

CURRENT STATUS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION NEEDS OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS AT NONG NGHIEP GENERAL HOSPITAL

Hoang Thi Oanh¹, Nguyen Thi Binh An²

¹Nong Nghiep General Hospital - Km13+500, National Highway 1A, Ngoc Hoi Ward, Thanh Tri Dist, Hanoi City, Vietnam

²Thang Long University - Nghiem Xuan Yem, Dai Kim Ward, Hoang Mai Dist, Hanoi City, Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess the current status and training needs related to continuing medical education (CME) among healthcare personnel at Nong Nghiep General Hospital.

Research subjects and methods: A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted involving 385 healthcare workers, comprising 85 physicians and 300 nurses currently employed at Nong Nghiep General Hospital. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with three sections: demographic information, participation in CME activities during the 2023–2024 period, and perceived training needs. Face-to-face interviews were used for data collection. Data were entered and analyzed using SPSS software, with descriptive statistics including means and proportions.

Results and Conclusions: More than 85% of respondents reported participating in at least one form of continuing medical education (CME) during the study period, with the most common formats being professional training workshops and academic conferences. However, only 64.2% met the required threshold of 48 training hours over a two-year period. Physicians exhibited higher levels of participation and greater demand than nurses, especially in academic activities such as research and teaching. Overall, the demand for CME was substantial (over 90%), though a notable gap remained between expressed needs and actual participation. The findings underscore the need to diversify CME formats, introduce more flexible scheduling, and implement supportive policies tailored to professional roles, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and accessibility of continuing education at the hospital.

Keywords: Continuing medical education; Nong Nghiep General Hospital; healthcare training; professional development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Continuous professional development is an essential requirement for healthcare workers in the context of rapid and ongoing advancements in medicine. Regular updates of professional knowledge not only enhance individual competencies but also contribute to improving the quality of care, thereby meeting the increasingly high expectations of patients. In Vietnam, continuous medical education (CME) takes various forms, including knowledge updates, continuing professional development (CPD), skills enhancement, technology transfer training, and other non-formal educational formats. The Law regulates these activities related to medical

examination and Treatment, as outlined in Circular No. 22/2013/TT-BYT, and the Ministry of Health's strategy for Continuing Education until 2030 [1].

In practice, healthcare workers in many localities exhibit a strong demand for continued learning. A study conducted in Vinh City (by Trần Đức Trọng) found that almost all physicians and nurses were aware of and participated in continuing education, with particular interest in specialized medical content [2]. Similarly, in Tuyên Quang province (Hồ Phương Thúy), over 80% of nurses expressed a need for ongoing education [3]. In Sóc Sơn district (Nguyễn Ngọc Huân), 74.9% of healthcare workers reported a desire for further training, primarily in

*Corresponding author

Email: nhuthuy1002@ump.edu.vn Phone: (+84) 363818713 <https://doi.org/10.52163/yhc.v66ienglish.2743>

family medicine [4].

The Agricultural General Hospital is a Grade I hospital with a capacity of 520 beds and nearly 700 staff members, including a substantial proportion of physicians and nurses. As part of its human resource development strategy, accurately assessing the current situation and training needs of its healthcare staff is crucial for hospital leadership to formulate appropriate solutions. However, to date, no specific research has been conducted at this hospital. In light of this gap, we conducted this study to describe the current status and training needs of healthcare workers at the Agricultural General Hospital.

2. STUDY SUBJECTS AND METHODS

2.1. Study Design: This research employed a cross-sectional descriptive design.

2.2. Study Setting and Duration:

- Setting: Agricultural General Hospital

- Duration: From November 2024 to May 2025

2.3. Study Population: The study population consisted of physicians and nurses who are official staff members of the hospital with at least 12 months of continuous service and who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

2.4. Sample Size and Sampling Method: The sample size was calculated using the formula for estimating a population proportion

$$n = Z_{1-\alpha/2}^2 \frac{p(1-p)}{d^2}$$

Where:

+ $Z_{1-\alpha/2}$ is the standard normal deviate corresponding to the desired confidence level (for $\alpha = 0.05$, $Z = 1.96$),

+ $p=0.5$ (used to obtain the maximum sample size),

+ $d=0.05$ (acceptable margin of error).

Applying the formula yielded a required sample size of 385 participants.

2.5. Data Collection Tool, Procedure, and Evaluation:

- The questionnaire was structured into three sections:

+ Section A: Self-developed questions to collect demographic and background information of participants.

+ Section B: Structured questions to record

participation in four types of continuing training activities undertaken by participants in 2023 and 2024.

+ Section C: Questions assessing the need and interest in participating in future continuous training programs.

The questionnaire was developed in accordance with Circular No. 22/2013/TT-BYT on continuing education for healthcare workers issued by the Ministry of Health. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews.

2.7. Data Processing and Analysis: Collected data were entered, cleaned, and processed using EpiData version 3.1. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 20.0. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and percentages, were used to summarize the data.

2.8. Ethical Considerations: The study adhered to all applicable ethical guidelines for biomedical research involving human participants.

3. STUDY RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Characteristic	Physicians (n=85)	Nurses (n=300)	Total (n=385)
Gender			
Male	42 (49.4%)	115 (38.3%)	157 (40.8%)
Female	43 (50.6%)	185 (61.7%)	228 (59.2%)
Ethnicity			
Kinh	83 (97.6%)	298 (99.3%)	381 (99.0%)
Other	2 (2.4%)	2 (0.7%)	4 (1.0%)
Place of Residence			
Urban	60 (70.6%)	192 (64.0%)	252 (65.5%)
Rural	25 (29.4%)	108 (36.0%)	133 (34.5%)
Age			
< 30 years	10 (11.8%)	52 (17.3%)	62 (16.1%)
30–50 years	68 (80.0%)	236 (78.7%)	304 (79.0%)

Characteristic	Physicians (n=85)	Nurses (n=300)	Total (n=385)
> 50 years	7 (8.2%)	12 (4.0%)	19 (4.9%)
Mean Age (years)	38.3 (±7.9)	36.3 (±7.3)	36.8 (±7.4)
Total	85 (22.1%)	300 (77.9%)	385 (100%)

Comment: The healthcare workforce surveyed was predominantly composed of nurses (77.9%), with a higher proportion of female staff (59.2%) compared to male (40.8%). Most participants belonged to the Kinh ethnic group (99.0%) and resided in urban areas (65.5%). The majority of the staff were aged between 30 and 50 years (79.0%), with a mean age of approximately 36.8 years.

Table 2. Departmental Assignment and Job Position of Study Participants

Characteristic	Physicians (n=85)	Nurses (n=300)	Total (n=385)
Department			
Internal Medicine	40 (47.1%)	134 (44.7%)	174 (45.2%)
Surgery	16 (18.8%)	67 (22.3%)	83 (21.6%)
Specialized Departments	9 (10.6%)	13 (4.3%)	22 (5.7%)
Paraclinical Services	14 (16.5%)	36 (12.0%)	50 (13.0%)
Administration	3 (3.5%)	26 (8.7%)	29 (7.5%)
Others	3 (3.5%)	24 (8.0%)	27 (7.0%)
Job Position			
Public Employee	26 (30.6%)	87 (29.0%)	113 (29.4%)
Civil Servant	9 (10.6%)	45 (15.0%)	54 (14.0%)
Contract Staff	36 (42.4%)	165 (55.0%)	201 (52.2%)
Head/Deputy of the Department	11 (12.9%)	2 (0.7%)	13 (3.4%)
Hospital Management/ Leadership	3 (3.5%)	1 (0.3%)	4 (1.0%)

Characteristic	Physicians (n=85)	Nurses (n=300)	Total (n=385)
Years of Service			
1–4 years	9 (10.6%)	29 (9.7%)	38 (9.9%)
5–9 years	29 (34.1%)	87 (29.0%)	116 (30.1%)
10–14 years	12 (14.1%)	86 (28.7%)	98 (25.5%)
≥15 years	35 (41.2%)	98 (32.7%)	133 (34.5%)

Comment: The majority of healthcare staff were assigned to internal medicine (45.2%) and surgical departments (21.6%). Over half of the participants (52.2%) were employed under contractual terms. Most staff had five or more years of work experience (89.9%), with 34.5% having at least 15 years of service. Only a small proportion held senior positions, such as department head or leadership roles in hospitals (4.4%).

Table 3. Participation in Continuing Education Activities Among Study Participants

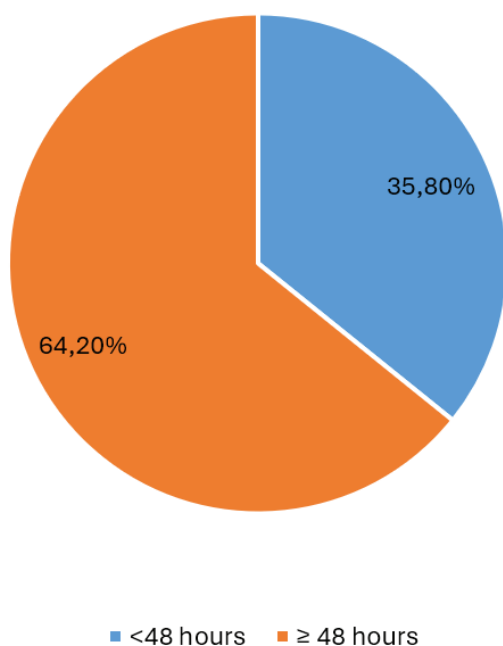
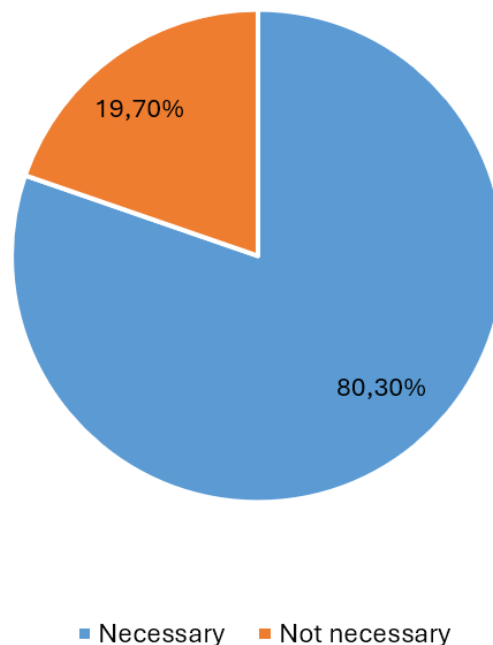
Activity					
2023			2024		
Physicians (n=85)	Nurses (n=300)	Total (n=385)	Physicians (n=85)	Nurses (n=300)	Total (n=385)
Participation in professional training					
75 (88.2%)	257 (85.7%)	332 (86.2%)	75 (88.2%)	260 (86.7%)	335 (87.0%)
Attendance at workshops, seminars, and conferences					
71 (83.5%)	241 (80.3%)	312 (81.0%)	73 (85.9%)	256 (85.3%)	329 (85.5%)
Engagement in scientific research					
22 (25.9%)	30 (10.0%)	55 (14.3%)	24 (28.2%)	32 (10.7%)	56 (14.5%)
Involvement in curriculum or material development					
3 (3.5%)	5 (1.7%)	8 (2.1%)	4 (4.7%)	6 (2.0%)	10 (2.6%)
Teaching activities					
9 (10.6%)	19 (6.3%)	28 (7.3%)	11 (12.9%)	20 (6.7%)	31 (8.1%)

Comment: The proportion of healthcare workers participating in continuing education remained high and stable over the two years, consistently above 85%. Physicians were more actively engaged in scholarly activities, such as research, teaching, and curriculum development, than nurses. However, participation in academic activities beyond basic training—particularly research and education—was still relatively limited.

Table 4. Demand for Participation in Different Forms of Continuing Education

Type of Training Activity	Physicians (n=85)	Nurses (n=300)	Total (n=385)
Professional training and skills enhancement	83 (97.6%)	267 (89.0%)	350 (90.9%)
Workshops, seminars, and conferences	84 (98.8%)	271 (90.3%)	355 (92.2%)
Scientific research participation	43 (50.6%)	98 (32.7%)	141 (36.6%)
Curriculum development and teaching	14 (16.5%)	34 (11.3%)	48 (12.5%)

Comment: The findings indicate a very high level of demand among healthcare staff for participation in continuing education activities, particularly for professional training (90.9%) and attending academic events, such as workshops and seminars (92.2%). Physicians expressed higher levels of interest than nurses across all types of activities, especially in scientific research (50.6% vs. 32.7%) and in curriculum development or teaching roles (16.5% vs. 11.3%).

**Figure 1. Conversion of Continuing Education Hours Among Participants****Figure 2. Perceived Need for Participation in Continuing Education**

Remarks: The proportion of healthcare workers who achieved the required 48 hours of continuing education over two years was moderate, at 64.2%. Figure 3.2 highlights a high perceived need for such training, with 80.3% of respondents rating it as "necessary." This discrepancy between actual participation and expressed need highlights the importance of enhancing access to training opportunities through more flexible scheduling, diverse formats, and increased institutional support.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Current Status of Healthcare Workers' Participation in Continuing Education at the Agricultural General Hospital.

The findings indicate that the participation rate in continuing education among healthcare workers at the Agricultural General Hospital remained consistently high in both 2023 and 2024. Over 86% of participants attended professional training sessions, and more than 85% participated in conferences, workshops, or seminars, demonstrating a strong commitment to professional development and compliance with Circular No. 22/2013/TT-BYT on continuing medical education. Compared to the study by Trần Đức Trọng at Vinh General Hospital, where 98.2% of healthcare staff had participated in CME but the majority accumulated fewer than 12 hours per year, it is evident that although provincial-level training is common, the overall accumulated hours remain

insufficient [2].

At the Agricultural General Hospital, engagement in advanced academic activities such as research, teaching, and curriculum development remains low, with participation rates below 15%. This reflects a predominant focus on clinical training, while academic and scholarly pursuits are yet to be fully integrated into professional development efforts. These findings align with those of Nguyễn Ngọc Huấn in Sóc Sơn District Health Center, where only 25.2% of staff showed interest in family medicine and just 4.9% expressed a desire for research training [4].

Importantly, physicians were more active than nurses in academic activities such as research and teaching, reflecting inherent differences in professional roles and career trajectories. This trend is consistent with the study by Chử Văn Thắng at Thanh Nhàn Hospital, which found that nurses primarily focused on hands-on clinical skills rather than scholarly engagement [5].

Regarding total training hours, only 64.2% of staff at the Agricultural General Hospital met the minimum requirement of 48 hours of CME over a two-year period, a level considered moderate. While most staff participated in training activities, they did not accumulate sufficient hours to meet official standards. This figure is higher than the 38.5% reported by Trần Đức Trọng in Vinh [2], but lower than the group of physicians in Sóc Sơn (over 70%) and similar to the nurse group (around 60%) in the same study [4]. In contrast, research by Mai Hàn Giang in Hà Giang found that only 55% of physicians met the required hours, mainly due to logistical difficulties and lack of flexible training options [6].

In summary, the rate of participation and the demand for continuing education among staff at the Agricultural General Hospital are high. However, a gap remains between actual participation and the required standards in terms of training hours. This underscores the need for improved monitoring, the development of flexible learning programs that combine online and in-person formats, and the establishment of a clear policy for CME recognition to encourage active participation.

4.2. Training Needs of Healthcare Workers at the Agricultural General Hospital

The study revealed a notably high demand for continuing education among healthcare workers, particularly for practical training formats, including professional workshops (90.9%) and academic conferences (92.2%). These figures reflect the proactive attitude of staff toward knowledge acquisition and professional development in response to the increasing demands of clinical practice.

Physicians expressed a consistently higher level of demand than nurses across all types of training, particularly in scientific research (50.6% vs. 32.7%) and in curriculum development and teaching (16.5% vs. 11.3%). This aligns with physicians' academic responsibilities, their orientation toward specialization, and their clinical training roles. These findings are supported by Trần Đức Trọng's study in Vinh, which found that physicians had the highest demand for specialized training (mean score over 4.2). In contrast, nurses prioritized hands-on technical skills [2].

Similarly, the study by Nguyễn Ngọc Huấn in Sóc Sơn revealed that over 74% of healthcare workers had an ongoing desire for learning, with the most interest focused on family medicine and clinical techniques. However, as observed in this study, activities such as teaching and curriculum development received relatively low interest (approximately 12.5%), suggesting that these are underexplored areas with potential for future growth [4].

It is also noteworthy that, despite strong demand, only 64.2% of staff met the requirement of 48 hours of training over two years, clearly highlighting the gap between training needs and actual engagement. This finding underscores the pressing need for more adaptable and supportive training programs that consider working conditions, while also providing clear incentives and recognition mechanisms for both physicians and nurses.

In conclusion, the training needs of healthcare workers at the Agricultural General Hospital are both substantial and clearly defined. This provides a solid foundation for the institution to develop sustainable human resource development strategies. However, effectively addressing these needs requires a structured approach to training organization, with tailored content for different professional groups, and a balanced focus on both practical competencies and academic development.

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the rate of participation in continuing education among healthcare workers at the Agricultural General Hospital over the past two years has been high (exceeding 85%), reflecting a positive awareness of the need for ongoing professional development. However, only 64.2% of participants fulfilled the required number of training hours, indicating a persistent gap between training needs and actual engagement. Physicians tended to be more involved in academic activities, such as research and teaching, than nurses. The demand for training was

substantial, particularly for hands-on workshops and professional conferences. To enhance the effectiveness of continuing education, it is essential to diversify training formats, offer flexible scheduling, and implement targeted support policies tailored to specific professional groups.

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