

Pharmacy Department Head's Succession Preparation: A Cross Sectional Study

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Abstract

Performance of Pharmacy department is determined by the quality of pharmacy leadership in the organization especially department head and it have to be developed the future leader to succeed, lead and run the department consistently for their patients. Therefore this study has been conducted to understand the succession situation and suggest the ideas for practically implementation. Survey questionnaire has been created by information from literature review, discussion with some of pharmacy leaders. Target sample is the department head of both regional and provincial hospital under Ministry of Public Health. Data was collected from August 2013-September 2013. Key findings are 1. Important institute for leadership development is Ministry of Public Health and some of its units, 2. Pharmacy-Management oriented Master Degrees still contribute to develop successors less than they should, 3. key knowledge, skills and attitudes are identified for the future leaders, and 4. Succession readiness of current successors is 33% from all successors which is not so bad but there is a long way to go for the sustainability of pharmacy department in the future.

Key word: Pharmacy Leadership, Leadership Development, Succession planning, Succession preparation

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a crucial position in every organization including Pharmacy department in the hospital. Leaders contribute to organizations' performance¹. Nowadays many challenges attack the pharmacy organization i.e. Hospital Accreditation, Patient Safety, Effective budget utilization, Pharmacy service excellence, etc. therefore, pharmacy leaders must manage every function appropriately including develop successors to succeed their position².

Succession planning is process of indentifying, developing, and tracking key individuals for executive position³. Succession Plan and preparation is one of the most important activities for sustainability of the

pharmacy department. Actually this activity has been passively conducted therefore the consistency of all kinds of pharmacy department's services and tasks are at risk similar to the finding in some study that lower than 50% of respondents identified their organization had not implemented properly succession planning especially executive positions⁴.

Hence the study of succession preparation will allow us to understand the situation for understanding and managing for the future of the pharmacy profession in Thailand.

Objectives of this research are to explore the current situation of succession preparation of the pharmacy department heads in the provincial and regional hospitals under

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Ministry of Public Health and to find out the solution to enhance pharmacy department head succession preparation for the target hospital. To comply with the research in human criteria, the study has been approved by the ethic committee of Faculty of Dentistry and Faculty of Pharmacy Mahidol University.

METHODS

Sample

Target group of this research is the pharmacy department's heads of the provincial hospitals and regional hospitals under Ministry of Public Health in the duration of survey (August-October 2013). Taro Yamane's sample size calculation⁵ was conducted and 89 out of 114 department head is the sample that researcher have to survey. Random sampling was used to finalize the list of target group for the survey.

Questionnaire

Survey questionnaire was designed by using information from the succession planning and preparation literature review.^{6,7,8} Content and face validity was conducted with the pharmacy department head in other public hospitals. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this survey questionnaire is 95%.

Research questionnaires consisted of 4 groups of question items; general information (type of hospital, highest education, interest to be department head, amount of training hours, formal development effort by their supervisors and self development method) which contain 7 question items (filling in blank, multiple choices and answer yes or no), Development for succession preparation which can be more than one answer (Institute which provide development

courses, type of the course and development options), Necessary knowledge-skills-attitude for successors which are 3 sections open-end questions and lastly succession readiness of the successors rated by their current department head which is a 0-10 scale rating. The study protocol and instrument received approval by Faculty of Dentistry and Faculty of Pharmacy Mahidol University Institutional Review Board.

Data collection

89 questionnaires were sent to the target group by postal mail without follow up or reminding mail in August 2013. Questionnaires were sent by hand for the non responded group in the meeting held by Ministry of Public Health in September 2013.

Data Analysis

This research has used Microsoft Excel to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

45 questionnaires were sent back from the respondents. It is 50.56% response which is high response rate. The respondents are 17 department heads of regional hospital and 28 of provincial hospital which is 37.7% and 62.2% of sample size respectively.

Results and discussions of the study will be done simultaneously in the following session.

General Information

Results of this part will be displayed in table 1- 4 and discussion will be made below each table.

Table 1. Highest Education of the respondents

Highest education	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor	19	42.2
Master	25	55.6
Ph.D.	1	2.2
Total	45	100.0

55.6% of the respondents are Master degree holders more than the finding of Sumethiwit et. al⁹ that Master degree held pharmacy department head is 38.2%. It means that post graduation study is one of

a preference of candidates for development of a head of pharmacy department in the big hospital like regional hospital and provincial hospital or secondary 2.3 level and above.

Table 2. Respondent's field of Master degree

Master degree	Frequency	Percentage
Pharmacy	14	56.0
Public Health	6	24.0
Administration	3	12.0
Other	2	8.0
Total	25	100.0

Table 3. Respondent's field of Master degree (Professional vs. Management-Profession focus)

Master degree	Frequency	Percentage
Professional Focus	18	72.0
Management& Professional Focus	7	28.0
Total	25	100.0

From Table 2, master in pharmacy related fields are most preferred by the respondents while pure administration master degrees is less contributed to succession development because pharmacy management and administration are quite different from other area of profession like industrial management or retail management or even trade management.

Among the master degree holders, 18 out of 25 (72.0%) are non management focused field like clinical pharmacy, public

health or community pharmacy. In contrast, only 7 from 25 (28.0%) are identified as management related field i.e. M.B.A., Pharmacy Administration or Public Health Management. But the proportion of management-professional focused fields are small amount and there is a big gap for preparing the professional and management oriented department heads. (See detail in Table 3) In addition this result also implies that there is incremental trend of management focus in pharmacy school in Thailand

Table 4. Respondent's interest to be department head

Intention level	Frequency	Percentage
Intention	21	46.7
Not intention	23	51.1
total	45	100.0

Data from Table 4 shows that 21 respondents (47%) had an intention to be pharmacy department head comparing to 30%

of respondents in the publication of Miller, Mark and Powell¹⁰ (2008) has shown quite lower than our finding in Thailand. This is a

positive trend for current incumbent that they have an interest in the head of department position

therefore they have consciously prepared and learnt to succeed the intent position.

Table 5. Respondent's development prior to access to the positiond

Formal development prior to access to the position	Frequency	Percentage
Intention	21	46.7
Not intention	23	51.1
total	45	100.0

Table 5 shows that 53.3% of the respondents respond that they have been developed to succeed the position. It can be implied that nearly half of current pharmacy department head have not been systematical developed by their supervisors to prepare to succeed the position. It is a great risk for the sustainability of the pharmacy department if the future department heads will not be able to lead and run department properly because

of lacking the preparation by their current department heads.

Formal Development for succession preparation

The results of this part consist of Institute which provide development courses for successors, types of the mentioned courses and development options currently are in place in the time of survey. All of the results are displayed in Table 6-9.

Table 6. Institute that provide knowledge for succession preparation

Institute	Frequency	Percentage
Ministry of Public Health	38	65.5
Faculty of Medicine Mahidol U.	5	8.6
National Institute of Development and Administration (NIDA)	3	5.2
Faculty of Pharmacy Mahidol University	3	5.2
Sonkhlanakarin University	2	3.4
Silapakorn University	2	3.4
Khonkhan University	2	3.4
American Management Association (AMA)	1	1.7
Pac Rim	1	1.7
Chulalongkorn University	1	1.7
Total	58*	100.0
Type of development course	Frequency	Percentage
General Management	46	79.3
Leadership	4	6.9
Human Resource Management	3	5.2

Table 6. Institute that provide knowledge for succession preparation (cont.)

Type of development course	Frequency	Percentage
Change Management	2	3.4
Inventory Management and Control	2	3.4
Cost Management	1	1.7
Total	58*	100

Leadership development method	Frequency	Percentage
1.Book and Journal	39	22.0
2.Seminar and Training	32	18.1
3.Learning from Supervisor	32	18.1
4.On the Job Training by Supervisor	26	14.7
5.Use the supervisor's approaches	18	10.2
6.Job Rotation	13	7.3
7.Cross Function Task	11	6.2
8.Mentoring system by supervisor	6	3.4
Total	177*	100.0

Leadership development method (Supervisors' involved development v.s. the rest)	Frequency	Percentage
1.Supervisors' involved development	82	46.3
2.Book and Journal	39	22.0
3.Seminar and Training	32	18.1
4.Job Rotation	13	7.3
5.Cross Function Task	11	6.2
Total	177*	100.0

*Remark: the respondents can answer more than¹

Ministry of Public Health and organizations under its control take a leading role for developing successors in the hospital under its governance. 65.5% of the respondents have attended the course provided by Ministry of Public Health.

For the type of courses, general management course is the most preferred course to prepare successors because department head have to manage every function in the unit therefore it comes in the 1st rank while leadership skill is the 2nd preferred course and Human Resource Management, HRM, is the 3rd rank. It

implies that it is not only management but also leadership and HRM are crucial for the position.

Considering the Leadership Development method (Table 6), even though development option 1 (Book and Journal) and option 2 (Seminar and Training) are the 1st and 2nd highest ranks of development. When the development options are categorized based on supervisors' involved method 3,4,5 and 8 (Learning from supervisor, on the job training, using the supervisor's approach and mentoring) are combined to one category. This result is also demonstrated in Table 6,

supervisors' involved development become the most frequent development option

therefore supervisor takes an important role in developing successor.

Necessary knowledge-skills-attitude for successors

Table 7. Necessary knowledge for department head's successors

Necessary knowledge	Frequency	Percentage	Acc %
1.General Management	23	19.2	19.2
2.Leadership Motivation and Communication	23	19.2	38.3
3.Human Resource Management and Development	19	15.8	54.2
4.Clinical and Hospital Pharmacy	17	14.2	68.3
5.Rule Regulation and Context of M.o.PH.	9	7.5	75.8
6.Strategic Management	7	5.8	81.7
7.Financial Management	6	5.0	86.7
8.Quality Management	5	4.2	90.8
9.Analizing Problem Solving and Decision Making	4	3.3	94.2
Misc.	7	5.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

Table 7 shows knowledge which respondents identify as necessary knowledge for their successors. Using Pareto's analysis (80/20 Rule)¹¹, 81.7 accumulated percentages of item 1 to item 6 are among the relevant knowledge which consists of General Management, Leadership motivation and communication, Human resource management

and development, Clinical and hospital pharmacy, Rule regulation and context of Ministry of Public Health., and Strategic Management. When compare to current and past knowledge that current department head have been attended, the priority has been placed on General Management only.

Table 8. Necessary skills for department head's successors

Necessary skills	Frequency	Percentage	Acc %
1.Leadership Motivation and Communication	34	34.0	34.0
2.Strategic Management	13	13.0	47.0
3.Human Resource Management and Development	12	12.0	59.0
4.Clinical and Hospital Pharmacy	11	11.0	70.0
5.Information Technology	8	8.0	78.0
6.Purchasing and Inventory Management	6	6.0	84.0
7.Job Analyzing	5	5.0	89.0
8.Negotiation	3	3.0	92.0
9.Team Working	3	3.0	95.0
10.English Language	3	3.0	98.0
Misc.	2	2.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	

Table 8, by using Pareto's analysis¹¹, necessary skills needed for the successors are item1 - 6 and some of them are similar to necessary knowledge whereas Information

Technology and Purchasing-Inventory Management are included due to the growing in effective-efficient orientation to sustain organization.

Table 9. Necessary Attitudes for department head's successors

Necessary Attitude	Frequency	Percentage	Acc %
1.Moral Ethic and Humanity	40	35.7	35.7
2.Honesty and Integrity	17	15.2	50.9
3.Good Attitude and Positive Thinking	15	13.4	64.3
4.Patient and Tolerate	13	11.6	75.9
5.Sufficiency Economy and Discipline	7	6.3	82.1
6.Devotion and Social Focus	7	6.3	88.4
7.Altruism	7	6.3	94.6
8.Leadership	5	4.5	99.1
Misc.	1	0.9	100.0
Total	112	100.0	

Table 9 describes necessary attitudes needed for preparing future leaders which are Moral Ethic and Humanity, Honesty and Integrity, Good Attitude and Positive thinking, Patient and tolerate, and lastly

Sufficient economy and discipline. This finding stress that future leaders should be cultivated and nurtured with all of this attitudes to make them more ethical and professional pharmacy leaders.

Succession readiness of the successors

Table 10. Percentage of readiness to succeed of current successors of the respondents

Succession Readiness Level*	Frequency	Percentage
Low	3	6.7
Intermediate	27	60.0
High	15	33.3
Total	45	100.0

* Succession Readiness level consists of 3 level; Readiness score range from 0-3.3 is defined as "Low readiness to succeed" 3.4-6.6 is "Intermediate readiness to succeed" and 6.7-10 is "High readiness to succeed"

Data from Table 10, 33% of successors are rated as high readiness to succeed which similar to the finding of Miller, Mark and Powell² that less than half of successors are ready to succeed in the time of their study.

Thank to the government reform and health reform by the Hospital Accreditation (H.A.) initiatives of Hospital Accreditation Institute in past decade have brought about the awareness of leadership development,

strategic management and HR management therefore the percentage of readiness to success is at acceptable level.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Currently the number of ready to succeed of the successor for pharmacy department head for regional hospitals and provincial hospital is not bad but there

are a lot of opportunities to do in order to enhance the preparation for the succession planning process systematically.

Leadership in pharmacy department is really important position not only manage the pharmacy practice but also develop the future leaders for department to sustain the pharmacy standard, practices and services.

From this study the researcher would like to suggest;

1. All of pharmacy school in Thailand should cooperate with Pharmacy council and Ministry of Public Health to develop the leadership development course that consist of necessary knowledge, skills and attitude of the successors.

2. The Leadership development course should be designed to enhance not only relevant knowledge but also relevant skill and attitude by mean of action learning and learning in reality.

3. Leadership Development should be begin at the entry level of the pharmacist in the hospital in addition to focus the successors level.

4. Ethical behaviors and attitude are import for the future pharmacy leaders.

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