



# Problems in the healthcare system in Uzbekistan during the years of independence

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## KeyWords

*“Health” projects, postpartum complications, problems in the private sector, supplying the population with medicines, import of medicines, “laughter therapy”, concept*

## ABSTRACT

*During the years of independence, Uzbekistan has carried out large-scale reforms in the healthcare system. In particular, much work has been done in the field of maternal and child health, combating infectious diseases, building modern medical facilities, renovating existing ones, launching new types of medical institutions, preventing births of children with disabilities and in other areas. As a result, significant progress has been achieved in this regard. However, there are still a number of problems that hinder the development of the sphere. This, in turn, has become one of the factors, giving a negative impact on the development of the healthcare system. This article is devoted to the analysis of the problems that have persisted in the healthcare system in Uzbekistan during the years of independence.*

## INTRODUCTION

During the years of independence, Uzbekistan has carried out large-scale reforms in the healthcare system. However, despite the significant progress achieved thanks to reforms, the challenges in the development of the healthcare system have remained unresolved over the years. These include problems in rural medical units, the spread of certain diseases, the introduction of market mechanisms in the sphere and difficulties in licensing the private sector, as well as the provision with medicines and other problems. For this reason, revealing and analysis of the remaining problems in these areas is one of the most pressing issues.

## MAIN PART

During the years of independence, much work has been done to establish and develop the activities of rural health units (RHUs), which are the primary healthcare facilities. However, some problems still remain. In particular, the activities of district nurses working in these institutions are not sufficiently organized; the implementation of effective mechanisms to increase their responsibility in this area is not up to date. This, in turn, has led to a number of negative effects. Specifically, the level of timely detection of socially significant diseases has decreased, regardless of the stage of healthcare facility. For example, in the Samarkand regional perinatal center alone, almost all maternal deaths in 2014 were the result of the irresponsibility of community nurses, among other staff [1].

However, RHUs were not adequately staffed with medical professionals. This, in turn, had a negative impact on their effectiveness. Insufficient number of specialists has limited access to the most modern medical equipment provided by the Health projects. At the same time, the training of personnel who can use such equipment has not been carried out in conformity with modern requirements. As a result, there was a process of increase in some diseases among the population. In particular, the incidence of active tuberculosis among women in 1995 was 36.8 per 100,000 people, while in 2010 the figure was 50.6. The incidence of menstrual disorders among women has also increased due to insufficient explanatory work among them. Specifically this figure was 114.6 per 100,000 women in 1995, while in 2010 the figure was 367.2 [2].

During the years of independence, the number of infertility, pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum complications among women has also increased. In particular, in 1995, infertility among women occurred in 90 out of every 100,000 women of childbearing age (15-49 years), while in 2010 it was observed in more than 141 women. Similar examples can be provided for pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum complications. In particular, in 1995, there were 1,814 cases per 100,000 women, while in 2010 the figure was 3,213 [2].

In addition, the number of premature births among live births during the years of independence has also increased. In particular, 3.4% of all live births in 2005 were premature, and in 2010 this figure was 3.6%. At the same time, the

incidence of certain diseases in children under 14 years of age has also increased. In particular, diseases of the endocrine system, eating disorders, and metabolic disorders amounted more than 1,670 per 100,000 children, while in 2010 the figure was about 4,300 [2].

During the years of independence, the introduction of new market mechanisms in the sphere, the activities of the private sector, which plays an important role in achieving quality of medical service, were not without problems. Although the activities of the private sector in medical sphere have been regulated by decrees and resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan aimed at developing the main directions of the healthcare system, the growing needs of the population for quality medical services have raised the issue of special decision-making. In particular, until 2017, the dental sector alone accounted for about 35% of the services provided by the private sector of medicine. The remaining 49 types of medical services were provided by 65% of private sector institutions. For this reason, on April 1, 2017, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to further develop the private sector in healthcare system" increased the number of medical specialties that can be engaged in private medical institutions from 50 to 126 [3].

Among the problems of those years is the licensing the private sector of medicine. In particular, until 2017, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan was responsible for issuing permits for private activities. This, in turn, has created a number of inconveniences for entrepreneurs wishing to operate in the private sector, such as the deadline for issuing permits and the submission of redundant documents. Therefore, on the basis of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017 "On measures to further improve the procedure for licensing the distribution of medicines and medical devices, and pharmaceutical activity" from April 1, 2017 it was planned to entrust the licensing of distribution of medicines and medical equipment to The Cabinet of Ministers of The Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional governments and The Government of Tashkent City [4].

In addition, corruption and extortion in the industry, abuse of power have persisted during this period. In particular, the Supervision Inspectorate of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the end of 9 months of 2017 imposed disciplinary measures on a total of 3823 medical workers. Of these, 2,839 employees were reprimanded, 757 employees were fined, and 227 employees were dismissed. In total, 801.134 mln. soums of fines imposed on disciplinary measures and recovered material damage were returned to the budget [5].

At the same time, in the first years of independence, despite the appropriate recommendations of the Ministry of Health, the transition to health insurance, which plays an important role in achieving quality indicators in medicine and allows to adapt to world standards, was not carried out. In addition, despite the reforms to improve the quality of medical education, a number of challenges remain in this sector. In particular, insufficient attention was paid to the involvement of the private sector in this sphere, including the opening of branches of the best foreign higher education institutions in our country, specializing in medical education. This, in turn, has become one of the factors hindering the industry to operate at the level of modern requirements.

Despite the fact that during the years of independence a number of significant measures have been undertaken in order to provide the population with medicines, many problems still remain. In particular, during these years, imports of medicines have been higher than exports. In 2005 exports amounted to 4580.1 thousand US dollars, while imports amounted to 41277.9 thousand US dollars. In 2015, these figures amounted to 5431.036 thousand US dollars of exports and 787026.674 thousand US dollars of imports, respectively.

During the years of independence, the use of "laughter therapy", which is of great importance in the prevention of depressive states that can occur in humans, has not been sufficient. During these years, the number and weight of the central and regional TV channels of the Republic and their level of specialization has increased. Sports and football TV channels have been launched to promote health. At the same time, the number of entertainment programs on central and regional TV channels also increased. However, no special TV channel has been set up under the Ministry of Health, which specializes in the direction of laughter and health promotion. For this reason, it is expedient to launch a new TV channel "Tabassum" (auth.) under the Ministry of Health, which will promote a healthy lifestyle and its main program will be comedy. This, in turn, will play a major role in the development of 'laughter therapy', which is the cheapest defense we have against diseases.

Despite the significant achievements of reforms in all areas during the years of independence, a number of problems remain. This situation has had a negative impact on the achievement of quality development indicators set out in the Concept of Health System Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan. This, in turn, laid the foundation for the ongoing reforms to develop the healthcare system in line with modern requirements, as well as all areas that began in 2016.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that in the years we are considering, the old system has been gradually eliminated. Instead, the foundations of privatization, the provision of the industry with mature personnel, close cooperation with world-renowned firms and companies, and other similar new modern systems have been created. However, at the same time, there are still cases that hinder the adequate development of the healthcare system. This, in turn, was reflected in the increase in some diseases among the population. Because of insufficient privatization, there has been a decline. The number of private medical institutions was far less than the number of state-owned institutions. These and other factors have become one of the factors hindering the industry to operate at the level of modern requirements.

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