



## Letter to Editor

Journal Homepage: <http://crp.tums.ac.ir>

# A Reflection on the Current Status and Future Directions of Iran's Health System



Sina Abdollahzade<sup>1,2\*</sup>

1. Senior clinical Fellow, Department of neurosurgery, Royal Preston hospital, Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust, Preston, UK.
2. Assistant Professor of neurosurgery, Department of surgery, Rajayi Hospital, Qazvin University of Medical Sciences, Qazvin, Iran.

Use your device to scan and read the article online



**Citation** Abdollahzade S. A Reflection on the Current Status and Future Directions of Iran's Health System. Case Reports in Clinical Practice. 2024; 9(1): 1-2.

**Running Title** The State of Iran's Health System



### Article info:

**Received:** January 8, 2024

**Revised:** January 30, 2024

**Accepted:** February 20, 2024

Social media posts have become an integral part of the health system, and various hospitals utilize them to celebrate their milestones and achievements. A few days ago, I came across two photos in my feed that I wanted to share with you and your readers, along with some thoughts that might interest policymakers in Iran and around the world. As a neurosurgeon who trained in Iran and moved to the UK to top up my training, comparing two health systems in general and techniques and approaches of neurosurgery specifically has been a passion since my first days when I started my journey at Royal Preston Hospital.

In the first picture, which was taken recently at Imam Reza Hospital, the most prominent university hospital in Iran's North West region and my hometown, Tabriz, the neurosurgery team celebrated their first experience operating on a pineal region tumor in a sitting position [1]. The surgical approach to pineal lesions and the sitting position has been a routine

procedure performed for many decades across the world [2]. The second picture is from my colleagues at Royal Preston Hospital, who celebrated the first use of an intraoperative 3D CT navigation system for a complex spine procedure. The intraoperative CT and its integration with neuronavigation is state-of-the-art technology to enhance precision and safety in spinal surgery [3]. Robotic surgery is also implemented and utilized routinely in many common procedures across many specialties (general surgery, gynecology, neurosurgery, etc.), even in small centers like ours in the UK, while major hospitals in Iran still lag behind and are experimenting with robots on animal models. Though some would argue that this stark difference is expected between the two countries based on their economy size and various other factors, I believe this is an alarming indicator of a gradual decline in Iran's health system due to chronic underinvestment in new medical technologies and devices. Failure to fund the hospitals and poor international collaboration, along with the widespread immigration of doctors

### \* Corresponding Author:

**Sina Abdollahzade**

**Address:** Department of neurosurgery, Rroyal Preston hospital, Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust, Preston, Uk.

**E-mail:** [Sina21@gmail.com](mailto:Sina21@gmail.com)



and nurses, has added pressure to an already stretched Iran's health system. Collectively, the quality of provided medical care across the country has diminished in recent years. This is also reflected in the scientific production of the country. A recent report by Professor Shahin Akhondzade has elaborated on how Iran has fallen behind her regional counterparts Saudi Arabia and Türkiye in the number of scientific publications [4]. Multiple explanations have been provided for these issues, but mainly it's a reflection of imposed sanctions and economic difficulties of the country. As the newly elected president, Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, who is a cardiac surgeon and considered a reformist, is about to take over, his job to get the country back on track to recover the economy and health system seems arduous and challenging. Without a prompt response to deal with all these concerns, it's not hard to imagine that Iranian patients will be forced

to travel to other countries to get modern medical services in a decade or so.

## References

- [1] IRNA. 2024 [cited 2024 Jul 20]; Available from: <https://www.irna.ir/news/85542449/>.
- [2] Elton RJ, Howell RS. The sitting position in neurosurgical anaesthesia: a survey of British practice in 1991. *Br J Anaesth.* 1994;73(2):247-8.
- [3] Trust Neurosurgery department performs its first ever spinal surgery with 3D technology. 2024 [cited 2024 Jul 12]; Available from: <https://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/news/article/712>.
- [4] Kashani L, Akhondzadeh S. New Approaches to Maintain Iran's Scientific Growth. *J Iran Med Council.* 2024;7(3):391-2.