

CLINICAL INCIDENT REPORTING IN UZBEKISTAN

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Uzbekistan's healthcare sector has undergone significant changes, yet several clinical incidents have raised concerns about patient safety, medical malpractice, and pharmaceutical regulation. This article examines major cases, including the Shahrissabz medical incident, the 'Dok-1 Maks' cough syrup tragedy, and negligence in maternity hospitals, highlighting systemic weaknesses. Additionally, it explores the impact of COVID-19 on healthcare infrastructure and the challenges posed by corruption and mismanagement. The government's responses—ranging from stricter regulations to increased investment—are analyzed alongside expert opinions and statistical data. While reforms are underway, restoring public trust and ensuring sustainable improvements remain critical for the future of Uzbekistan's healthcare system.

INTRODUCTION. Uzbekistan's healthcare sector has undergone significant changes in recent years. However, several clinical incidents have raised serious concerns about patient safety, medical malpractice, and pharmaceutical regulation. From tragic deaths due to faulty medications to inadequate emergency responses in hospitals, these cases highlight the urgent need for stronger oversight. This article examines major clinical incidents, the government's response, expert opinions, and the future prospects of Uzbekistan's healthcare system.

Shahrissabz Medical Incident

On November 6, 2024, a private clinic in Shahrissabz became the center of controversy when a young woman died after receiving an injection for angina. The case sparked outrage as investigations revealed that the clinic lacked proper licensing and the doctor involved had

no valid medical certification. Authorities temporarily shut down the facility, but the incident exposed the larger issue of unregulated private healthcare in Uzbekistan.

The 'Dok-1 Maks' Cough Syrup Tragedy

In December 2022, the deaths of 18 children in Samarkand due to the consumption of toxic cough syrup shook the nation. The syrup, imported from India, contained dangerous levels of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol. This tragedy led to a temporary suspension of Indian pharmaceutical imports and increased scrutiny of drug quality control processes. Despite these actions, concerns remain over the effectiveness of pharmaceutical regulations in the country.

Tashkent Maternity Hospital Negligence

Reports of medical malpractice in maternity hospitals have also emerged. In 2023, multiple maternal deaths were linked to negligence in a Tashkent maternity hospital. Poor sanitation, outdated equipment, and lack of qualified medical personnel were cited as major causes. Following public pressure, the government promised funding for hospital upgrades and new training programs for medical staff.

COVID-19 and Healthcare Challenges in Uzbekistan

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed weaknesses in Uzbekistan's healthcare system. During the peak of infections, hospitals were overwhelmed, and a lack of oxygen supplies led to preventable deaths. Many rural areas suffered due to poor infrastructure and a shortage of medical professionals. The government responded by increasing investments in healthcare, building new hospitals, and accelerating vaccination efforts, but the crisis highlighted the need for long-term reforms.

Corruption and Mismanagement in Healthcare

One of the biggest challenges in Uzbekistan's healthcare system is corruption. Cases of bribery among medical staff, the sale of fake medical certificates, and fraudulent hospital expenditures have been reported. In recent years, several hospital administrators have been arrested for embezzling funds meant for medical supplies. Without serious anti-corruption measures, public trust in the healthcare system remains low.

Government and Policy Reactions

The Uzbek government has introduced various measures to address these issues, including:

- Stricter inspections of private clinics and pharmaceutical companies.
- The introduction of electronic medical records to prevent fraudulent practices.

- Collaboration with WHO and international organizations to improve healthcare standards.

- Increasing salaries for doctors and nurses to reduce corruption and improve service quality.

Expert Opinions and Statistical Data

Healthcare analysts argue that Uzbekistan needs to significantly improve its healthcare funding. According to official statistics, the country spends only 6.5% of its GDP on healthcare, which is lower than many neighboring countries. Experts recommend increasing this budget to at least 10% to modernize hospitals and train more medical staff.

Public Trust and Future Prospects

Restoring public trust remains a challenge. A recent survey showed that 60% of citizens prefer to seek medical treatment abroad due to concerns over the quality of local healthcare. However, with increased investment in medical education, technological advancements, and stronger legal oversight, Uzbekistan has the potential to build a more reliable and efficient healthcare system in the coming years.

Conclusion. Uzbekistan's healthcare sector has faced numerous challenges, including clinical malpractice, pharmaceutical safety issues, and corruption. While the government has taken steps to address these problems, significant work remains to be done. The future of healthcare in Uzbekistan will depend on continued reforms, stricter enforcement of regulations, and improved access to high-quality medical care for all citizens.

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