

The roots of health sector problems in Iraq: A Short report

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Abstract

The health sector in Iraq has suffered from major chronic problems during the past four decades, when the state's support for the health sector declined during the 1st gulf war. The subsequent fatal blow to the health sector during thirteen years of comprehensive sanction exhausted the health sector and causes the massive decline that we are still suffering from until today.

Keywords: Iraq; health; solved problems

Introduction

Iraq has been cut off from the world since 1980 when doctors and other citizens were prevented from traveling abroad and bringing technology and knowledge.

Unfortunately, after the occupation of Iraq, which was followed by the ensuing civil war, terrorism, and security/ political instability for more than a decade and a half, which caused the burning and sabotage of most hospitals and health institutions and the targeting of doctors with killing and displacement, the Iraqi health sector remained reeling under these worsening crises/ wars for forty years without any support.

Results and Discussion

At the same time, the world has been progressing rapidly and developing tremendously.

We can identify the most important reasons that stand in the way of the renaissance of the health sector in Iraq, which we can call the roots of the problem:

1. The absence of correct scientific strategic planning for the country, especially for the health sector, despite the importance of the health of citizens. We still do not find a declared governmental plan for the advancement of the health sector or a strategic plan for this sector.
2. The absence of an effective health insurance system until this moment, despite the Iraqi parliament's approval of the health insurance law at 2020.⁽¹⁾
3. Iraq still depends on the item budget system, which is a restrictive and inflexible pattern and is not related to the level of achievement on the ground. The solution is to change this system of budgets to a program and goals budget system, in which spending is closely related to achievement and the actual need on the ground.⁽²⁾
4. Absence of necessary funding for the steadfastness and development of the health sector. Iraq spends only a small amount of money on the health sector. For example, the United States of America spends 20% of its GDP on the health sector, Britain and Australia spend around 9% of their GDP, and Saudi Arabia, Iran, Jordan and Lebanon

spend 3-5% of its GDP, while Iraq spends less than 1% of its GDP, which is the lowest of all countries in the world except for Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia.⁽³⁾

Where the rate of government spending in Iraq on the health sector is 154 US dollars per person annually⁽⁴⁾, which is very little compared to all countries in the world. For example, Bahrain spends 1190 US dollars, Qatar spends 2090 US dollars, Singapore spends 2507 US dollars, Britain spends 3,405 US dollars, Germany, France and Canada spend more than 4000 US dollars, as do the states⁽⁵⁾. The United States costs 8,508 US dollars annually as an average per capita of its citizens, so we noticed the huge difference between what Iraq and the rest of the neighboring countries and the world spend.

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