

ALLIED HEALTH IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Dr Rasika Jayasekara

Senior Lecturer in Nursing and Midwifery, School of Nursing and Midwifery,
University of South Australia

Healthcare is changing dramatically due to the advancement of medical sciences and technology, the abundance of clinical research and the higher demands of consumers. These changes represent a significant challenge to the healthcare professions and education in terms of maintaining the quality of services and preparing healthcare professionals for the future. Effective systems for regulation, education, research and management are key to strengthening the contribution of healthcare professions in order to achieve the required improvement in health outcomes (ICN 2017; WHO 2017; World Bank 2017). In response, healthcare professionals' education and services are increasingly being restructured in many countries to prepare them for contemporary and future demands of healthcare. It is estimated that there are 43 million global health workers in 2015, including 9.8 million physicians and 20.7 million nurses/midwives (WHO 2017). To maintain this enormous workforce requires approximately 3,000 educational institutions, which produce approximately 1 million new healthcare graduates each year (WHO 2016). It is essential to ensure that new healthcare graduates achieved the required standards and competencies to practise in order to provide safe and effective healthcare. However, many healthcare professionals in particular allied healthcare professionals face poor working environments, lower-level wages, unsupportive management and a lack of social recognition and career development (WHO 2016). It is therefore essential that governments and other institutions involved in human resources for health should establish effective strategies designed to ensure adequate policies in order to create safe and effective healthcare system that are able to deal with challenges presented today and the future.