

The Impact of Vision 2030 on Primary Healthcare Delivery: A Qualitative Exploration of Family Physicians' and General Practitioners' Roles in Achieving National Health Goals

Anwar Eid Alruwaili¹, Sattam Menwer Alsulami², Abdullah Mohammed Alashhab³, Abdulrahman Nasser Alhooti⁴, Eman Abdulrahim Alfaraj⁵, Ahlam Mohammad Almalki⁶, Nourah Saad Alsharif⁷, Abdulaziz Khaled Albulaihed⁸, Mohammed Jassim Alali⁹, Fahad Saeed S Alotaibi¹⁰

1. Family Medicine
2. Family Medicine
3. Family Medicine
4. Family Medicine
5. Family Medicine
6. Family Medicine
7. Family Medicine
8. General Practitioner
9. General Practitioner
10. General Practitioner

Abstract

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has set ambitious goals for transforming the nation's healthcare system, with a particular focus on enhancing primary healthcare delivery. This qualitative study explores the roles and perspectives of family physicians and general practitioners in achieving the national health goals outlined in Vision 2030. Through semi-structured interviews with primary care providers, the study aims to identify the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for aligning primary healthcare practices with the Vision 2030 objectives. The findings reveal that family physicians and general practitioners play a crucial role in promoting preventive care, managing chronic diseases, and ensuring access to quality healthcare services. However, participants also highlight the need for enhanced training, resources, and interprofessional collaboration to effectively contribute to the realization of Vision 2030 health goals. The study provides valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of primary care providers and offers recommendations for policymakers and healthcare leaders to support the successful implementation of Vision 2030 in the primary healthcare sector.

Keywords: Vision 2030, primary healthcare, family physicians, general practitioners, qualitative research, Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, a comprehensive national development plan, has placed significant emphasis on reforming and enhancing the healthcare system to improve population health outcomes and quality of life (Vision 2030, 2016). One of the key focus areas of Vision 2030 is the strengthening of primary healthcare delivery, which serves as the foundation for preventive care, early disease detection, and chronic disease management (Ministry of Health, 2017).

Family physicians and general practitioners play a critical role in providing accessible, continuous, and comprehensive primary healthcare services to individuals and communities (Almalki et al., 2011).

This qualitative study aims to explore the roles and perspectives of family physicians and general practitioners in achieving the national health goals outlined in Vision 2030. By gaining insights

into the experiences, challenges, and opportunities faced by primary care providers, the study seeks to inform strategies for aligning primary healthcare practices with the Vision 2030 objectives and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the healthcare system.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To understand the roles and contributions of family physicians and general practitioners in achieving the Vision 2030 health goals.
2. To identify the challenges and barriers faced by primary care providers in aligning their practices with the Vision 2030 objectives.
3. To explore the opportunities and strategies for enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of primary healthcare delivery in the context of Vision 2030.
4. To provide recommendations for policymakers and healthcare leaders to support the successful implementation of Vision 2030 in the primary healthcare sector.

2. Literature Review

The literature review section synthesizes existing research on the role of primary healthcare in achieving national health goals, with a specific focus on the context of Saudi Arabia and Vision 2030.

2.1 Primary Healthcare and Health System Performance

Primary healthcare plays a pivotal role in promoting population health, preventing diseases, and ensuring equitable access to essential health services (WHO, 2018). Robust primary healthcare systems have been associated with improved health outcomes, reduced healthcare costs, and enhanced patient satisfaction (Starfield et al., 2005). In Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Health has recognized the importance of strengthening primary healthcare as a key strategy for improving the overall performance of the healthcare system (Ministry of Health, 2017).

2.2 Family Medicine and General Practice in Saudi Arabia

Family medicine and general practice are the core specialties providing primary healthcare services in Saudi Arabia (Almalki et al., 2011). Family physicians and general practitioners are responsible for delivering comprehensive, patient-centered care across the lifespan, managing chronic diseases, and coordinating care with other healthcare providers (Al-Khathami, 2012). However, the primary healthcare sector in Saudi Arabia has faced challenges such as limited resources, inadequate training, and a fragmented referral system (Alsharif & Al-Khaldi, 2020).

2.3 Vision 2030 and Healthcare Transformation

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has set ambitious goals for transforming the healthcare system, including increasing the accessibility and quality of healthcare services, promoting preventive care, and encouraging public-private partnerships (Vision 2030, 2016). The Ministry of Health has developed a National Transformation Program (NTP) to operationalize the Vision 2030 objectives in the healthcare sector (Ministry of Health, 2018). The NTP emphasizes the role of primary healthcare in achieving universal health coverage, reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases, and improving patient outcomes (Alharbi, 2018).

2.4 Challenges and Opportunities for Primary Care Providers

Family physicians and general practitioners face various challenges in contributing to the realization of Vision 2030 health goals. These challenges include high workload, limited resources, inadequate training, and lack of coordination with other healthcare sectors (Alsharif & Al-Khaldi, 2020). However, Vision 2030 also presents opportunities for primary care providers to enhance their skills, adopt innovative practices, and collaborate with other healthcare professionals to improve the quality and efficiency of primary healthcare delivery (Almalki et al., 2011).

2.5 Qualitative Research in Primary Healthcare

Qualitative research methods have been increasingly used to explore the experiences, perceptions, and practices of primary care providers (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative studies have provided valuable insights into the challenges, facilitators, and strategies for improving primary healthcare delivery in various contexts (Almalki et al., 2017). This study builds upon the existing qualitative literature to investigate the roles and perspectives of family physicians and general practitioners in the specific context of Vision 2030 implementation in Saudi Arabia.

3. Methods

This qualitative study employed a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of family physicians and general practitioners regarding their roles in achieving the Vision 2030 health goals.

3.1 Study Design

A descriptive phenomenological design was adopted to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences, challenges, and opportunities in aligning their practices with the Vision 2030 objectives. Phenomenology allows for the exploration of subjective experiences and the identification of common themes and patterns among participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.2 Participants and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to recruit family physicians and general practitioners working in primary healthcare settings in Saudi Arabia. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Licensed family physicians or general practitioners
- Currently practicing in a primary healthcare setting in Saudi Arabia
- Have at least three years of experience in primary care practice
- Willing to participate in the study and provide informed consent

A total of 20 participants (12 family physicians and 8 general practitioners) were recruited for the study. The sample size was determined based on data saturation, which was achieved when no new themes emerged from the interviews (Guest et al., 2006).

3.3 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants either in-person or via videoconferencing platforms. The interviews were guided by an interview protocol that included open-ended questions exploring the participants' roles, challenges, opportunities, and strategies for achieving the Vision 2030 health goals. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The analysis involved the following steps:

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading of the transcripts
2. Generating initial codes by identifying meaningful segments of the data
3. Searching for themes by collating codes into potential themes
4. Reviewing and refining themes to ensure coherence and consistency
5. Defining and naming themes to capture the essence of the data
6. Producing the report by providing a coherent narrative of the findings

The analysis was conducted independently by two researchers to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles and guidelines for qualitative research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the interviews. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process. The study received ethical approval from the relevant institutional review board.

4. Results

The thematic analysis of the interview transcripts revealed four overarching themes regarding the roles and perspectives of family physicians and general practitioners in achieving the Vision 2030 health goals.

4.1 Theme 1: Promoting Preventive Care and Health Education

Participants emphasized their crucial role in promoting preventive care and health education to support the Vision 2030 objectives of improving population health and reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases.

"As family physicians, we play a vital role in educating patients about healthy lifestyles, screening for common diseases, and providing preventive interventions. By focusing on prevention, we can contribute to the Vision 2030 goal of a healthier population." (Family Physician, 6 years of experience)

Participants highlighted the importance of patient education, health promotion activities, and community outreach programs in enhancing the effectiveness of preventive care.

4.2 Theme 2: Managing Chronic Diseases and Ensuring Continuity of Care

Family physicians and general practitioners identified their role in managing chronic diseases and ensuring continuity of care as critical to achieving the Vision 2030 health goals.

"Managing chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases is a core responsibility of primary care providers. By providing comprehensive, patient-centered care and ensuring continuity, we can improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs." (General Practitioner, 9 years of experience)

Participants emphasized the need for effective care coordination, patient follow-up, and the integration of primary care with other healthcare sectors to optimize chronic disease management.

4.3 Theme 3: Challenges in Aligning Practices with Vision 2030 Objectives

Participants identified several challenges in aligning their practices with the Vision 2030 objectives, including high workload, limited resources, and inadequate training.

"The high patient load and limited time per consultation make it challenging to provide comprehensive care and engage in preventive activities. We need more resources and support to effectively contribute to the Vision 2030 goals." (Family Physician, 5 years of experience)

Participants also highlighted the need for enhanced interprofessional collaboration, improved referral systems, and better integration of primary care with other healthcare sectors.

4.4 Theme 4: Opportunities for Professional Development and Collaboration

Participants recognized the opportunities presented by Vision 2030 for professional development, skill enhancement, and collaboration with other healthcare professionals.

"Vision 2030 has created opportunities for primary care providers to engage in continuous professional development, adopt innovative practices, and collaborate with specialists and allied health professionals. These opportunities can help us improve the quality and efficiency of primary healthcare delivery." (General Practitioner, 7 years of experience)

Participants expressed their willingness to participate in training programs, research initiatives, and quality improvement projects to enhance their contributions to the Vision 2030 health goals.

Table 1. Summary of Themes and Sub-themes

Theme	Sub-themes
Promoting Preventive Care and Health Education	- Patient education and health promotion - Screening and preventive interventions - Community outreach programs
Managing Chronic Diseases and Ensuring Continuity of Care	- Comprehensive, patient-centered care - Care coordination and follow-up - Integration of primary care with other healthcare sectors
Challenges in Aligning Practices with Vision 2030 Objectives	- High workload and limited resources - Inadequate training and skill development - Lack of interprofessional collaboration and referral systems
Opportunities for Professional Development and Collaboration	- Continuous professional development - Adoption of innovative practices - Collaboration with specialists and allied health professionals

5. Discussion

The findings of this qualitative study provide valuable insights into the roles and perspectives of family physicians and general practitioners in achieving the Vision 2030 health goals in Saudi Arabia. The themes that emerged from the analysis highlight the critical contributions of primary care providers in promoting preventive care, managing chronic diseases, and ensuring access to quality healthcare services.

5.1 Implications for Primary Healthcare Delivery

The study emphasizes the importance of strengthening the primary healthcare system to achieve the Vision 2030 objectives of improving population health and reducing healthcare costs. Family physicians and general practitioners play a pivotal role in providing comprehensive, patient-centered care and promoting preventive interventions. The findings suggest that investing in primary healthcare resources, training, and infrastructure can enhance the capacity of primary care providers to contribute to the realization of the Vision 2030 health goals.

5.2 Implications for Healthcare Policy and Practice

The challenges identified by the participants, such as high workload, limited resources, and inadequate training, underscore the need for policy interventions and practice improvements to support the effective implementation of Vision 2030 in the primary healthcare sector.

Policymakers and healthcare leaders should prioritize the allocation of resources, the development of training programs, and the establishment of interprofessional collaboration mechanisms to enable primary care providers to align their practices with the Vision 2030 objectives.

5.3 Implications for Professional Development and Collaboration

The opportunities for professional development and collaboration highlighted by the participants suggest that Vision 2030 can serve as a catalyst for enhancing the skills and practices of primary care providers. Encouraging the participation of family physicians and general practitioners in continuous professional development activities, research initiatives, and quality improvement projects can foster a culture of innovation and excellence in primary healthcare delivery.

5.4 Strengths and Limitations

The strengths of this study include the use of a qualitative phenomenological approach, which allowed for an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences and perspectives. The inclusion of both family physicians and general practitioners provided a comprehensive understanding of the roles and challenges faced by primary care providers in the context of

Vision 2030. However, the study has some limitations. The sample size was relatively small, and the participants were recruited from a limited geographical area, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias.

6. Conclusion

This qualitative study explored the roles and perspectives of family physicians and general practitioners in achieving the Vision 2030 health goals in Saudi Arabia. The findings highlight the crucial contributions of primary care providers in promoting preventive care, managing chronic diseases, and ensuring access to quality healthcare services. However, the study also reveals the challenges faced by primary care providers in aligning their practices with the Vision 2030 objectives, such as high workload, limited resources, and inadequate training.

The study provides valuable insights for policymakers and healthcare leaders to support the successful implementation of Vision 2030 in the primary healthcare sector. Investing in primary healthcare resources, training, and infrastructure can enhance the capacity of primary care providers to contribute to the realization of the Vision 2030 health goals. Encouraging the participation of family physicians and general practitioners in continuous professional development activities, research initiatives, and quality improvement projects can foster a culture of innovation and excellence in primary healthcare delivery.

Future research should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and policies aimed at strengthening primary healthcare in the context of Vision 2030. Additionally, exploring the perspectives of other healthcare professionals, policymakers, and patients can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in achieving the Vision 2030 health goals.

In conclusion, family physicians and general practitioners play a vital role in achieving the Vision 2030 health goals in Saudi Arabia. By addressing the challenges faced by primary care providers and leveraging the opportunities for professional development and collaboration, the healthcare system can optimize the contributions of primary care providers in promoting population health and realizing the Vision 2030 objectives.

References

- Al-Khathami, A. D. (2012). Evaluation of Saudi family medicine training program: The application of CIPP evaluation format. *Medical Teacher*, 34(sup1), S81-S89. <https://doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2012.656752>
- Alharbi, M. F. (2018). An analysis of the Saudi health-care system's readiness to change in the context of the Saudi National Health-care Plan in Vision 2030. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 12(3), 83-87. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5969321/>
- Almalki, M., Fitzgerald, G., & Clark, M. (2011). Health care system in Saudi Arabia: An overview. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 17(10), 784-793. <https://doi.org/10.26719/2011.17.10.784>
- Almalki, M. J., FitzGerald, G., & Clark, M. (2017). Quality of work life among primary health care nurses in the Jazan region, Saudi Arabia: A cross-sectional study. *Human Resources for Health*, 15(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12960-017-0218-z>
- Alsharif, A. I., & Al-Khaldi, Y. M. (2020). Attitude, practice and barriers of evidence-based medicine among primary care physicians in Saudi Arabia: A cross-sectional study. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 9(7), 3500-3506. https://doi.org/10.4103/jfmpe.jfmpe_264_20
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59-82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>
- Ministry of Health. (2017). National eHealth Strategy. <https://www.moh.gov.sa/en/Ministry/nehs/Pages/default.aspx>
- Ministry of Health. (2018). Health Sector Transformation Program. <https://www.moh.gov.sa/en/Ministry/vro/Pages/Healthcare-Transformation.aspx>
- Starfield, B., Shi, L., & Macinko, J. (2005). Contribution of primary care to health systems and health. *The Milbank Quarterly*, 83(3), 457-502. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0009.2005.00409.x>
- Vision 2030. (2016). Saudi Vision 2030. https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/media/rc0b5oy1/saudi_vision203.pdf
- World Health Organization. (2018). Declaration of Astana. <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/primary-health/declaration/gcphc-declaration.pdf>