

## **Implementation of Performance Management and Development System: The Case of the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Health, South Africa**

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**Abstract :** Rationale and Purpose: Performance management and development system are central to effective and efficient service delivery, especially in highly labour intensive sectors such as South African public health. Performance management and development systems seek to ensure that good employee performance is rewarded accordingly, while those who underperform are developed so that they can reach their full potential. An effective and efficiently implemented performance management system motivates and improves employee engagement. The purpose of this study is to examine the implementation of the performance management and development system and the challenges that are encountered during its implementation in the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Health. Methods: A qualitative research approach and a case study design was adopted in this study. The primary data were collected through observations, focus group discussions with employees, a group interview with shop stewards, and in-depth interviews with supervisors and managers, from April 2019 to September 2019. There were 45 study participants. In-depth interviews were held with 10 managers at facility level, which included chief executive officer, chief medical officer, assistant director's in human resources management, patient admin, operations, finance, and two area manager and two operation managers nursing. A group interview was conducted with five shop stewards and an in-depth interview with one shop steward from the group. Five focus group discussions were conducted with clinical and non-clinical staff. The focus group discussions were supplemented with an in-depth interview with one person from each group in order to counter the group effect. Observations included moderation committee, contracting, and assessment meetings. Findings: The study shows that the performance management and development system was not properly implemented. There was non-compliance to performance management and development system policy guidelines in terms of time lines for contracting, evaluation, payment of incentives to good performers, and management of poor performance. The study revealed that the system is ineffective in raising the performance of employees and unable to assist employees to grow. The performance bonuses were no longer paid to qualifying employees. The study also revealed that lack of capacity and commitment, poor communication, constant policy changes, financial constraints, weak and highly bureaucratic management structures, union interference were challenges that were encountered during the implementation of the performance management and development system. Lastly, employees and supervisors were rating themselves three irrespective of how well or bad they performed. Conclusion: Performance management is regarded as vital to improved performance of the health workforce and healthcare service delivery among populations. Effective implementation of performance management and development system depends on well-capacitated and unbiased management at facility levels. Therefore, there is an urgent need to improve communication, link performance management to rewards, and capacitate staff on performance management and development system, as it is key to improved public health sector outcomes or performance.

**Keywords :** challenges, implementation, performance management and development system, public hospital

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