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CLINICAL INCIDENT REPORTING IN UZBEKISTAN: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

Scientific Supervisor: **Asatullayev Rustam Baxtiyarovich**
Student: **Sherkulova Diana**

Abstract: *Clinical incident reporting plays a crucial role in improving patient safety and healthcare quality by identifying, analyzing, and preventing medical errors. In Uzbekistan, the development of an effective incident reporting system faces several challenges, including limited awareness among healthcare professionals, lack of standardized protocols, and cultural barriers that discourage open disclosure of errors. Despite ongoing reforms in the healthcare sector, underreporting remains a significant concern due to fear of punitive actions and insufficient legal protection for medical staff. However, with the implementation of digital health solutions, strengthened regulatory frameworks, and increased training on patient safety, Uzbekistan has the potential to enhance its clinical incident reporting mechanisms. This article explores the current challenges, underlying causes of underreporting, and potential strategies for fostering a transparent and effective incident reporting culture in Uzbekistan.*

Keywords: *Clinical incident reporting, patient safety, medical errors, healthcare quality, underreporting, Uzbekistan, health system reforms, digital health, regulatory framework.*

Clinical incident reporting is an essential component of modern healthcare systems, designed to identify medical errors and adverse events to improve patient care. In Uzbekistan, the concept of systematic incident reporting is relatively new, and its implementation faces multiple obstacles. Historically, the healthcare system operated under a highly centralized structure, where errors were often concealed rather than addressed transparently. This legacy has contributed to an environment where healthcare workers hesitate to report incidents due to fear of administrative sanctions, job insecurity, and damage to professional reputations.

A key issue in clinical incident reporting in Uzbekistan is the lack of standardized reporting procedures across medical institutions. Many hospitals and clinics operate without clear guidelines on how to document, investigate, and respond to adverse events. Additionally, there is no centralized database for reporting incidents, making it difficult to analyze trends and develop targeted interventions. Healthcare professionals also receive limited training on patient safety, which affects their awareness of the importance of incident reporting and their ability to identify preventable errors.

Cultural factors play a significant role in underreporting. In many cases, healthcare workers perceive error disclosure as a sign of professional incompetence rather than an opportunity for systemic improvement. Furthermore, the lack of legal protection for whistleblowers discourages individuals from reporting mistakes. Without policies that

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ensure confidentiality and protect medical staff from unjust consequences, the fear of retribution remains a powerful deterrent to transparency.

Despite these challenges, Uzbekistan has begun taking steps toward improving patient safety and clinical governance. Recent healthcare reforms emphasize digitalization, which could facilitate real-time incident reporting and data analysis. The introduction of electronic medical records (EMRs) and automated reporting systems can help streamline the documentation process, making it easier for healthcare professionals to report incidents without fear of retribution. Additionally, training programs on clinical risk management and patient safety are being integrated into medical education to promote a culture of accountability.

To enhance clinical incident reporting, Uzbekistan should adopt a multi-faceted approach that includes policy reforms, educational initiatives, and technological advancements. Implementing non-punitive reporting systems, where healthcare workers can report errors anonymously, would encourage participation and transparency. Establishing independent oversight bodies to analyze incident reports and develop preventive strategies could further strengthen the system. Moreover, collaboration with international health organizations can provide Uzbekistan with best practices and technical support to build a robust patient safety framework.

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