

Health care system in Korea

Byoung Jun Yoon

Dept. of Environmental health

Korea National Open University

1. health care personnel education

Health care personnel education : Medical student study currently for six years in medical college, college of dentistry and college of oriental medicine. If the graduated student from this university pass the national board, He will get a medical doctor's license. Students have graduated 4 years university can go to graduated students program for additional for 4 years. Some universities with medicine are going to change this system.

The graduated students at university or college can get a license of nurse and become a nurse. License is not separated by university and college. but hospital prefer to employ a student from college because of labor cost. The graduated students of private nurse academy can obtain a qualification form a governor of the province and become aid nurse. In case of the medical technicians, If the graduated students of 3 years college pass the national qualitative exam, he can obtain a license.

In case of the pharmacists, students study at university for 4 years. But after the introduction of system "separation of dispensary from medical practice", pharmacy study program would change 6 years to enhance pharmacists' speciality. But this program repulsed by the association of doctor.

In case of the midwives, the person who have nurse license or have finished probation of premature birth in medical institution can get a license after the national exam.

2. Health care delivery system

Health care system divided into primary health care (medical practitioner's office), secondary health care (hospital, general hospital), tertiary health care (large general hospital) in Korea. But health care delivery system is operated with two stage.

We have received medical care preferentially in primary or secondary medical institution. The one who have doctor's written medical request from primary or secondary medical institution could have a medical treatment at large general hospitals.

The one who wants to receive the medical service from large general hospital directly should pay total medical fee without subsidies.

In case of oriental clinic, the proportion of insurance benefit receiving medical care is low. Only 56 prescriptions could receive an insurance benefits. The chronic disease patients and elder patients prefer to go to oriental clinic. Otherwise, the person prefer to have restorative go to herb clinic but there are not insurance benefits. Accordingly the general popularity of a oriental medical doctor is the most high currently.

3. Medical insurance system

Medical insurance system has been introduced as a social insurance in Korea from July 1 in 1977 and come into effect as a national health insurance in 1989.

Until now, It's divided into employee medical insurance, local medical insurance and government offices and non-government school personnel medical insurance. But three insurance were integrated in the mode of unity insurance from 2000. A policyholder is Health Insurance agency and the agency has about 250 branch offices in nation-wide.

The financial integration have established from 2003. Work medical insurance of "government officials and non-government school personnel medical insurance" is surplus finance, but local medical insurance is deficit finance. It's bring increase of governmental subsidies and insurance fee after the integration. Before the integration, the contracts of worker insurance were extreme.

The rate of the person himself charge are 55% level in case of the outpatients care. The rate of the person himself charge are 20% level in case of the inpatients care.

But If it contain high price medical treatment equipment using fee, cost of high class room and the charge for in-hospital food which can not receive insurance benefits, The rate of the person himself over 50% level.

4. Public health service

There are 246 health center as administration of a town, district, area in everywhere. There are 1271 branches in district and there are 1899 sub-branches in out-island.

Nurse is arranged in sub-branch and does simple medical treatment and disease prevention of inhabitants. It is established law as a part of vulnerable area's health care countermeasure and managed in sub-branch.

Health center did mainly health administration and functionally combine basic medical treatment. The main subjects are the needed person and infants.

The established 15 health medical centers expanded as a public health center which have the sick-bed. The health medical centers give a service of medical care and do protection of transmissible disease in the district without medical institution.

There are exploded actively health promotion service at public health center. Public Health center give medical care services such as a visiting nurse services, management of dementia, the prohibition of smoking clinic, exercise, nourishment improvement business, etc.