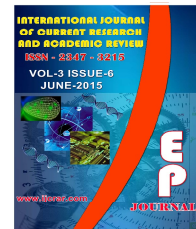




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### The role of project management offices (PMOs) in healthcare system

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#### A B S T R A C T

The main problems of the most healthcare settings is nonexistence of consistence management approach, lack of prioritization, no formal tracking, lack of communications, lack of functional user involvement, as well as absence of on-time or on-budget programs. Thus, these settings need potentially to the systems responsible to scheduling and planning the projects, implementing project servers, training healthcare staffs, and finally improvement of project success rate by standardization of project processes. Here, we tried to describe and review different aspects of these systems term as the project management office (PMOs) in each healthcare system.

### Introduction

The presence of inconsistence management programs is one of the main problems in most health care settings that its solving is now challenging. The main incapability of such managements is potentially referred to lack of prioritization, no formal tracking, lack of communications, lack of functional user involvement, as well as absence of on-time or on-budget programs. In this context, the appearance of an appropriate project management system aimed to improve these pitfalls seems to be necessary.

These systems are usually structured as project management offices (PMOs) that seek the standards of project processes, describe main responsibilities of chief managers of healthcare systems and train them as well as supervise implementation of various health care processes. The present review came to address the role of PMOs in project management systems with the approach to healthcare management systems.

### **Project management office: A means for system integration**

The project management office (PMOs) is one of the main components of management body for the projects and portfolios within its scope [1]. The first applicable step of PMOs in each project is to define and prioritize the goals of target organization that performing this step is necessary to organize its further steps. In fact, the second step is defining what constitutes a project, how projects interrelate into a program and then identifying how these programs pursue clearly outlined portfolio objectives such as the main priorities of a hospital [2].

PMOs have a critical role for defining and structuring the best programs for managing and implementing projects managers' responsibilities [3]. The best programs are usually defined as a group of interrelated projects and subprojects to obtain benefits and a level of control not possible by an individual project management [4].

In this regard, a portfolio describes a collection of programs, projects and other works that are grouped together to facilitate effective management of the work entailed in order to meet strategic business objectives [4,5]. Thus, the type and complexity of a PMO in an organization is directly dependant to the portfolio complexity and worthiness of project managers.

### **The Project Lifecycle and Tools**

The PMO's operation in a specific project is usually framed around the lifecycle of that project. The main categories inherent in a lifecycle include the initiating phase, planning phase, executing and controlling phase and, finally, the closing phase [6]. Depending on the complexity and scope of target organization, it may also have an identification phase. In case the project

chronology and timetable is setting up through a lifecycle, definition and description of all activities, deliverables, and decisions that occur at each phase is necessary. In this section, we describe the different phases of PMOs necessary to achieve its goals [10]:

a) Initiation phase: this stage can be got on using project charters that should define the project at a high level and include the components of problem statement, project objectives and goals, team leads and members, expected benefits, constraints, and dependencies.

b) Planning phase: in this step, the project manager should describe and highlight his or her expected project outcome, the work steps, expectations of the project team members, the time of work performance, any costs associated with the work, and the time of the team meetings. Totally, the main tool using in this step is the work plan that can be perfectly as all project related tasks and key milestones with specific timeframes. On the other hand, in a perfect work plan, responsibilities of all team members for each task are minutely listed.

c) Execution phase: in this phase, the required initiatives and tasks are realized and set out in the specific work plan on a clear coordination and communication. In this step, in fact, the PMO is responsible for getting the project moving and tracking implementation. For effective planning, regular meetings should be set up by project manager and PMO.

d) Monitoring and controlling phase: the main role of this phase is monitoring the Key Performance Indicators that should have a target established and be measured on a weekly basis. Key Performance Indicators can be managed through dashboards which help visualize project

progress and keep track of goals, budget, and schedule.

e) Closing phase: For closing a project, the main activities should be to review project performance and discuss lessons learned; the project manager should consider archiving project files in a centralized database so that materials can be easily accessed for future projects; and the team itself should finally receive recognition and celebrate its achievements.

### **The role of project management offices in healthcare systems**

Project management offices (PMOs) are regional resources established for managing and overseeing the performance of strategic priority projects for any structured private or governmental health organizations [11]. These offices are usually consist of expert project managers, analysts, specialist of process improvement, and trained administrative staffs acknowledged to different aspects of healthcare priorities and needs. In healthcare systems, these offices potentially focused on clinical and healthcare service delivery projects that span multiple sites and programs [11,12]. The main goal of the PMOs in healthcare organizations is increase of effectiveness and efficiency of healthcare services by aligning sanitary and medical needs and resources, integrating services across sectors, increased service quality and evidence-based practice in clinical settings, emphasizing health promotion and prevention, and improved accountability in health management systems [13]. Thus, main key components of PMOs in healthcare systems can be organized as: prevention and promotion, treatment and support, community, health system staff, accountability in healthcare management system, as well as research and education.

The main structure of PMOs in healthcare systems is based on delivery of successful health projects in health systems and organizations [14]. For this aim, PMOs apply two approaches including 1) project management approach and infrastructure, and 2) selection of strategic integration projects [15]. The term of the PMOs infrastructure is referred to the creation of the PMO, competencies in project management, analysis, and process improvement, Knowledge of the entire system, and disciplined approach to project management [16]. In healthcare systems, infrastructure should be structured to produce standardized tools and templates for healthcare management projects, identification and monitoring of project metrics, leadership alignment on healthcare projects, clarity of roles and responsibilities in different health management subgroups, focus on execution, and introduction of new approaches to problem solving in healthcare systems [15,16]. For instance, with respect to the role of PMOs in projects of process standardization in nursing services, the main PMOs goals should be approached to critical care chief nursing education and Infection control practices. In total, around healthcare systems, PMOs responsibilities should be covered education and training, especial consultation, and healthcare processes improvement.

### **Responsibilities of PMOs in healthcare systems**

The responsibilities of PMOs in the healthcare settings can be described as the main duties, risk management, financial Management, and staff Management. With respect to the main duties, a PMO should manage the full healthcare project management lifestyle [13-16]. On the other hand, the PMOs is responsible for managing

implementation of different healthcare policies, monitoring and control of healthcare system to ensure the successful management of the project, and reporting of all corporate initiatives in the healthcare program. In addition, the PMO should lead and supervise staffs to oversee the impacts and interdependencies between works and program [17]. Moreover, it should effectively manage allocation of resources within the projects to meet work fluctuations and budget as well as time constraints in the delivery process for the main purpose of creating a high-performing healthcare team. Overseeing the creation and maintenance of project methodologies and supporting collateral material is another duty of a PMO to ensure all delivery models are operating to the highest quality. Finally, it should develop a client satisfaction program and creates a continuous improvement process to

incorporate the needs of successful projects performing [17,18].

Regarding risk management, the PMO in healthcare develops a comprehensive quality assurance or risk management plan to identify risks for managing or eliminating the risk. This management approach help to report and manage major risk profile affect on project timeline, budget or objectives. For financial management, it should provide monthly accruals, forecasts, and project statuses by the due date established that result in maintaining current statements of work, tracking and billing sheets. Finally for staff management, a PMO is responsible for train and supervise healthcare project managers and Project coordinators and it should prepare and report parallel annual feedback of its performance assessment [15-18].

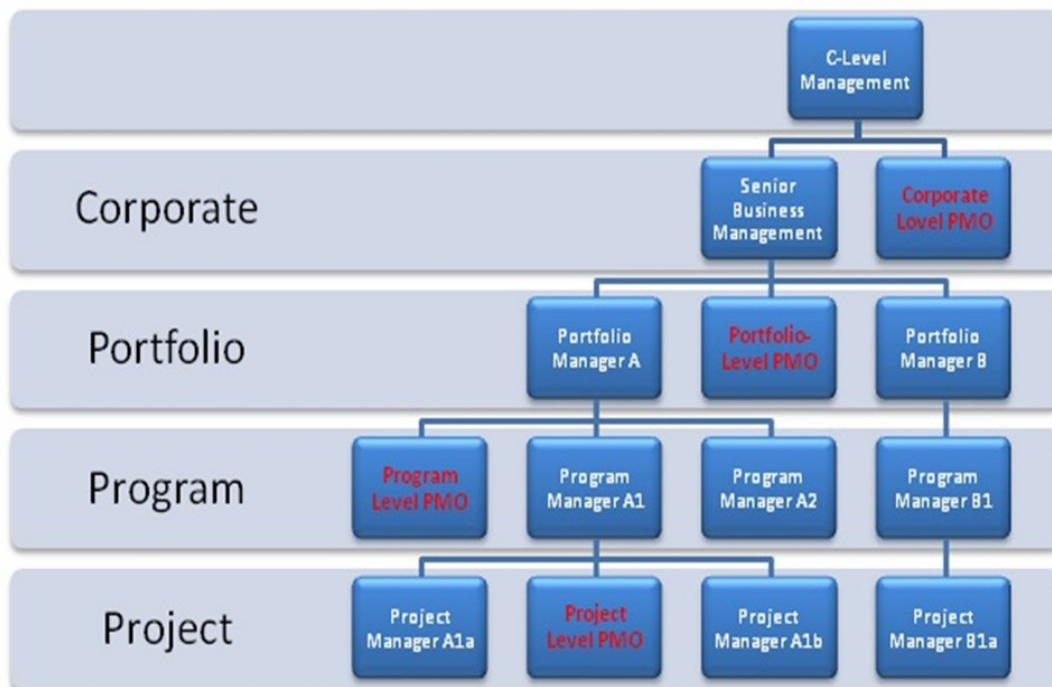
**Table.1** Responsibilities and duties of the project management offices (PMOs)

Responsibilities of the PMOs	Description of the duties
Quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality audits</li> <li>- Quality controls</li> <li>- Quality standards</li> </ul>
Portfolio management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project selection</li> <li>- Portfolio monitoring</li> <li>- Reporting metrics</li> </ul>
Personnel development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manage skills</li> <li>- Training and development</li> <li>- Certification tracking</li> <li>- Project resource management</li> </ul>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Processes &amp; methods</li> <li>- Templates</li> <li>- Forms</li> <li>- Standards</li> <li>- Policies</li> <li>- Vendor management</li> </ul>
Project support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor ongoing projects</li> <li>- Tools management</li> <li>- Change management</li> <li>- Document publication management</li> <li>- Knowledge management</li> <li>- Website</li> </ul>

**Figure.1** The main goals and targets of the project management offices (PMOs)



**Figure.2** Optimized Project Management Office Structure



## **Conclusion**

In most of the healthcare settings, some initial projects are not aligned with healthcare strategies, some projects accompanied with delaying, and some uncontrolled barriers are existed. Under the leadership and supervision of a PMO, the healthcare system objectives are effectively defined and its-related technological projects can be potentially managed. This can finally result in managing, programming, and structuring different loops of projects lifestyles including planning, prioritizing, budgeting, and executing. Finally, the main goals of PMOs in healthcare systems will be implementation of a project portfolio management tool that refining the benefits methodology, and continuing the advancement of the project management methodology. In total, the main goal of the PMOs in healthcare organizations is increase of effectiveness and efficiency of healthcare services by aligning sanitary and medical needs and resources, integrating services across sectors, increased service quality and evidence-based practice in clinical settings, emphasizing health promotion and prevention, and improved accountability in health management systems. In fact, according to this fact that the majority of healthcare systems particularly in developing nations are lack the regulatory system on the quality of health management formed as PMOs, establishment of such managing groups for evaluating and improving the quality of healthcare services and standardizing them is potentially recommended.

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