Abstract

Background: Health services imply the work of an important group of professionals who are responsible for the functions which are derived from the ability profile. Objectives: To identify the professional profile of health services managers, its correlation with the technical profile of the position established by the Department of Health, and to determine its role in the process of reforming the health sector. Participants and method: This transversal descriptive research was carried out from December 1997 to February 1998 at the ISEM (Health Institute of the State of Mexico), by means of a census of state directors belonging to the health sector, heads of the sanitary jurisdiction, and hospital directors, all of whom received a semi-structured test about their professional formation and development, as well as the training received and perceived as necessary to hold the position. This was checked against the established technical profiles and the demands of the Reform Program. Results: 94% of the directors were doctors; 48% of them did not have postgraduate degree in administration and 50% did not have any postgraduate studies in medicine; this shows a concordance between the profiles of 42% of the jurisdictional heads and 75% of the hospital directors. With regard to training, 81% did not have any introduction to their position, 10% did not know the documents of their area of responsibility, 19% never received courses, and 44% did not have any training or research activities; their training needs range from basic concepts in administration to health and quality administration. Conclusion: The lack of minimal requirements established in the technical profiles for jurisdiction heads and hospital directors, as well as the lack of adequate training and introduction to the position, are an indication of the difficulty that decision-makers face to fulfill the functions and to cover the demands for management skills established in the Reform Program.

Keywords

Health services, health services manager, professional profile, technical profile, health services administration.