



The Assistant Manager as a Leader for Community Health Nursing in Pakistan

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Introduction

- Community health nurses (CHNs) and the health workers they supervise are instrumental in achieving the targets set forth in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), yet they remain an invisible force [Global Health Work Force Alliance (GHWA) 2008].
- Too few health providers are available to meet the demands of the MDGs, and the shortage of nursing leaders in countries such as Pakistan presents an even greater obstacle (Siddiqui 2006).
- Urgency in developing the capacity of providers, from community health workers to midwives and other highly paid cadres, is required (GHWA 2008).

Study Purpose

- To assess the perception of the role of the CHN assistant manager, with the goal of strengthening that role.
- Specific aims included exploring the role of CHN and its significance within leadership context, identify strengths and challenges for implementing this new role
- Providing recommendations for successful implementation

Methodology

- **Study Design:** Interpretative qualitative approach
- **Study Sample:** Purposive sample, n = 13
all experienced in Community Health
- **Interviews Settings:** Aga Khan Health Services'
Pakistan
- **Data collection:** In-depth interviews, Semi-structured
interview guide
- **Data analysis:** Qualitative content analysis
- **Ethical Consideration:** Participants' written informed
Consent

PAKISTAN



The **Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS)**

- AKHS is one of three agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) that support activities in the field of health.
- is one of the most comprehensive private not-for-profit health care systems in the developing world.
- AKHS now provides primary health care and curative medical care in Afghanistan, India, Kenya, Pakistan, and Tanzania, and provides technical assistance to government in health service delivery in Kenya, Syria and Tajikistan.

Major initiatives

- AKHS's overall major initiatives currently include:
- Assisting communities to develop, manage, and sustain the health care they need.
- Providing accessible medical care in modern, efficient, and cost-effective facilities.
- Working in partnership with other agencies in the development of communities and the enhancement of their health.
- Educating physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals.
- Conducting research relevant to environments in which AKHS institutions exist.
- Contributing to the development of national and international health policy.

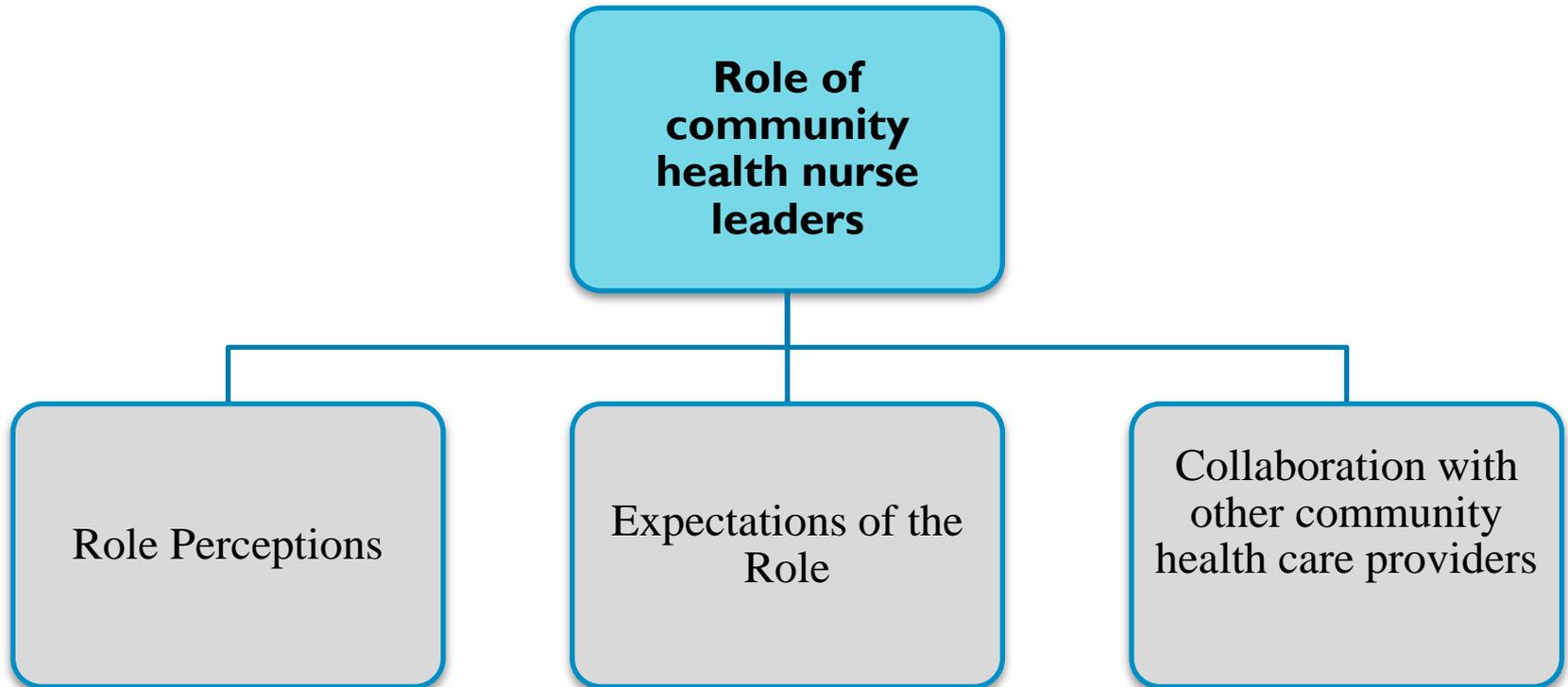
(<http://www.akdn.org/akhs.asp>)



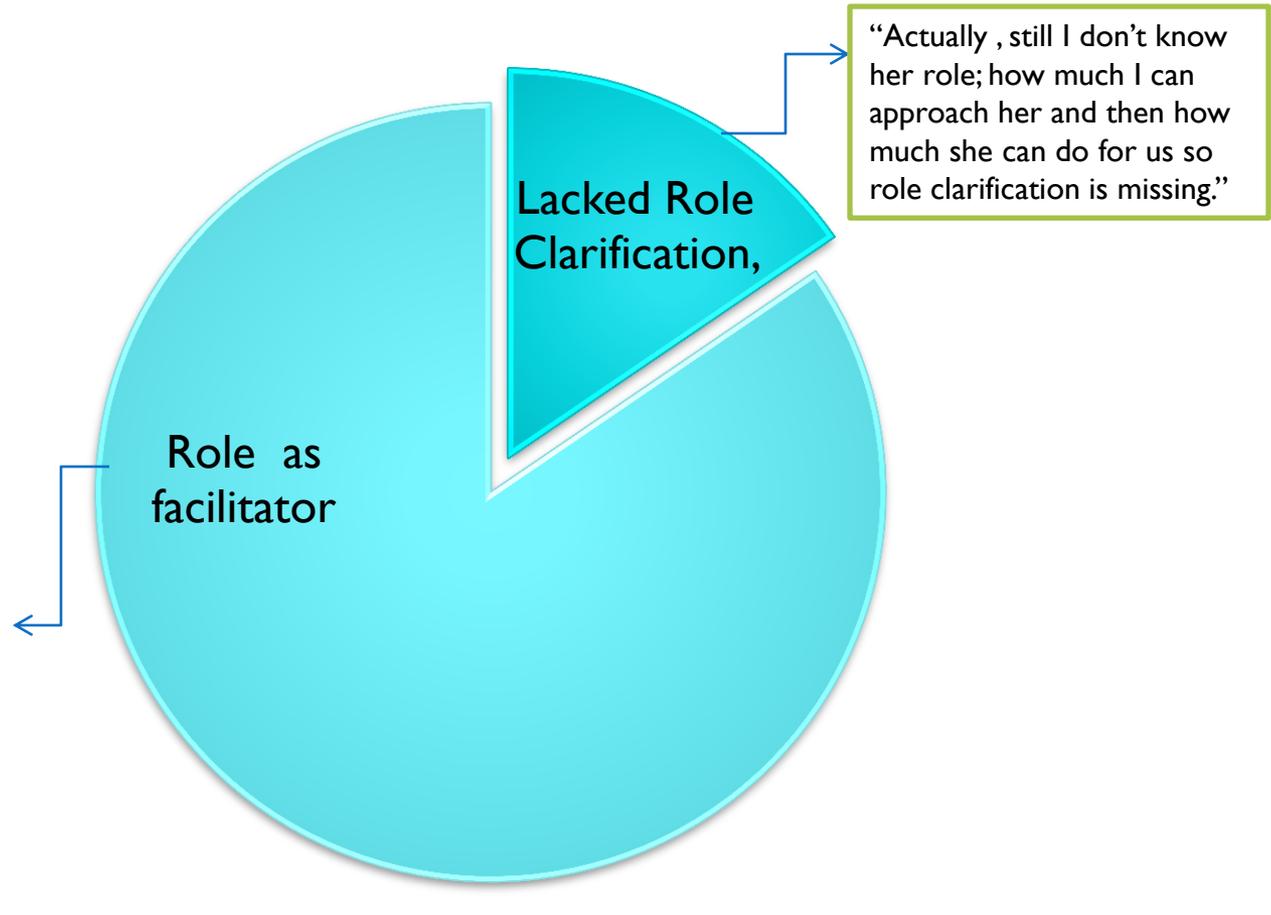
Findings

Three major themes derived from the data

Major themes derived from the data



Role Perceptions



Expectation of the Role

Within the context of daily workplace expectations, assistant manager CHNs were expected to:

- ...orient and evaluate all community health staff.
- ...implement and monitor current community programmes.
- ...develop protocols for minor ailments.
- ... teach a community health course in addition to ‘strengthening primary healthcare.’”



At a
conceptual
level the
assistant
manager was
expected to:

- "...be a visionary person, perceptive, insightful...ability to develop systems to understand issues, enhance collaboration, represent regionally, foresee others development, be accountable...know grassroots problems in the community."

Another
participant
compared this
role with being:

- "...the frontline soldiers which have an ultimate effect on the image of the institution and nursing ... they deal [with] the public at the basic level to prevent disease and promote maximum health. If primary healthcare delivery system is strengthened up then ultimately tertiary care will also be improved."

Collaboration with other Community Healthcare Providers

...our LHV are bound for 24 hours (a day) job and do not get any incentive to boost them up...are already overburdened and jobs like housekeeping maintenance should not be delegated to them ... since their working hours are long, she [CHN assistant manager] should take a step forward to raise their salaries.

Participants recognized the responsibility of these LHVs stating

Collaboration with other Community Healthcare Providers

If they can conduct individual interviews . . . and listen to their problems . . . may not be able to offer solutions for our problems, but may be able to provide support morally and educationally . . . she may suggest strategies or refer to the place where we could channel our concerns and issues

Communication was seen as key to promoting collaboration among all HC providers.

Collaboration with other Community Healthcare Providers

She should be able to instill in them a sense that nurses and midwives and other healthcare providers can speak for themselves and prepare them to raise their voice

Being whistle blower found as an important requirement that nurse leader can promote amongst health care providers

Recommendations

Achieving maximum effectiveness and competency within the assistant manager CHN role requires consideration of the following:

- Creating a vision for the assistant manager CHN that can be clearly articulated to all levels of community health providers, including administrators.
- Evaluating the position description and reintroducing the scope of work to higher levels of administration as well as those supervised by the assistant manager CHN.
- Educating the administration regarding competencies expected of the BScN Graduate and evaluating need for Master's prepared assistant manager CHNs.
- Providing opportunities for the continuing education of assistant manager CHNs.
- Providing opportunity to build capacity about new emerging field like utilizing eHealth for promoting health of community.

Conclusion

- Community health providers at all levels struggle to meet the individual and population healthcare needs within developing countries on a daily basis. Expectations of those within the role must be synchronous with the realities they face, along with meeting target goals for improving health at the local, provincial and national levels.
- Future studies on CHNs in Pakistan must include a comparison of the local contexts in which they work as national provinces and their communities differ.
- A detailed analysis of the CHN assistant manager's job satisfaction would be helpful for informing any changes in position description and educational requirements.

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Questions and Answers