Hierarchy and Power in Australian Healthcare Analysis

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Introduction

The health care of any country is governed by a set of rules and policies. It defines the process that helps one to understand how the whole process of health care would function. Australia is one of the best healthcare countries across the globe. But still, the nation suffers from many loopholes. In this research, we will discuss how hierarchy and power play a crucial role in Australia's healthcare sector. Along with that, the various theories and concepts of sociology will be tested to see how they apply to the power factor. All this will help in judging the effect it can have on a medical practitioner or midwife like me when it comes to taking care of the patient.

Hierarchy and Power

The hierarchy in medical terms includes all those people who are involved in the care of a patient. It includes doctors and medical staff, such as nurses and midwives. They are all very important for the better health of the patient. Hierarchy is a very crucial part of health care as it is questioned on many ethical grounds. Power is the decision to take the final call or the authority one has over the other. It highlights the people or the position that rules others in accepting or following the decisions they make. Many times, it is misused in the healthcare sector as people use this power for their own selfish motives, leading to a lot of issues for the public. It is for all these reasons that hierarchy and power are intrinsic issues in Australia's healthcare system (van Teijlingen, 2017). Numerous theories and concepts highlight how they play a role in Australia's healthcare system.

Their effect on the health care system in Australia

Health care is of great importance to all countries. However, it should be all the more important to Australia due to its current health care conditions. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a health system is something that involves a bunch of people who provide good and fair health treatment to all the people who may need it. While this may change from nation to nation, a certain aspect of it remains the same. The health care of Australia provides immense facilities and care to the majority of its people. Various efforts have been made by the Australian government to make health

care as smooth and good as possible. But still, there are a lot of times when, due to the power that the management or the superior holds or how accountability functions, basic care and need take a back seat (Bowling, 2014). This is where the various theories and perspectives come into the picture to explain how the hierarchy and power have the command to make or break the health care system of Australia.

Sociological Theories and Concepts

Sociology is a branch of science that deals with the social life of an individual. It takes into consideration the society in which an individual lives, works, and grows up. It is the branch that deals with how human interaction takes place with another aspect of society. Sociology is very important when it comes to health care. This is because social factors and determinants play a crucial role and have a major influence on Australia's healthcare system. This is because they define how health care and the issues related to it are dealt with in the conditions of Australia. There are various concepts and theories known as perspectives. These are based on how sociology functions in a healthcare environment (Rock, 2016). This will help one to get a better understanding of how hierarchy and power have such huge control over the nation's healthcare system. The various theories and concepts are:

The biomedical model: This is the oldest method or concept that was used in health care. According to this model, the cause of any disease is biological. The whole focus is on the biological and psychological aspects of the disease. This theory is mostly in practice by doctors and other health practitioners in Australia. This concept is important as it helps in clinical practice and research, which helps in the health care sector. The reason it has the most effect on the health care system of Australia is that doctors may place more emphasis on the way the disease is treated and cured rather than on its prevention. This may lead to its successful treatment, but one would suffer from that in the future as well. This is the reason that this concept is not so successful at the current time (Rabinowitz & Richlin, 2014). This is because the power should rely on the ways that can be used to prevent or determine the causes of a particular disease.

The Functional Approach- According to functional theory, good health is an important part of a great society. This approach believes that good health care helps improve society. This is the reason power and hierarchy play a huge role in Australia's health care system. The top management of the health system lays too much importance on making health care better for the life of the country. Various legislations and policies are being introduced to make the lives of people better (Duckett & Willcox, 2015). The reason is that ill people may not be able to fulfill all their roles and responsibilities to the best of their abilities.

Australian health care should put its power on how midwifery can be made better and what role it plays in the lives of the citizens. This will make the life of the people of Australia better as the power bestowed upon midwifery will allow them to apply the applicable policies and rules for the betterment

of the health of the people of the country. This will improve not only their health but also the sociological factors that are responsible for the disease. Also, in the case of hierarchy, if midwifery is given enough power to make important health-related decisions, then the life of the patient can be much more sorted. The higher authorities may not have sufficient time to make important decisions regarding every health aspect (Wakerman et al., 2017). The power of midwifery can be really helpful for the improvement and advancement of health care in Australia.

The Symbolic Interactionism Theory- According to this theory, every symbol and sign holds a different meaning for a different human being. It may not have some specific meaning, and humans treat it as they want to. This can be a huge cause of confusion between the patient and the medical practitioner. A word may have a different meaning for the sender and a whole different meaning for the receiver. The role of midwifery is huge in this. This is because they can state the various meanings and conditions associated with the diseases, which can help in their qualification. This is because the object gets meaning only when a human interacts with it (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017). The power that it holds can be a defining force of health care in Australia. The hierarchy or the power will flow accordingly to treat or cure that disease.

The various meanings and attributes related to various things may lead to many diseases. It is with the help of power that one can define what is true to terminal disease and illness and what is just a belief of the public. It is based on this hierarchy that a sick person can be treated and turned into a normal person. It all depends on how the sick people tend to behave with the medical personnel treating them like the nurses or the midwives.

The Feminist Theory– This theory states that all the major research and findings state the facts about male humans and the diseases they suffer. There is no record of any female interaction in all this. Female health is of great concern in Australia. The facilities provided are still better than in other nations, but there is room for improvement. The power of the top people places more emphasis on the better health of the male or upper caste of the societies, ignoring the health of some of the sections of the country. The same can be seen in the hierarchy followed in the nation (Clifford et al., 2015). This has caused disparities in the country's health sector. The power is mostly centered on the rich people of the country, leaving the poor female in a very distasteful condition.

With the help of medical practitioners like nurses and midwives, the situation can improve. They are of the same gender and understand the situation in a far better way. They can be consulted on ways to improve the health of the female, taking into consideration just their health and no other aspect (Renedo et al., 2015). Improvement in their social condition with the help of power can also be really great for the prevention of further illness and health issues.

Conflict Theory- This theory highlights the inequality that exists in Australia's areas of health care, including gender, social status, and other areas of health care. The level of healthcare differs majorly from the top to the bottom in every part of the world. Though the situation is not so bad in Australia, the gap is still quite broad. The hierarchy and the power enjoyed by a few people in the nation are

often misused by them. This can lead to a lot of loss of life and resources, which could have been easily prevented. It also comments on how various diseases that are social to the lives of people are considered medical and treated without proper guidance. This makes people suffer more than they should (Giddens et al., 2016). This is the reason that power plays such a huge role in Australia's healthcare system.

The government needs to appoint people who are experts in this field at various levels. This will allow the sick person to get fair treatment irrespective of the social status shared by him. Also, the midwives and medical practitioners should not discriminate between the patients on the basis of their power or the links that they enjoy. Every patient should be treated as fairly and equally as possible.

Another theory or concept is the social concept. It takes into account the biological, psychological, and social aspects that can affect a person's health. They believe that people with higher status and power also suffer from the disease, but they get the facility of better treatment and health facilities, which is lacking in the lower section of Australian society.

Effect on me as a health practitioner

As a medical practitioner or midwife, all the power and hierarchy affect me and my work to a great extent. As a medical practitioner who works with many people, my work is often dictated by my seniors and boss. Many times, I may not treat a patient who is in need because the health authority above me does not allow me to do so. The power enjoyed by a few people in society forces me to treat their disease even if it is not so serious. This makes the life of a normal, sick patient very pathetic. They, even being in need, may not get the treatment that they deserve. It also makes me feel very sick and helpless at times (Madsen, 2015). Though there are various policies and rules that govern the life of the people, even they may not apply to various situations.

There is also a war on power dynamics. The private sector is owned by the government and enjoys more power than the private sector, where all health professionals like us work. This rivalry of power and hierarchy may also cause some differences in Australia's healthcare system. It gives us less power than we deserve for taking adequate care of the patient. The top official may not have enough power to give us the autonomy that we deserve when it comes to caring for a patient (Irving et al., 2014). This led to a lot of delayed decisions and unnecessary work, which could have been easily avoided.

There are various boundaries that govern the health sector, affecting the lives of the people of Australia. Thus, efforts need to be made to fill the gap and make the lives of the people as good as possible. The proper hierarchy should be set based on the needs and the social condition of a person rather than the money or power enjoyed by them. More provisions and policies should be established that can contribute to improving the lives of patients in Australia in every way.

Conclusion

It can be clearly stated that power and hierarchy are an intrinsic part of Australia's healthcare system. The dominance they have, along with the impact that they can create, is the reason they should be used very carefully. Making efforts to use them to improve the social as well as the living conditions of the people to prevent many diseases can be a huge step in this direction. Empowering medical practitioners with sufficient power and accountability can help make quick and better decisions, improve the overall health care of Australia, and make it a much better nation.

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