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Advances in Health Knowledge Management: New Perspectives

Maria Jose Sousa¹, Francesca Dal Mas² and Renato Lopes Da Costa¹

¹Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Business Research Unit, Portugal

²Lincoln International Business School, University of Lincoln, UK

maria.jose.sousa@iscte-iul.pt

fdalmas@lincoln.ac.uk

renato_jorge_costa@iscte-iul.pt

1. Introduction

Healthcare is one of the most critical sectors in today's world, given its fundamental role in impacting people's lives and well-being.

Nowadays, knowledge management in healthcare is particularly crucial, given the significant changes and challenges affecting the field, including the recent Covid-19 pandemic (Cobianchi et al., 2020b; Grasselli, Pesenti and Ceconi, 2020), which required a fast reorganization of processes, people, tools and the need to rethink most of the sector's strategies (Cobianchi et al., 2020a; Derbyshire and Wright, 2014).

The advent of new technologies in healthcare practices is profoundly changing the whole scenario, concerning both the clinical practice and clinicians' educational needs (Au-Yong-Oliveira et al., 2021; Sousa et al., 2021). While new operating robots are affecting surgery and the skills that surgeons need to develop, automation and big data allow collecting information that can be used both for training new medical doctors as well as for innovating existing healthcare techniques (Pesqueira, Sousa, and Rocha 2020). New technologies and data availability impact internal procedures, including team management and the relationships with stakeholders, providing at the same time new challenges for the overall clinical education system. Telemedicine and e-health have become more popular as a means to address patients' ambulatory needs after the disruption and social distancing requirements due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Grenda, Whang and Evans, 2020; Miceli et al., 2021; Sorensen et al., 2020). At the same time, scientific clinical research progresses in various fields, including, for example, transplantation and organ regeneration (Cobianchi et al., 2009; Hogan et al., 2012; Marzorati et al., 2009; Orlando et al., 2013) to address the unmet medical needs of patients, and calling for a fast "bench to bedside" translation (McAneney et al., 2010).

By taking a comprehensive approach to new technologies, healthcare companies and institutions can deliver products and services more quickly, boost innovation in the industry, and hold down costs. Additional challenges include reporting and accountability, especially for those healthcare organizations belonging to the public sector (Massaro, Dumay and Garlatti, 2015). Investments required to support this technological shift must be transparently reported to stakeholders showing the growing intellectual capital of those organizations and their impact on organizational outcomes: better cure, life improvements, overcoming clinical bias, and so on (Cavicchi, 2017; Cavicchi and Vagnoni, 2017).

The above-described premise, including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which hit the healthcare systems worldwide, provides new challenges for the knowledge management discipline in the healthcare and medicine sector in terms of decision-making, innovation, human resource management, business processes, intellectual capital and intangibles management and reporting, learning and education of healthcare professionals, among others. The aims of the special issue call for papers were to collect the latest trends, ideas, and perspectives about knowledge management practices in the health scenario.

2. Special Issue Papers

The papers included in the Special Issue highlight a variety of different topics.

In the first article, Dal Mas et al. (2020b) discuss the topic of knowledge translation as the ability to translate concepts in different contexts by stakeholders characterized by various skills, goals, and even feelings. Given the features of the modern healthcare ecosystem and the presence of various stakeholders, such a topic seems central to allow different actors (including clinical professionals, scientists, policymakers, patients, ...) to effectively work together (Cobianchi, Dal Mas and Angelos, 2021; Secundo et al., 2019). A structured literature review (Massaro, Dumay and Guthrie, 2016) allows the authors to describe the tools, solutions, and managerial practices gathered from the Business & Management literature about healthcare.

Knowledge translation is also the main topic of the second paper (Dal Mas et al., 2020a), which analyses a case study gathered from a Breast Unit of an Italian hospital. Results highlight the different knowledge translation tools and dynamics among the actors involved and their impact on the outcome.

Mnasri and Papakonstantinidis (2020) contribute to the literature on knowledge construction and knowledge sharing within the field of organizational communication by underlining the importance of exploring human learning contextually, descriptively, interpretively, and inductively. The paper employs a case study in oncology, offering a new framework model for exploring trivialized organizational dynamics and challenging groupthink.

Vold and Have (2020) employ a qualitative case study investigating the work relevance of an adult education study bachelor programme for middle managers of the public health sector in Norway. Results highlight how a study programme can support the development of knowledge management practices in an organization by focusing on the relevance pronounced through management practices.

In the following article, Pateiro Marcão and colleagues (2020) investigate the pharmaceutical sector, and more in details, the adoption of gamification techniques within the quality management system. Employing a case study in Portugal, the paper shows the potential of gamification techniques to boost stakeholders' engagement.

Jucevičienė and colleagues (2020) deepen the topic of organizational learning of clinicians through an empirical investigation conducted in a small hospital in Lithuania.

Martins et al. (2020) discuss the new frontiers on health by investigating edible vaccine using a mixed methodology, involving both healthcare professionals and citizens. Results highlight little knowledge about the topic, calling, therefore for dissemination and knowledge translation activities.

Cassaniti and colleagues (2020) explore a case study in Kenya to deepen online communities and networks' role to engage various stakeholders.

Therkildsen Sudmann et al. (2020) analyze the case of senior users of the online health information, highlighting how participants engage in self- and co-management of their own or others' health. Therefore, the ways information and data are managed and disseminated is crucial to facilitate this interaction.

A literature review conducted by Fernandes Travassos Rosário and colleagues (2020) on health knowledge management in the last 10 years identified the key research themes and resulting development patterns, namely, the integration and interoperability of knowledge from different sources into a single platform, occupational safety, the need to ascertain the quality and pertinent information among general web information, culture and social behaviour and data security.

Tega Enakrire (2020) studied the topic of health informatics in Africa through a bibliometric analysis, highlighting the connection with the clinical practice and the call for strategic plans.

Ferreira Polónia and Coutinho Gradim (2020) investigated the interaction of different stakeholders to identify possible partners to be involved in innovation activities, including hospitals, universities, research centres, and start-ups. Using a case study approach, the article suggests potential roles for the different parties along the innovation funnel and what they can do in each phase.

Finally, Booto Ekionea and Fillion (2020) employ a case study of two hospital organizations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, presenting a model with five levels of intellectual progress based on the knowledge

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