

The Role of Economics of Primary Healthcare Service in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

(A case study of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the period (1431 - 1438 AH))

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to address the role of economics of primary healthcare service in achieving the sustainable development goals in Saudi Arabia during the period 1431-1438AH. The study identifies the concept of primary healthcare economics, the importance of primary health care, and the objectives of primary health care, as well as the concept of sustainable development and its objectives, and the role of the individual in sustainable development. To achieve the objective of the study, the researcher adopted the descriptive and analytical approach, the historical approach and the case study approach in highlighting the role of primary healthcare economics in achieving the goals of Sustainable development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study concluded with several findings; the key ones are: The Saudi Arabia paid great attention to the primary healthcare sector and expanded the healthcare services provided by primary healthcare centers and increase the number of centers from 2094 in 1431 to 2393 in 1438. This was positively reflected in the lives of individuals and on sustainable development. The results also showed that, despite the spread of chronic and pandemic diseases, the population increase accompanied by the increase and diversity in demand of primary healthcare services, the government of Saudi Arabia was able to overcome all these challenges by providing high quality healthcare services to all cities and for all members of communities. Thus, achieving the sustainable development goals related to the access to quality healthcare and well-being, eradication of poverty and hunger, and achieving food security.

Key words: Economics of Primary Health Care, Sustainable Development, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

1. INTRODUCTION

The enjoyment of excellent health is a vital sign of the community development and stability that preferably cares for the human being. This is positively reflected in the country's ability to achieve the desired economic growth and preserve its continuity. This is because human beings, regardless of how technically and scientifically developed, are still the main driver of any phase of growth and the main guarantor of its continuation, which has to be a worldwide trend in human healthcare to attain that goal. (Zeyadah, 2017:2).

Development has been recognized by a stable population capable of continuous production, while health has been recognized by the ability to work, since being healthy means being able to work and produce, and therefore contributing to economic development. (2013: 135) (Mukhtar, Elfatih).

Therefore, health services in general and primary health services in particular are the most important things that can be given to human beings, the spurs of life and development, which, if they represent human need, are also an economic necessity for building a community capable of performing better in various economic, social and environmental fields.

There is no question that primary health care, at the appropriate and targeted levels, are one of the most critical services that the State must provide. Therefore, the state often seeks to strengthen them and enhance their efficiency by studying the different methods and processes that enable to accomplish them. In consequence, the benefit of the individual, and society, and the benefit of the state as a whole are achieved. (2016 Sultani, Wafa: A).

It is quite clear that primary health services are, in particular, one of the most essential services of importance to people, society and the state in general, since they provide a state of protection and security for individuals and society, as well as contribute effectively to the prevention of risks and the treatment of illnesses. This is in addition to the fact that these programs represent the starting point of the growth, construction and social stability phase, given that they are better controlled and driven.

2. THE STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Many countries around the world, including Saudi Arabia, are very involved in primary health programs, but at the same time, they face tremendous rising strain on all health services organizations, particularly at a time when chronic and epidemic diseases have spread, followed by a shift in the climate and a growing population. In addition to rapid technological and technical advances, this is followed by a rising and diverse demand for primary health services.

All of these factors pose many challenges for Saudi Arabia, the most significant of which, in addition to continuous growth and enhancement of the quality of service, is perhaps the coverage of primary healthcare services for all cities in the country. In this context, the main problem of the study is in the following questions:

1. Does the Government of Saudi Arabia provide primary health care services in different cities to all community individuals, which contributes to achieving the goals of sustainable development?
2. Does the Government of Saudi Arabia constantly develop and boost quality of service?

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are a set of key points that can be formed as follows:

1. Defining the concept of economics of primary healthcare. and its significance.
2. Explaining primary health care goals.
3. Defining the concept of sustainable development and its goals.
4. Explaining the individual's position in sustainable development.
5. Tackling the reality of primary healthcare economics in Saudi Arabia over the period (1431-1438) and the degree to which they contributed to the achievement of the goals of sustainable growth.
6. Addressing the reality of primary healthcare economics in Saudi Arabia during the period (1431-1438) and the extent of their contribution to achieving sustainable development goals.

4. HYPOTHESES

There are many challenges facing the primary healthcare systems in Saudi Arabia, the most important of which is population growth and rapid technological advances, which involve the provision of a high level of services to all individuals of communities in different cities, ensuring that everyone enjoys a healthy lifestyle and that all establishments enjoy well-being and welfare.

The Government of Saudi Arabia shall provide primary health services to all individuals in various cities and shall achieve the sustainable development goals.

Saudi Arabia's primary health services are keeping pace with rapid and continuing technological advances and are continually evolving and enhancing the quality of service that has a positive effect on the lives of the people and leads to sustainable development and the achievement of the 2030 vision.

Strengthening the primary healthcare systems is crucial to achieving sustainable development goals associated with healthiness, well-being, and welfare eradicating poverty and hunger, and achieving food security.

5. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This research follows the descriptive theoretical methodology used during the time (1431-1438) to clarify and evaluate the economics of healthcare services in Saudi Arabia and its role in achieving objectives for sustainable growth. First of all, the analysis describes the notion of primary healthcare economics and its meaning and primary healthcare objectives.

In addition, the study clarifies the notion of sustainable development and its goals, the role of individuals in sustainable development, and analyzes the reality of primary healthcare economics in Saudi Arabia over the period (1431-1438) and their contribution to the objectives of sustainable development.

The study will also adopt the case study and historical method by tracking and analyzing historical data for the duration of the study to reach the precise results that will enable the formulation of recommendations that support the future of primary health care services in the Kingdom.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of the economics of primary healthcare service

Primary health services are one of the most essential services that many states have to offer in order to protect the majority of the population from diseases through prevention and care due to their presence and accessibility to an acceptable degree. The individual therefore feels relaxed and satisfied, which positively reflects on his relationship with others and on the society in which he lives and becomes more productive and actively contributes to development. Therefore, developed countries pay particular attention to the primary health care. The researcher would first discuss the concept of service from this point of view and then explain the theory of primary healthcare economics.

7. THE CONCEPT OF SERVICE

Abstract descriptions of concepts relevant to multi-directional and multidimensional human and intellectual activity are often difficult to provide. The services are not unrelated to the material in question. Numerous definitions of the service can therefore be listed, but each of them can provide a particular dimension, although at times they share one or more of these concepts.

Service has been defined by Kotler as “any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another, which is intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. He added that offering a service may or may not be tied to a tangible product” (Kotler Philip, 2006: 461).

This description refers to the assertion that the intangible component of the service does not take place without an act and a request by another person, and that it is not actually connected to a tangible object and not physically owned by its purchaser, which implies the possibility to use it without owning it.

It was also defined by some experts as “intangible activities that achieve a benefit to the customer or client, which are not necessarily tied to the sale of a good or service, that is, the production or provision of a service as a sample does not always require the use of a good material”. The intangible aspect of the service and the probability of its differentiation from the good is emphasized in this description.

Lapert described it as “an economic activity that produces value and meets the needs of the consumer at a particular moment and place to reflect the change intended by the beneficiary of the service” (Denis Lapert, 2005: 14).

It is very evident from the above that the services include all economic activities that are not generated by material items, but are mostly intangible, and are typically consumed at the time of manufacture, providing added value such as comfort, health, entertainment, etc. Purchasing does not inherently result in possession, but rather benefits and advantages that meet the needs of consumers and their expectations. (Najat, 2012: 21-22).

Turning to the concept of the economics of primary healthcare, this concept can be defined in different ways and each one reflects a certain point of view and the most important of these definitions is that primary healthcare “is those medical and preventive services that are provided to patients and non-patients and do not need inpatient care in the hospital”.

The second definition of primary healthcare is “those services that include treatment of common diseases and accident injuries, first aid, provision of vaccination services against various diseases, maternal and child care, school health services, health prevention, environmental health, and health education.” (Najat, *ibid*: 37-38).

As for the World Health Organization, it has defined the concept as “Primary healthcare is essential healthcare based on practical, scientifically sound, and socially acceptable methods and technology made entirely accessible to individuals and families in the community through their full participation and at a cost that the community and country can afford to maintain at every stage of their development in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination” (Talbot, Verrinder, 2010:3). It is an integral part of both of the country’s health system, of which it’s the vital function and main focus and of the social and economic development of the community. It is the primary level of communication of people, families, and community with the national health system bringing healthcare as close as possible to where people live and work.

As mention earlier, the economics of primary healthcare service can be defined as “universally available healthcare to individuals and families in the community in ways that they can accept, with their full participation and at costs they can afford, and that care represents the core of the health system and is based on the principles of justice, equity and rational use of resources”.

8. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

Primary healthcare is of great significance to the State or society in general and for the individual in particular, because of its significant and fundamental impact on the life of the individual and society. It provides health services to the community such as family planning campaigns, maternity and child care, endemic disease prevention, vaccination against infectious diseases, elderly care, laboratory tests and medical analyses, ambulance, nursing and pharmaceutical, and food services, and primary healthcare also includes essential elements needed to improve health security and prevent health threats such as epidemics and antimicrobial resistance through measures such as community participation and education, rational prescriptions, and a core set of basic public health functions including Surveillance, strengthening systems at the community level and the level of peripheral health facilities contributes to building resilience, which is critical to sustaining shocks to the health system.

Primary healthcare has proven to be a highly effective and efficient way to address the main causes and risks of poor health, welfare in the present time, as well as to deal with emerging challenges to health and welfare in the future. It is also a valuable investment given the evidence that quality primary healthcare reduces total healthcare costs and improves efficiency by reducing hospital admissions. Therefore, attention has expanded due to its critical importance in improving the health system, improving the way the service is provided, and the importance of primary healthcare can be summarized in the following points:

- Helps detect diseases at an early stage and provides prescriptions at appropriate times.
- Provides maternity and childcare services and pregnancy follow-up programs.
- Helps prevent endemic diseases.
- Provides care for the elderly and people with special needs.
- Provides ambulance, nursing, and pharmaceutical services.

- Child vaccination campaigns and vaccination against infectious diseases.
- Reduces the cost.
- Furthers improving health care.
- Promotes medical cooperation in the sharing of specialized information and expertise.
- Increases medical consulting services and exchange experiences and training in the medical field.

9. PRIMARY HEALTHCARE GOALS

The primary healthcare goals are represented in the following points: (Dahman, Muhammad, 2017: 74, adapted).

- Medical treatments: where primary healthcare aims to offer treatment at all levels through prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of health imbalances that afflict individuals.
- Health prevention: by taking a number of deterrent measures before the emergence of diseases, such as carrying out various vaccinations.
- Comprehensive coverage of health needs: through comprehensive coverage of the population's needs for health services in different regions, as well as for different social classes, especially the poor.
- Transport of patients: This activity aims to accompany the patient to health structures through healthy means of transport.
- Education and scientific research: This activity aims at training the workers of the sector (medical and paramedical and even administrative personnel), in addition to developing scientific research in the health field.
- Providing management services: This activity is embodied through the interests of the administration and insurance institutions, which seek through its work to manage the interests of individuals from the health side, in addition to managing insurance funds allocated to cover the expenses of medical consumption.
- The manufacture and provision of medical materials: through the manufacture of pharmaceuticals and the provision of essential medicines that contribute to the treatment of patients, to ensure access to these substances and medicines to all members of the society.
- Health awareness and education campaigns: through planned programs in schools, universities, and various health facilities that highlight and explain how to prevent diseases and treatment, environmental sanitation, and good nutrition.

10. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Experts have formulated definitions of sustainable development, involving human development based on improving the level of health care, education, and social welfare. The Report of the World Development and Environment Committee (Brundtland) noted that:

“Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising

the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”

The term sustainable development means a pattern of development that make the maximum use of natural resources and never waste them. In other words, development that is replenishing resources and wealth and recycling in a way that ensures a clean and livable environment for the present and future generations. (Abojouda, 2011).

Sustainable development is also defined as: (Al-Baridi, 2015: 51-52).

“Not to harm the productive capacity of future generations and leave it in the state inherited by the current generation”.

Another definition of sustainable development is known:

“That it is all that leads to a fair and continuous promotion of human life, present and future within a strategic and contractual cultural framework that preserves and develops the environment and resources.”

11. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Sustainable development through its mechanisms and organs seeks to achieve several goals, including:

(Moh.gov.sa/ministry/news/pages/sustainable development)

1. Improving the national capacity to manage natural resources consciously and rationally to achieve a better life for all segments of society.
2. Respecting the natural environment by regulating the relationship between human activities and environmental elements, and not harming them, in addition to promoting environmental awareness of the population, and developing the individual’s sense of responsibility towards environmental problems.
3. Ensure that environmental planning is included in all stages of development planning to achieve rational and informed exploitation of natural resources to prevent them from being depleted or destroyed.
4. Linking modern technology to the needs of society, and collecting enough basic data of an environmental nature to allow for proper development planning.
5. Inform the public of the challenges they face in various fields to ensure effective popular participation.
6. Focus in particular on endangered systems, whether agricultural land is vulnerable to desertification, water sources exposed to depletion, pollution, or population growth of shanty towns.

The role of the individual in sustainable development:

The role of the individual in sustainable development is as follows (Ibrahim, 2012: 90).

1. The awareness of the concept of sustainability as a new idea may lead to solutions to economic, social, and environmental problems that are intractable to traditional solutions.
2. The conviction that sustainability is an important and possible goal at the personal level, local community level, state level, and the world.
3. Creating a minimum understanding of the idea of sustainable development and how economic,

social, and environmental dimensions interact.

4. Create a personal commitment to work towards sustainable development, adapt, and contribute to the change needed to achieve it.
5. Make the desired change in a personal lifestyle that helps to achieve sustainable development whether at home or work.
6. Develop critical analysis skills, and get used to participating in the decision-making, whether at the district level, school, work, or any other platforms for Ashura.
7. To diversify the work skills and expertise required to participate actively in achieving sustainable development.
8. Learn how to look at things in their far-reaching global dimensions, rather than a narrow personal perspective, and encourage others to do so.

It can be said that sustainable development in its philosophy is a moral concept since it depends on changing patterns of behavior so that the individual is responsible for feeling others around him as well as those who come after him. The main focus is sustainable development is human and offer him the best needs for his life. Therefore, each individual has to consider others needs including his children, his neighbors and the environment around him whether he is citizen or non-citizen or whether he is an employee that does his job honestly to achieve the best for the beneficiary. At the level of the decision-maker or a politician, whose task is to guarantee good living conditions for the people and meet the needs and requirements of the present time and future. As long as the focus of sustainable development is the individual and his needs, the individual is also the key to building such development.

The economics of primary healthcare and its impact on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals - Saudi Arabia model period (1431 -1438 AH):

Primary healthcare is an approach to health well-being and welfare, encompassing the whole community and centered around the needs and priorities of individuals, families, and local communities. It addresses health well-being and welfare in its overall and interrelated physical, psychological, and social aspects.

The essence is to provide healthcare to all members of society with regard to lifelong health needs and is limited to a range of specific diseases, ensuring that individuals receive comprehensive care based on a commitment to social justice and equity and to recognizing the fundamental right to the highest attainable level of health. Everyone has the right to a standard of living sufficient to ensure the health and well-being of himself and his family, especially in terms of food, clothing, housing, medical care, and the necessary social services.

(<https://www.who.int/ar/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/primary-health-care>)

Therefore, the primary healthcare is a comprehensive view of health that goes beyond the narrow medical model, recognizing that many of the deep roots of diseases fall outside the health sector and control, and must, therefore, be addressed by a holistic, society-focused approach, and to do so for several purposes, including improving health, reducing diseases, increasing justice and equity and making major improvements in the performance of health systems.

All this has made many countries, including Saudi Arabia, very interested in this vital sector and

allocates huge budgets to it as it has become an influential and important indicator on which to measure the urbanization and urbanization of countries. Saudi Arabia is home to the largest healthcare sector among the Gulf states, accounting for about 48 percent of the gulf government's total spending on healthcare at a cost expected to exceed \$40 billion in 2020.

The Kingdom also plans to establish medical cities, with a budget of about \$4.3 billion, which indicates the huge budget provided by the government to promote this vital sector. This interest has made the Kingdom move at an accelerated pace in the development of the largest health sector in the Gulf states in terms of government spending, after placing this sector at the top of the priorities of the Kingdom's goals to achieve vision 2030 and recognizing the importance of the health sector. The total allocation for the health services and social development sectors in the Saudi budget 2019 was approximately 172 billion SR, including about 47.7 billion for the Saudi vision 2030 initiatives. (<http://The Arab hospital.com/features-are>).

The Kingdom's vision "2030" focused on the involvement of the private sector in the health sector, and in this context, the Saudi Ministry of Health confirms that the essence of the health transformation project is to build a health system based on a new model of healthcare through which healthcare is provided according to the principles and concepts important for its success, so that partnership with the private sector is the most important axis within the axes of health transformation, in addition to other important tools such as institutional transformation, and the idea of institutional transformation is centered on the transition of the task of gradually transferring health services to a network. From government companies to the ministry's focus more and more on its role in planning, supervision, regulation, and control of health services.

The Ministry of Health said that the importance of institutional transformation lies in improving the efficiency and quality of health providers in the public and private sectors, and providing additional opportunities for more important quality specialties in the health field.

In addition to increasing the ministry's ability to focus on its regulatory, coordination, and oversight functions, and promoting transparency and competition among service providers. It is known that the institutional transformation brings many benefits to patients, as it works to reduce waiting times, focus on public health initiatives and control such as reducing chronic diseases, smoking, obesity, etc., in addition to following the best effective procedures to care and serve patients and to provide multiple options for the provision of health care.

Primary healthcare centers are a priority and important. The start of the development of a number of primary health centers with new model designs is the beginning of the primary care restructuring initiative system in the Kingdom as a whole. Primary healthcare is one of the most important elements mentioned in the "Saudi Vision 2030" that will put the Kingdom at the forefront of the world if it says in the text of the vision:

(What we aspire to is not only to make up for the downfall in incomes, or to preserve the gains and achievements, but our ambition to build a more prosperous homeland, in which every citizen finds what he wishes for, the future of our country that we are building together will only be accepted to make it at the forefront of countries with education and rehabilitation, with opportunities for all, advanced services in employment, health care, housing, entertainment, etc.).

This vision represents an unprecedented opportunity for the development of the health sector with a wise orientation that allows the provision of outstanding health services through advanced business models

that ensure sustainability and achieve the highest levels of efficiency and works to attract the private sector and encourage it to invest in the health sector by up to 35%. Vision 2030 focuses on several themes for the development of healthcare by promoting a healthy lifestyle and focusing on combating epidemics and infectious diseases as well as preventive medicine.

The Saudi Ministry of Health confirmed its support for the primary healthcare system and encouraging citizens to benefit from it, as well as enhancing the quality of health services and the safety of patients and health facilities, in addition to increasing the qualification and training of doctors to face chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart, and cancer.)The Arab Hospital Magazine 2019).

The Saudi government's great interest in the health sector in general and the primary healthcare sector, in particular, was reflected in health indicators, where infants' mortality fell to (4.82) per 1,000 live infants, child mortality fell less than five years to (8.05) per 1,000 live infants, maternal mortality fell to (12) per 100,000 live infant and life expectancy at birth rose to 75 years. In terms of funding, the percentage of funds allocated to the Ministry of Health (7.61%) was 1.6 percent of the total state budget. (Saudi Ministry of Health Report 1439 / 2017).

Besides, to the best of our knowledge that the infant mortality rate was (7.4) per 1,000 live infants in 37/1438 and the under-five mortality rate (8.6) per 1,000 live infants and the life expectancy at birth (74) years. The percentage of funds (7.2%) of the total state budget, which shows the increase in the percentage of appropriations and its development in 1439 to (7.61) of the total state budget, as shown by the Saudi government's great interest in the health sector, where the Ministry of Health covers about (60%). The needs of health services in the Kingdom while other government agencies and the private sector contribute to cover about (40%).

Treatment services have expanded over the past years and cover all parts of the Kingdom, which has led to a qualitative shift in the services provided by primary healthcare centers and hospitals, and table (1) shows the development of healthcare centers of the Ministry of Health by regions.

Table (1) Development of primary healthcare centers in different regions

Years Regions	1431 AH	1432 AH	1433 AH	1434 AH	1435 AH	1436 AH	1437 AH	1438 AH
Riyadh	99	401	435	435	418	407	430	427
Makkah	84	84	92	92	84	83	85	84
Jeddah	93	93	108	108	88	88	90	93
Taif	112	112	120	120	121	120	121	121
Al-Madina	143	143	154	154	164	162	162	195
Qassim	151	151	159	159	170	172	192	181
Eastern Province	124	126	136	136	136	138	142	144
Ahsa	63	64	71	71	75	73	72	73
Hafr AlBatten	38	38	41	41	36	40	40	40
Aseer	227	227	238	238	249	246	254	254
Bisha	76	76	79	79	71	81	91	84
Tabuk	67	68	73	73	77	81	85	87
Hail	93	96	100	100	105	105	107	108
N.Borders	43	43	45	45	46	45	51	47

Jazan	146	146	155	155	159	179	181	176
Najran	61	61	65	65	68	66	68	68
Al Bahah	93	98	101	101	102	104	105	108
Al Jowf	33	33	35	35	35	40	43	43
AlQurayyat	16	16	17	17	18	15	19	17
AlQunfudhah	32	33	35	35	37	37	43	43
Total	2094	2109	2259	2259	2281	2282	2381	2393

Source: Saudi Ministry of Health Report 1438-1439 AH

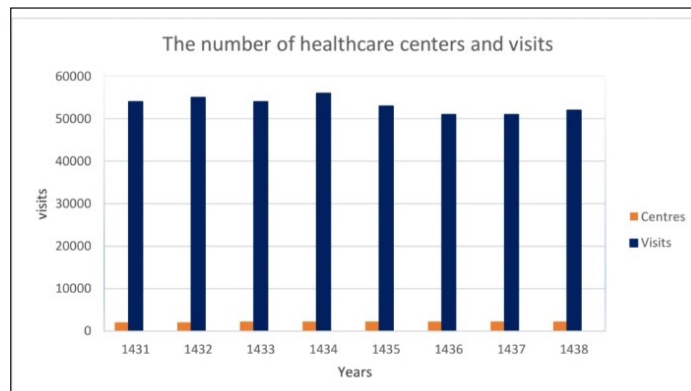
Table (1) shows the development of primary healthcare centers and their increase almost across the kingdom, as well as the increase in the total number of primary healthcare centers nationwide, from 2094 in 1431 to 2393 in 1438 AH, which indicates that the primary healthcare service is covered for all cities of the country, in addition to the continuous development and improvement of the level of service for all members of the community, which is reflected in the health indicators as mentioned earlier, including the rise of the health indicators. Life expectancy at birth to (75) years. Thus it can be said that primary healthcare services in the Kingdom keep pace with rapid and continuous technological developments and are constantly developing and improving the level of service, which reflects positively on the lives of the members of the community, which contributes to achieving sustainable development and vision 2030.

Table (2) and Figure (1) shows the development of primary healthcare centers and the number of visits by patients from 1431 to 1438/1439 AH.

Year	No. of Healthcare Centers	No. of Review Visits by patients in Million
1431	2094	54
1432	2109	55
1433	2259	54
1434	2259	56
1435	2281	53
1436	2282	51
1437	2381	51
1438	2393	52

Source: Ministry of Health Report, 1438-1439 AH

Figure (1) Numbers of primary healthcare centers and Visits From 1431 to 1438/1439 AH



Source: Prepared by the researcher

It is clear from Table 2 and Figure 1 that the number of visits by patients decreased from 54 million in 1431 to 52 million in 1438, despite the population increase that occurred during this period, indicating the great work being done by the Government of the Kingdom in the field of health care, and ensuring that everyone enjoys healthy lifestyles and well-being and welfare for all businesses.

Among the most prominent primary healthcare programs: (Ministry of Health Report, 1438-1439 H).

Reproductive health and maternity programs:

The program aims to provide comprehensive and integrated health services for the mother and baby to ensure a healthy and safe life for both of them. Seven training courses and workshops in reproductive health and maternity were carried out during 1439 AH.

Maternal mortality rates decreased to (12) deaths per 100,000 live births, compared with (14) per 100,000 live births in 1435 /1436H, and the proportion of mothers receiving primary healthcare services during pregnancy increased from one to four visits to (98%).

12. CHILD HEALTH PROGRAM

It aims to provide an adequate and appropriate amount of preventive, therapeutic, strengthening, and rehabilitative services that bring children mentally, psychologically, and physically safe and enable them to build a healthy generation capable of contributing effectively to economic and social growth. Many courses and workshops have been carried out in the field of child health and the issuance of a health document (passport) for mother and child.

13. YOUTH HEALTH PROGRAM

This program aims to ensure that young people in Saudi society enjoy all aspects of healthcare and be effective and able to contribute to achieving the development goals of the country. The national strategy for the care of young people has been prepared and a guide of the healthcare workers has been prepared for young people in primary health care.

14. THE ELDERLY CARE PROGRAM

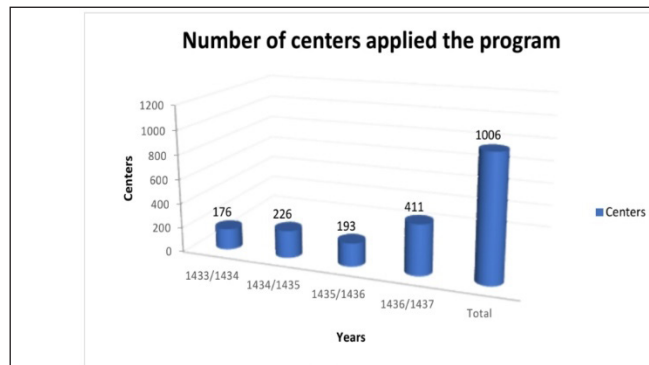
This program aims to maintain the health of the elderly (60 years and above) and improve their quality of life by providing comprehensive, integrated, continuous, accessible, and high-quality health services for the elderly in the centers. The National Strategy for Elderly Health 2017-2030 has been developed and 587 physicians and 664 nurses who work at the centers of elderly in different regions and provinces have been trained. The number of centers applied to the geriatric care program (1006) in 1417 compared to (595) centers in 1435 / 1436 H.

Table (3) and Figure (2) show the number of primary healthcare centers applied for the elderly care Program in 1433/1434-1436/1437H

Table (3) show the number of primary healthcare centers applied for the elderly care Program. (1433/1434 – 1436/1437)

Years	Number of centers applied for the program
1433/1434	176
1434/1435	226
1435/1436	193
1436/1437	411
Total	1006

Source: Ministry of Health Report, 1438 AH



From Table 3 and Figure 2, the steady increase in the number of primary healthcare centers applied for the elderly care program from (176) centers in 1433 / 1434 H to (411) in 1437.

The previous analysis shows that the Government of Saudi Arabia provides primary healthcare services to all members of society in various cities. The researcher found that there are programs of maternity and childcare, health programs for young people and adults, and programs of care for the elderly. Moreover, there are several other programs, which show the strength of primary healthcare systems in the Kingdom and achieving high levels of health services reflected on health indicators of members of the community. It can be said that the great interest in primary healthcare systems led to the achievement of sustainable development goals related to Good health and well-being for all members of society, poverty eradication, and food security.

15. CONCLUSION

This research addressed the role of primary healthcare economics in achieving the sustainable development goals (a case study of Saudi Arabia during the period 1431-1438H) and clarified the concept of primary healthcare economics, the importance of primary health care, and its objectives, as well as the concept of sustainable development and its goals. The research also addressed the role of the individual in sustainable development, and the reality of primary healthcare economics in Saudi Arabia during the period (1431-1438H) and the extent of its contribution to achieving sustainable development goals.

The research showed that Saudi Arabia paid close attention to the healthcare sector and allocated huge budgets, which is the largest among the Gulf states, acquiring about 48% of the total spending of Gulf governments on health care. As demonstrated by the inclusion of the primary healthcare sector in the “Saudi Vision 2030” for the development of this sector and enabling it to provide distinctive health

services that ensure sustainability and achieve the highest levels of efficiency and work to attract the private sector to promote a healthy lifestyle and focus to combat epidemics and infectious diseases along with preventive medicine.

The research also showed that primary healthcare services are provided to all cities in the Saudi state, and there are continuous improvement and development of the level of service for all members of the community reflected on health indicators, including the increase in life expectancy at birth to (75) years. It has also reflected on the productivity of the members of society. Thus, achieving the sustainable development goals related to good health and welfare, the eradication of poverty and hunger, and the achievement of food security.

16. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings:

It was clear through the research that Saudi Arabia is home to the largest healthcare sector among the Gulf states, accounting for about 48% of the total spending of Gulf governments on health care. To develop the sector of the primary health care, it has been included in the “Saudi Vision 2030” to provide quality services for all to ensure sustainability and achieve the highest levels of efficiency with the participation of the private sector, which demonstrates the great interest in the primary healthcare sector by the Saudi government.

The Saudi government’s paid a great attention to the health sector in general and the primary healthcare sector in particular based on health indicators, where the infant mortality rate fell to (4.82) per 1,000 live births in 1438 compared to (7.4) per 1,000 live infants in 1437. Child mortality decreased with a rate of fewer than five years to (8.05) per 1,000 live births in 1438 compared to (8.6) per 1,000 live births in 1437, and maternal mortality fell to (12) per 100,000 live births. The life expectancy at birth increased to 75 years, compared to 74 years in 1437 AH, and this is attributed to the development in health indicators are due to the increase in the percentage of funds allocated by the government to the Ministry of Health, where the percentage (7.61%) Of the total state budget in 1438 / 1439 compared to the percentage of funds (7.2%) of the total state budget of the Ministry of Health in 1437 / 1438 AH.

Treatment services expanded during the years of study for primary healthcare centers and covered regions all over the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which led to a sustainable development in the services provided by primary healthcare centers, where primary healthcare centers rose from (2094) in 1431 to 2393 in 1438, and this reflected positively on the lives of members of the community, contributing to achieving sustainable development and vision 2030.

The main primary healthcare programs include reproductive and maternal health programs, child health programs, youth health programs, and eldercare programs.

The study showed that despite the spread of chronic and epidemic diseases of the era, and the population increase accompanied by increased and diversity in demand for primary healthcare services. However, the Government of Saudi Arabia has managed to overcome all these challenges by providing primary healthcare services to all cities of the Saudi state and to all members of the society and of high quality. Thus, reaching the sustainable development goals related to providing quality healthcare services

to all segments of society and achieving welfare, and eliminating poverty, hunger, and food security.

17. RECOMMENDATIONS

Working to develop human capacities in the field of primary healthcare and keep pace with the latest developments in primary healthcare to increase the quality of service in the primary healthcare sector and to continue the processes of continuous improvement and development to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth for all.

Allocating an appropriate budget for research related to primary healthcare systems and encouraging and motivating the private sector to enter this field and encourage students of the colleges of health sciences in Saudi universities and faculty members in these colleges to do research in primary healthcare systems to find out all the obstacles to the development of this sector and work to solve all-new obstacles in this sector to ensure continuous access to the service to all members of society and more sophisticated and advanced.

Working to increase the funds allocated to the primary healthcare sector and encourage the private sector and motivate it to enter this field to open more primary healthcare centers, especially with the ongoing population developments and the increasing and expansion of urban plans to ensure access to the service in remote areas.

Developing channels of communication between all primary healthcare providers and ensure coordination within the country to provide more integrated services and achieve economic and social well-being and welfare for all.

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