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The health sector is no longer limited to doctors and nurses. In the last decade, the industry has seen a leap in job opportunities for management professionals, human resource, administrative and sales related jobs as well. ANIL NAYAK tells you how a career in this field is a lucrative option

Healthcare offers a wide range of opportunities and challenges. In India this industry is growing at a rate of about 15 per cent per year. The jobs in this sector is not only limited to the opportunities for doctors but the other areas as well. It is expected that the growth rate in this sector will almost double in the next couple of years.

Reasons for growth

The growth of healthcare management sector in India can be attributed to many factors.

- The health care industry is becoming broader and bigger.
- Liberalisation has made way for corporate world to enter into this industry and created many new healthcare management careers opportunities.
- Due to the high demand for workers in the field, careers in healthcare are some of the most lucra-



Health is wealth

tive options available. The more highly skilled one is, the higher is the pay.

- Every city has seen a growth in hospitals. This has created a significant gap in demand and supply of trained healthcare staff. For example, in NCR, more than 15 new hospitals will be opened in the next couple of years that will create thousands of healthcare jobs.
- A study by Ernst & Young and KPMG says that India will need to add around a lakh beds every year for the next 20 years so that it can meet its healthcare needs. It also estimates that each bed can create five direct and 25 indirect healthcare jobs.
- Hospitals today have become high-tech healthcare facilities providers. Therefore, they need highly skilled and trained healthcare management professionals.
- The growth of medical tourism in India has also contributed towards creation of new healthcare careers

Courses & eligibility

The various courses and programmes focus on the diverse management principles like finance, communications, operations and other areas associated with the healthcare industry. One can go for both graduation and PG degree and diploma courses. If one have a graduate or a post graduate degree in any of the back grounds like life sciences, micro

biology, medicine, pharmacy, nursing, physiotherapy, veterinary science, biotechnology, paramedics, one can pursue a career in the field.

The MBA degree in healthcare management can, apart from jobs in hospitals, make one eligible for getting jobs in pharmaceutical companies, disease management companies, credit rating firms, NGOs, health insurance companies and e-health ventures. Students with a degree in healthcare management can also apply in the medical tourism industry.

Skills profiles

Medical office managers must be extremely organised, and have eye for detail. They should be excellent at communication and conflict resolution. In general, medical office managers should work well with people and be able to manage a variety of personalities. Medical office managers should also be good with basic math and numbers, especially if overseeing a billing department. Practice managers must have a basic understanding of coding, appointment scheduling, medical reception, so he or she could fill in if needed to cover for one of the other employees.

Job profiles

Direct jobs in this sector include the traditional profiles of doctors, nurse and other healthcare careers. The new and other indirect jobs in the



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sector include job openings as those for team managers to supervise HR, marketing, health information and medical billing. All that is needed to make a career in this sector is to have a healthcare administration degree.

Growth opportunities

A hospital administrator can become a CEO or the head of the department. If he/she is ambitious, one can establish one's own hospital. However, this is not the regular nine-to-five job. Also one should be enough responsible, innovative, compassionate, and highly motivated apart from being able to work for long hours.

The recent trend in healthcare sector witnesses medical students going for a healthcare management degree and about 50 per cent of the students are doctors. Many pharmacy companies as well as consumer healthcare and medical companies these days prefer to hire doctors as brand managers who go on to become marketing directors, medical directors, and managing directors.

Scope

Healthcare management is a huge, complex, and ever-changing field. In fact, healthcare services will account for 3.1 million new jobs, the largest increase of any industry.

Disease management

Unlike case managers, who help

patients navigate the healthcare system to heal specific conditions or diseases, disease managers take more of a preventive approach. They try to keep people from falling ill or from having a relapse that might put them back in the hospital. In other words, the work of a disease manager is to give the patient the tools, education and encouragement to control his or her own disease.

This speciality depends heavily on building a trusting relationship between the manager and patient. Communication is the key to success in disease management. If one can't communicate with the patient, one will not be able to effectively deliver the message. A career in disease management can be a welcome change of pace for people who may have spent decades in clinical care. They may be looking for a change from an acute care environment, but they still want to be able to utilise their acute care knowledge.

While switching to a less physically strenuous practice setting may be appealing to many. In a hospital, a doctor would treat the patient and send him home. One doesn't have a chance to find out what happens to him later. As a disease manager, one can follow the same programme for a few years. This leads to job satisfaction.

(The writer is director of Kartavya Healthcon, Mumbai)