

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Job satisfaction and stress level of primary health caregivers at Primary Health Centers in Qatar

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## ABSTRACT

### Objective

The aim of this study was to assess the extent of job satisfaction and stress of Primary Health Caregivers who offer their services in the Primary Health Centres in Qatar.

### Subject and Methods

A population based cross sectional study was conducted in July 2007. In total, 323 questionnaires were distributed to all the Physicians/General Practitioners (GP) working in Primary Health Care Centers in Qatar. Out of 323, only the 176 (54%) responded, of whom 85 (48%) were males and 91 (52%) were females. Most of the respondents were non-Qatari, of age between 30-45 years and married and parents of children. Data on socio-demographic characteristics, job satisfaction and occupational stress were collected on self-administered english forms developed by Warr, Cook and Wall.

### Results

The overall job satisfaction and stress were below the average levels. There were no significant differences in the overall job satisfaction for nationality, sex, marital status and number of children whereas the female Qatari health caregivers were found more stressed than their counterparts were. There was a negative correlation between job satisfaction measurements and occupational stress measurements ( $r = -0.29$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ).

### Conclusions

Job satisfaction of primary health caregivers is critical for the improvement of health systems. The results of our study showed that Qatari physicians were less satisfied with their salaries and the variety in their work. Occupational stress was more intensive in the Qatari health caregivers than their non-Qatari counterparts were.

**Keywords:** caregivers, job satisfaction, stress, occupational health, primary health care, Qatar.

## INTRODUCTION

Primary health caregivers are responsible for providing medical care to the larger amount of Qatar population. They play a pivotal role in treatment timing and in

health services in general. Medical care can be improved by providing the primary health caregivers with proper working conditions, improved pay scales and other working environment facilities at their peripheral workplace.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has also recognized the importance of Primary Health Caregivers in 1978 in Alma Ata Declaration.<sup>1</sup> Al-Eisa Ibrahim published a study on job satisfaction of Primary Health Care (PHC) physicians at Capital Region Kuwait in 2007.<sup>2</sup> The author concluded that attention should be given to income, variety in work interests/motivations and practice conditions in order to improve the overall satisfaction of Physicians. In 2002, Al Mari SA from Qatar suggested for improving job satisfaction of PHC Physicians, providing incentives, reducing workload and offering vocational training to improve the quality of the PHC services as well.<sup>3</sup> Kalantan Khalid A published a similar study in 1999 focusing on the factors that influence job satisfaction among PHC physicians in Riyadh suggested that vocational training should be provided as well as adequate incentives and administrative support to PHC Physicians.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, in the years including the aforementioned studies, there was only one study published in Qatar about job satisfaction for Physicians working in PHCs, providing clues on making improvements.<sup>3</sup> At this point, recent changes in incentives and work environment facilities in PHCs in Qatar pose the necessity for updating the information concerning this matter.

The aim of this study is to determine job satisfaction and stress level of Primary Health Centers' physicians and General Practitioners (GPs) in Qatar.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Subjects

In total, 323 questionnaires were distributed to the total number of the Primary Health Care Physicians who work at the 24 Primary Health Centers in the state of Qatar. Of those, only 176 (54%) physicians responded. Most of them were of 30-45 years of age. There was 1:1 ratio of male to female. There were 80% non-Qatari in the study. Most of the participants were married and having 5 or more children. There were 119 (68%) participants from the General Practitioners community and 49 (27.8%) from Physicians whereas 8 (4.5%) participants were not mentioned about their discipline. The description of demographic data is included in Table 1 and figure 1.

### Questionnaire

The used questionnaire was adopted by the authors, based

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