
- (2) MBBS Year 5 (N=211) students were assessed based on: individual readiness assurance test and group discussions using grade descriptors



## Results:

	Pass (50%-79%)	Distinction (80%-100%)
Case 1	35%	65%
Case 2	42.5%	57.5%
Case 3	21%	79%
Case 4	26%	74%
Quiz 1	7%	93%
Quiz 2	6%	94%

Teaching and learning (% of strongly agree and agree)		
Seminar was helpful in acquiring knowledge and skills needed for health care management	65	The tutor provided me with the timely and helpful feedback
I was intellectually stimulated and inspired by the lecturer	71	Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this Management course
The tutorial developed my problem solving skills.	67	Case 1 is useful in learning about principles of health care management
The tutorial sharpened my analytic skills.	71	Case 2 is useful in learning about principles of health care management
The tutorial helped me to develop my ability to work in a group.	67	Case 3 is useful in learning about principles of health care management
The tutor was effective in helping me to achieve the tutorial learning outcome	67	Case 4 is useful in learning about principles of health care management

Self-perceived improvement of competences:	Strongly agree or agree (%)	Strongly disagree or disagree (%)
Engaging in team work to discuss principles of health care management or leadership	55	4
Planning strategies for health care services	49	6
Planning and managing resources in health care	41	6
Analysis of situation that requires health care management knowledge and skills	53	4
Analysis of situation that requires health care management knowledge and skills	53	4
Acquiring professional management skills needed to solve a problem in health care	51	4
Recognition of team work in ensuring quality health care service delivery	54	4

**Comments:**

- The time spent on each of case may be too short and discussion is too rushed
- The marshmallow challenge was something new and it was a good thing to include.
- More scenarios and interactions could be included
- More interactive tasks like spaghetti tower building!
- More cases could be arranged
- Workload is too heavy
- I would like to learn more about the real context of HK, eg HA budgeting, that would be much more helpful

## CONCLUSION:

- Although the management course increased the MBBS students' ability to address health service management issues, further training will be needed to gain a confidence in solving problems in health care management.
- Empowering students with management principles and skills will enable them to adapt and tackle future challenges in health care service.

