Personal Statement

Dear Members of the Admissions Committee in the Department of Health Policy and Management at the University of Massachusetts Amherst

My name is Farah Ajayneh, and I was born in Jordan. I am currently a research and teaching assistant at the University of Science and Technology. I am eager to further my education and advance my career in my field. **I have been awarded a full scholarship to complete my study in the USA. So, I am financially supported by the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST).**

"We need a cost-effective, high-quality health care system, guaranteeing health care to all of our people as a right." This quote by Hillary Clinton has inspired me since I read about her in an article during secondary school. This made my sheer passion and aspirations for the future focus on the healthcare sector, aiming to help people and make a significant contribution to the health of citizens in my community through effective management, improving efficiency, providing high-quality services at a reasonable cost, and enhancing healthcare services in terms of access to health care regardless of disparities.

In general, when we talk about the healthcare sector, we are talking about a sector that deals with human beings. Thus, it is considered one of the most important sectors globally, given that health and well-being play a vital role in people's lives. This led me to opt for the Bachelor of Health Administration and Policies at Jordan University of Science and Technology and then pursue my Master's degree in Healthcare Management and Quality. I spent about six years of study at the Medicine College; these were among the best years of my life as I learned a lot of concepts related to organizational theory, health economics, health policies, and healthcare quality. Also, during my Master's studies, I worked for two years as a research and teaching assistant in the health administration and policies department. This was my first job, so it was a very interesting and useful experience.

I have always been interested in Health Policy and Management. I aspire to study a Ph.D. in this field at the University of Massachusetts Amherst because it is amongst the most highly rated postgraduate programs in the United States. It is renowned for its high-quality education and innovative teaching methods. I am confident that the program will provide me with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed and challenge me academically and professionally.

In addition to the academic opportunities that the University of Massachusetts Amherst offers, I am also attracted to the cultural diversity and friendly natives of the United States. Studying in a new country will expand my knowledge and perspective and allow me to make valuable connections and friendships with people worldwide.

During my undergraduate studies, **I was the first among undergraduate students in the healthcare management and policy department**, so I got a full scholarship from the university to complete a master's degree. As a master's student, I earned a high rank in all

studied courses. In my Master's thesis, I have developed an interest in providing high-quality and safe health care for patients without any errors and mistakes, particularly in Cognitive Medical Errors titled: "Cognitive Medical Errors and Exploring Factors Contributing to Medical Errors in Jordanian Hospitals." My thesis investigates the relationship between cognitive medical errors and factors contributing to the occurrence (organizational characteristics, communication, teamwork, workload, and lack of training and continuing education) in Jordanian hospitals.

I am interested in **Health Policy, Quality, Health care Equity and Access to Care, Health economics, and Health insurance**. I believe that a postgraduate program of good quality will help me achieve my dream and my passion to become an expert in these domains and then deliver my research experience, ideas, and knowledge in the education field.

I will contribute to the student community at the University of Massachusetts Amherst in various ways: first, working hard so that your respective university would be proud that I was part of its alumni, which will attract more students. Secondly, I am willing to participate actively in the intellectual environment, sharing responsibility for community development as an independent learner. Finally, I will become an active learning community member, participating in and attending the courses.

After completing my Doctoral degree, I will be able to help reinforce many of the concepts in healthcare and life science that pertain to the field, an understanding of which will help me better gauge the types of projects that will result in the best outcome for the patient.

Thank you very much for considering my application. I hope that my qualifications and background are suitable, and I look forward to your positive response, granting me the opportunity to study at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Yours sincerely,

Farah Ajayneh

Research Statement

My research has focused on the quality of healthcare services and patient safety, factors contributing to medical errors, and the financial burden on healthcare systems. Specifically, my master's activities focused on the following areas: (1) Exploring factors that affect the occurrence of cognitive medical errors, (2) the impact of factors such as (lack of training and continuing education, policies and procedures, and communication) on human performance and patient safety. This experience made me realize the importance of studying factors that affect healthcare providers' performance and behavior because their performance can influence quality healthcare services, patient safety, and customer satisfaction. At the same time, I have gained a deep understanding of the challenges faced by healthcare systems, as well as optimizing human performance to deliver quality healthcare services.

For future research, I plan to build on my research and practice experience and expand into (1) the role of health policies and Procedures in enhancing human performance, (2) finding solutions to reduce the incidence of morbidity and mortality and implementing innovations to improve patient safety. My ultimate goal is to fill the gap between theory and practice by developing actionable recommendations that can be implemented in healthcare settings to improve patient outcomes and increase people's confidence in their health system and their economic benefit and care processes. Also, enhance the efficiency of healthcare systems and contribute to developing evidence-based solutions that can improve the quality of healthcare services.

Research Contributions

My thesis project for my MSc, "Cognitive Medical Errors and Exploring Factors Contributing to Medical Errors in Jordanian Hospitals," is focused on examining the association between medical errors and organizational characteristics (culture and policies and procedures), communication and teamwork, workload, and lack of training and continuing education, and its impact on the quality of services provided and patient safety. This led me to recognize these factors' critical role in human performance and the quality of healthcare services.

Through my research, I have identified the critical role that policies and procedures play in making decisions about the care of patients, providing standardized practices, and understanding roles and responsibilities within the organization. Also, the type of culture

prevailing in the organization impacts the behaviors of healthcare professionals and the organization's success. Moreover, there is great importance to what the Institution of Medicine (IOM) has indicated that workflow interruptions among healthcare providers during the provision of services are linked to the occurrence of medical errors that affect patient safety; this led me to examine the relationship between communication and teamwork and medical errors and its impact on patient outcomes.

My research explores the relationship between the lack of training and continuing education and medical errors and their impact on patient outcomes. I am particularly interested in investigating how training, learning, developing new skills, and keeping up to date with medical knowledge can incentivize healthcare providers to provide high-quality care that improves patient outcomes and overall hospital performance. The importance of this research cannot be overstated, particularly for decision-makers (healthcare providers) within organizations. Therefore, I am particularly interested in investigating how heavy workloads and long working hours can harm healthcare providers' decisions, which lead to negative patient outcomes.

Our results highlight the importance of enhancing training and continuous education for healthcare providers, knowledge-based training and development, improving communication and teamwork, and reducing workload to provide high-quality health services. The significance of this research is multiple: (1) it underscores the importance of training and continuing education as key drivers of innovation and development within healthcare organizations and specifically for healthcare providers ; (2) it highlights the need for evidence-based policies and procedures that help to make decisions that can have a profound impact on patient outcomes, organizational efficiency, and healthcare delivery ; (3) it emphasizes the importance of maintaining communication and teamwork between healthcare providers and its impact on the provision of healthcare services ; (4) it focuses on reducing workload in healthcare organizations as one of the influencers on human performance and patient outcomes. *This research was funded by the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) and collaborated with Professor Mohammad Alyahya and Professor Heba Hijazi.*

I recently completed two papers collaborating with Jordan University of Science and Technology professors. My research paper ***"The Association Between Cognitive Medical***

Errors and Their Contributing Organizational and Individual Factors" was published in Risk Management and Healthcare Policy Journal. My research *paper, "The Development and Validation Instrument for the Cognitive Medical Errors: Structural Equation Modelling Approach,"* was published in the Quality and Quantity Journal.

Future Plan

I plan to expand on my current work in several directions. I will use my research background to develop and expand programs for scientific research to improve efficiency and effectiveness in healthcare organizations and the quality of the care provided. By conducting further research on this topic, I hope to contribute to the development of evidence-based policies and strategies that can be used by decision-makers in the healthcare sector to improve human performance. Also, contribute to the developments that enhance the evidenced-based knowledge of the health providers along with continuous training to improve the quality of care and patient outcomes.

Looking toward the future, I aim to improve healthcare systems to achieve equal access to healthcare services and sustain outstanding healthcare services in a rapidly changing industry. Also, my education in health policy and management will enable me to successfully manage the integration of new healthcare delivery systems, technological innovations, and restructuring of work and budgets to improve patient outcomes. In particular, I plan to investigate how healthcare organizations can utilize economic principles to improve the quality of care while maximizing efficiency and reducing costs by integrating health economics into hospital management. Additionally, we can develop more effective strategies for promoting equity, solidarity, effectiveness/quality, affordability, participation, and sustainability in the healthcare industry.

Conclusion

I envision leading an interdisciplinary research program in health economics, quality, and patient safety in collaboration with researchers from several backgrounds, including clinical and management. As a researcher in this field, I look forward to collaborating with the faculty in the Department of Health Management and Policy at JUST and the faculty at Massachusetts University. I will target funding agencies like JUST and the Ministry of Health in Jordan to sustain my research programs. Moreover, I will actively seek funding opportunities that

support research to continue conducting high-quality research that can improve healthcare practices, quality of healthcare, patient outcomes, and overall population health.