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## Review Article

# Analysis of a Health Care Delivery System of Pakistan and Canada

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## ABSTRACT

Health care is an important sector of any country as it is related with public health. This article compares the healthcare delivery systems of two countries, Pakistan and Canada, with the aim of identifying similarities and differences and making recommendations for improvement. The study was conducted using a comparative approach, examining the healthcare systems' structures, policies, processes, and outcomes. The findings suggest that while both countries have strengths and weaknesses in their healthcare delivery systems, Canada's system is more comprehensive, with a higher level of access, quality, and equity. The study highlights the need for Pakistan to improve its healthcare system by increasing the availability of resources, strengthening the healthcare infrastructure, and ensuring the quality of care. The authors also suggest that Canada can improve its system by focusing on reducing healthcare costs, improving the efficiency of its system, and increasing access to care. This article provides valuable insights into the healthcare delivery systems of both countries and serves as a reference for policymakers and healthcare professionals seeking to improve the health outcomes of their populations.

## INTRODUCTION

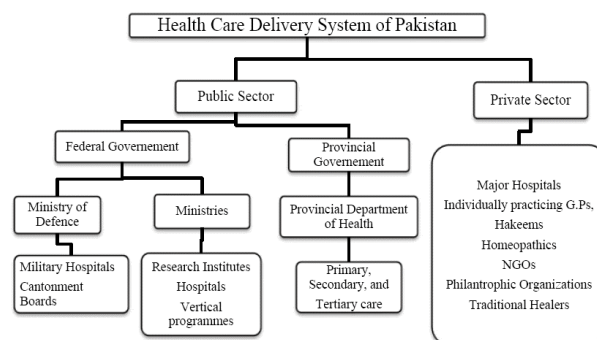
Health is considered as fundamental right of every human being, According to WHO "health is complete state of physical, mental and social wellbeing not merely the absence of diseases" [1]. In the past, the health care system was traditionally disease focused but now a days the whole picture of health care system has been changed, and is focusing on health promotive and preventive services. Health of whole nation depend upon the provision of health care services by the government. Health care delivery system is organization of people and their aim to provide the health care services to the individual to fulfil their health needs [2]. The fundamental purpose of good health care delivery system is to provide preventive, promotive, curative services to population and affordable cost of health expenditure for whole nation [3]. Moreover, an effective health care delivery system requires enough

resources to fulfill the basic health needs of the whole nation thus every country should invest large amount to develop good and effective health system as according to WHO every developed and developing country should invest 5% of total budget on health and health related services. Many developing countries are fulfilling the WHO recommendation to attain the health for all e.g., Egypt spend 5% of total budget on health. But some countries are still struggling but unable to maintain proper health budgeting as Pakistan is still unable to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and maintaining the budgeting [4]. On the other hand, health insurance is also helpful for maintaining the low-cost healthcare delivery system. Insurance helps manage health expenditures with the insured money. In the health insurance population of the country, people pay a small amount and from this amount,

the insurance company pays for all health services, including the cost of medical and surgical expenditures. All developing countries maintain health insurance cards and private health insurance projects to provide relief to their residents [5].

### Health care delivery system of Pakistan

Pakistan is developing country with highest population growth and is struggling and attempting hard to accomplish the MDGs which was formulate to meet the fundamental health needs of developing nations [6]. Population of Pakistan is increasing with rate of 3% and increasing population is the highest burden on the economy of Pakistan [7]. Although, Pakistani government has made remarkable changes and progress in health care delivery system but still Pakistan health care delivery system has many aspects lacking with highest maternal mortality ratios, morbidity, burden of communicable diseases low life expectancy and malnutrition in children [6, 8]. Health care delivery system of Pakistan consists of private and governmental organization. Unfortunately, about 70 % population all population is served by the private sector and only 30% population is receiving health services from governmental health care settings [6]. Pakistan has 1167 hospitals for whole population of Pakistan which is not enough for 1.8 billion populated countries including 5334 basic health units (BHUs), Sub health centers 560, Rural health centers 4712, Dispensaries, Maternal and child health (MCH) 905 and Tuberculosis centers 288 [9]. As Pakistan have larger number of health care centers but it is not enough for 1.8 billion population. Moreover, in the past, Pakistan was following traditional method of health care system which was mostly limited to disease treatment but during last decay Pakistani government has changed its strategy and approach to health care delivery system which consists of disease prevention, health promotion, and curative treatment [3]. Current health care delivery system of Pakistan is comprising preventive, curative, promotive and rehabilitative services. The health care delivery system is consisting of private sector and public sectors, public sector is controlled by two sectors known as federal government and provincial government. Governmental sector comprises of following line of hierarchy. Firstly, Federal government includes ministry of defense which consist of military hospital cantonment boards and ministries which is consisted of research institutes, and hospitals. Secondly, provisional government is consisting of provincial department of health, primary, secondary and tertiary care. Private sector comprises on major hospitals, non-governmental organization, Hakeem, homeopathic and other traditional healers [10]. The health care delivery system of Pakistan is shown in following Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Health care delivery system of Pakistan

### Strength of the Pakistani health care delivery system

Major strength of the Pakistani health care delivery system is an outreach primary health care at the community level by lady health workers, lady health visitors and community midwives which are most trusted health care team member at the community level and they work to provide the health care services at the population residence level, this also support the primary health care system of Pakistan, Since 2000, significant progress has been made in the healthcare delivery system and health indicators, largely due to partnerships between the public sector, private sector, and NGOs. Despite having high population growth and high maternal and child mortality ratios, Pakistan has achieved this progress [10]. A major step forward was taken in recent years with the initiation of the Prime Minister's National Health Program on December 31, 2015, which provides health insurance cards for the poor population [11]. *The main aim of this program this program is to give coverage for 15 districts of the Punjab, Baluchistan, (FATA) and Islamabad and these health insurance cards will cover the medical and surgical treatments which will reduce the burden of medical expenditures on the pocket of poor people [12]. Furthermore, 3227113 individuals have availed the health insurance card [11].*

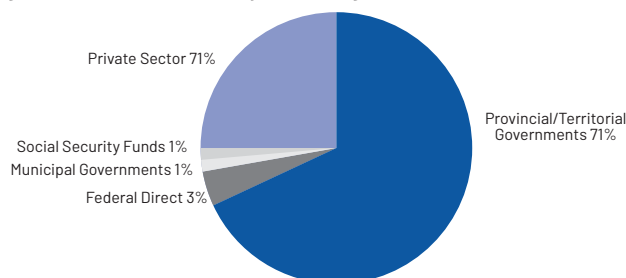
### Challenges faced by health care delivery system of Pakistan

Recently, Pakistan has low health budget and spending very low amount of 50 billion on health. Which is 0.4% of total budget of Pakistan. It is not enough for 7<sup>th</sup> most populous country of world and it is not fulfilling the recommendations of WHO which is to spend the 5% of total budget of every country despite this whether it is developing country or not. In the relation of 5% to 0.4% is nothing just a little bit support for health of population [10]. Low budgeting of Pakistan health care system is unable to give coverage to the preventive, promotive and curative services. Pakistan is also facing the corruption issues in small budgeting and major part of this budget was spent in past in Punjab and KPK, Sindh and FATA. Inefficiency, lack of regularization, Inequitable distribution collection of

scarce resources are major issues facing by health department in Pakistan [13]. Furthermore, health services are not distributed equally throughout the country which give raise to mortality and morbidity as health care facilities are different in Punjab that's why mortality and morbidity ratios are low than Sindh and Baluchistan [3]. Moreover, Pakistan has a great shortage of the health care professional and trained birth attendants in rural and urban areas and health care profession is facing this issue since last decay but the efforts of the government in this regard are enough to minimize this issue [12].

### Health care delivery system of Canada

Canada has a population of 35.1 million, and its healthcare delivery system is funded by the government. The government takes responsibility for health expenditures and provides the same healthcare facilities to all Canadian citizens and permanent residents. The Canadian government provides all types of preventive, curative, and promotive health services, but does not cover expenses for cosmetic and beauty surgeries [14]. Canada health care system has also government and private sectors and 70% of expenditures are provided by the government and 27.6% is paid by the private sector. Figure 2 is showing that 71% of health expenditures are paid by government and 24 %by private sector, 1% by social security, 1% by municipal government and 3 % by federal government.



**Figure 2:** Canada health expenditures, 2010

### Strength of Canadian health care delivery system:

Canada government spends more than 2000\$ on health which is about 100\$ billion dollars [15]. Canada government is spending large amount on health and health related services, giving wide coverage of health services to its residents. Moreover, Canada has strong health care insurance system and health insurance of Canada government is covering all population and providing equal health facilities without any biasness. Canada has strong primary health care system which consider as the base of health. Primary health care facility has expert physician which provide free consultation to all population without any difference and government pays attractive wages to their primary health care provider to make them motivated to their work and responsibilities [16].

### Challenges face by Canadian health care delivery system

Canada has impressive health care system but this system has some cons still. As for emergency services people have to wait long and follow full protocols of the health system. Canadian people have to wait within queue for their in-emergency cases to and they to follow all protocols which increases the suffering and pain of the patients [17]. Canadians pays a larger amount as tax than Americans, most of the province pays 10% taxes of whole income. For poor families and low-income families, it becomes impossible to pays this tax rates [18]. There is a great shortage of health care providers in Canada which makes the problem for sick patient and organization as well as for the government too [19].

### Analysis of the Pakistan health care delivery system with Canadian health delivery system

The health care delivery system of Canada and Pakistan have pros and cons for their population and face challenges but both countries are trying to provide best health care services to their population. The allocation of health care budget of Pakistan is not enough according its population growth. Moreover, due to high population growth it is not enough in the comparison of Pakistan. Canada has less population and have high health budget and this financing of the Canadian government makes a huge difference in providing best health care facilities [2]. Health insurance is being provided by the both countries but health insurance system of Canada is well organized and giving full coverage for all types of health care services for all population but in the comparison the Pakistan has started this health insurance program recently, that's why insurance system is not still in full working conditions and not providing health insurance facility to all population on equality basis. Pakistani government and policy makers should follow the strategies and policies of those countries who successful health insurance system for all population like Canada and USA has well organized health insurance system. Pakistani government is investing in the health insurance system alone, private sectors and *private insurance companies can play a very supportive role to minimize the burden of health insurance expenditures* [11]. *A well-organized health insurance system of any country can be of very help in minimizing the burden of country economy and well-organized health insurance system will give great relief to common man from the expenditures of healthcare service. Both countries are facing the shortage of health care providers according to the need of population. Government should develop strategies to overcome the shortage of the health care provider they should initiate the programs to motivate the health care provider to entered in the government job. Government should give them attractive*

wages. Furthermore, the government should appoint the health care providers according to the need of country's population[20].

### Strategies

Pakistan is a developing country and should allocate the budget and available resources to overcome the weakness of the health care delivery system. Health policies should be planned on equality basis and Pakistan has to put great focus on primary health care services. On the other hand, Canadian government should focus on the active emergency care procedure to minimize the suffering of their population and taxes from low-income families should be less than those who have higher income. Both countries should minimize the shortage and maximize the number of health care provider and these countries should focus on 1:1 ratio to give best patient centered care. Evidence base practice should be promoted. Recourses should be divided equally throughout the country because it is the fundamental right of every individual to have the best health care and it also the major responsibility of the state to distribute the health resources equally to provide standard health care system to whole population.

### CONCLUSIONS

Finally, Pakistani health care delivery system and Canadian health care delivery system has different challenges and issues. Health of any country is fundamental need of the population and there is no doubt that health care delivery system is a complex domain and health needs changes with the passage of time. Governments of all countries should make policies and strategies according to need of people and should revise these policies to maintain the health system.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest

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