



## Letter to Editor

**The importance of paying attention to the Magnet Hospital project in Iran**Hadis Ashrafizadeh<sup>1</sup>, Abbas Ebadi<sup>2,3</sup>, Maryam Rassouli\*<sup>4</sup><sup>1</sup>School of Nursing, Student Research Committee, Dezful University of Medical Sciences, Dezful, Iran<sup>2</sup>Behavioral Sciences Research Center, Lifestyle Institute, Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran<sup>3</sup>Nursing Faculty, Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran<sup>4</sup>School of Nursing and Midwifery, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

Approximately 230,000 nursing personnel work across both public and private sectors to provide nursing care for the country's population, although the nurse-to-bed ratio remains at an estimated 0.8 (1). Due to the obvious nursing staff shortage, ensuring the desired quality of nursing care remains a paramount concern for the country's nursing officials and is a pressing demand from the people, necessitating serious attention (2). The concept of quality of care has long been associated with various aspects of health care, including interpersonal interactions, technical proficiency, patient outcomes, structural elements, and the establishment of quality standards (3). It encompasses critical factors such as patient satisfaction, patient safety, patient-centered care, staff competence, and participation. Moreover, in clinical settings, the patient's involvement in decision-making serves as an indicator of care quality (4).

The Institute of Medicine defines quality of care as the extent to which health services for individuals and populations enhance the likelihood of favorable health outcomes while aligning with current professional knowledge (5). On the other hand, Allen-Duck et al. describe healthcare quality as the assessment and delivery of effective and safe care, fostering a culture of excellence that ultimately leads to optimal health outcomes (6).

Additional definitions emphasize concepts such as effectiveness, safety, evidence-based practices, and patient-centered care. In an

ever-evolving care environment, health services must be timely, equitable, integrated, and efficient (4).

Typically, countries rely on national programs to drive progress in this area. However, the key lies in adopting a comprehensive framework that allows for the development of a balanced strategy. Consistent evaluation of essential elements over time is crucial. Achieving this goal necessitates a broad vision, the creation of a future roadmap, and the implementation of ongoing reforms. It's a long-term agenda that demands commitment, vigilant monitoring, diverse perspectives, trust-building, and the accumulation of knowledge and experience over time (7).

One innovative approach to enhancing quality of care and patient safety is Magnet Recognition through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) (8). This prestigious designation is awarded to hospitals that achieve a high standard of excellence in professional nursing practice (9). For nurses, Magnet Recognition translates to ongoing training and career advancement, fostering greater independence. For patients, it signifies receiving care from nurses who are empowered to provide the very best. In simpler terms, Magnet hospitals are highly desirable institutions that attract both nurses and patients alike (10). The primary purpose of Magnet designation is to incentivize hospitals to recruit and retain top nurses, ultimately leading to improved patient care quality (8).

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## ***Magnet Hospital project in Iran***

Magnet Recognition signifies that an organization fosters a “magnet culture” to empower nurses in decision-making, training, leadership, teamwork, and professionalism. To achieve magnet hospital status, there are five main components of excellence including transformational leadership, structural empowerment, exemplary professional practice, new knowledge, innovations, and improvements, and empirical quality results (9).

These components are supported by 14 forces that respond to changing nursing and healthcare environments. These 14 forces include leadership quality, organizational structure, management style, personnel policies, and programs, professional models of care, quality of care, quality improvement, consultation and resources, independence, community and hospital, nurse as a teacher, nursing image, interdisciplinary relations, and professional development (11).

In their model, Chen & Johantgen describe magnet hospitals’ characteristics as encompassing personnel policies, management style, autonomy, professional development, management quality in nursing, and communication with other scientific disciplines. Other studies also highlight features such as decentralized organizational structures, flexible working hours, emphasis on professional autonomy and its growth, and systematic communication between management and employees. These key elements are not only observed in magnet hospitals within the United States but are also adopted by hospitals in countries like Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Canada, and Asia (12).

The Magnet Recognition program distinguishes itself from other quality improvement methods like FOCUS-PDSA and Kaizen by not only enhancing overall service quality but also improving services themselves (13). This program serves as a roadmap for nursing excellence, leveraging the available quality resources to support the entire initiative (11). Research indicates that magnet hospitals foster a better work environment, leading to increased job satisfaction among nurses and better patient prognoses when compared to non-magnet hospitals. Notably, the development of

magnet hospitals has been on the rise in various countries in recent years (14).

Drawing inspiration from the principles of magnet hospitals, several solutions emerge. These include re-organizing nursing services, involving nurses in policymaking at all levels, integrating nursing care within community services (such as universal health coverage and primary healthcare), and optimizing nursing workforce alignment with societal changes. Proper application of management skills and principles, along with creating conducive work environments and ensuring professional independence, is essential. Encouraging innovation, recognizing nurses’ achievements, supporting their growth, and integrating evidence-based practices are critical steps. Additionally, adherence to regulatory and professional standards, workplace safety, and patient safety remains paramount (11, 15).

### ***Magnet application solutions for Iranian hospitals***

Given the challenges across various service delivery areas, the Nursing Deputy has undertaken several initiatives. These include empowering the nursing workforce and strategically deploying master’s staff to relevant departments, ensuring continuity in service delivery.

One notable initiative is the Outstanding Hospital project, which aligns with the people’s need for high-quality nursing services. The project aims to enhance Nursing Sensitive Indicators (NSIs), such as pressure ulcer prevention, fall management, pain control, and patient satisfaction in selected hospitals.

Recognizing that nurses play a pivotal role in patient recovery and discharge from the hospital, the project emphasizes improving nurses’ abilities and skills. Simultaneously, it prioritizes increasing direct nursing care hours—an essential factor in patient satisfaction. To achieve this, the project meticulously defines nurses’ responsibilities, eliminating processes unrelated to their duties. Launched in July 2022, the Outstanding Hospital project standardizes main care processes, ultimately leading to improved nursing care quality at the bedside.

Aligned with the common goals of this project and the Magnet Hospital initiative, the Nursing Deputy has extended this strategy in the form of Magnet Hospital since March 2023. The plan encompasses several key components: standard nursing care guidelines based on nursing diagnoses, continuous monitoring and evaluation of service quality, electronicization of nursing documentation and reporting, and fostering inter-disciplinary collaboration, particularly with doctors.

Despite the absence of a formal report on the model's effectiveness and the need for sustained implementation over an extended period, it appears that drawing inspiration from successful global models can move us forward. By doing so, we can avoid trial-and-error pitfalls that often hinder macro policies. Ultimately, our health system's ultimate goal which is ensuring people's access to high-quality services will be taken into account.

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