Is It Easy to Recruit Young Doctors for Military Service?

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Abstract: Health support for military personnel is a key stone for successful executing combat capacities of military personnel in time of military tasks realization. Recruitment system should provide military units with medical personnel that realize medical support and health care for military personnel and allows achieve tactical targets in peace time operations or in tactical military missions` tasks. The target of our study is to assess information level of medical students about military service that allow find gaps and identify problematic area in medical personnel recruiting process of National Armed Forces of Latvia. We have provided Questionnaire into medical students` group (N = 87) in Riga Stradins University in Latvia. Questionnaire allows to determine respondents` interests` levels about military career, their information level about military education and recruitment procedures. Questionnaire results indicated problems of recruitment system for medical personnel that are lack of information for target auditory (medical students) about recruitment procedure for military (medical) service. Recruitment of medical personnel is a challenge for recruitment system of armed forces in different countries that connect to compatible payment system and supporting professional medical a qualification system. Information about recruitment to the military medical service in National Armed Forces of Latvia should reinforce, focuses to the target auditory – medical students. Recruitment centre specialists spread activities in social media. Questionnaire data revealed that there is a potential group of young medical specialist who are interested in military medical service and are ready to connect professional medical career to National Armed Forces of Latvia.

Keywords: recruitment system of medical personnel, medical support, medical students, career.

Introduction

Medical module is a compulsory part of military unit that provide medical support of unit (Roy, Palma, Rich, 2006). Health support for military personnel is a key stone for successful executing of combat capacities of military personnel and realizing military tasks (Chen, 2007; Dick, 2007; Fazekas, 2010). Recruitment system should provide military units with medical personnel that realize medical support and health care for military personnel and allows fulfilling military tasks in peacetime or tactical operations tasks during missions (Baker, Ryals, 1999; Holmes et al., 2009; Kanev, Kostadinov, 2009; Rozenbaums, 2017; Trams, 2018). Military units have specific strategic, operational, tactical tasks that are declared in state defence program. Military personnel as well military medical personnel participate in military training together with representatives from other NATO states. Medical support is essential component for military unit during tactical operations. Recruitment of medical personnel is a serious challenge for military system in different countries (Tonev et al., 2007; McAlister, 2015; Gerboud, 2010; Lejeune, 2010; Lengvarsky, 2010; Alexander, 2010). There are various and numerous impact factors to recruitment of medical personnel in NATO countries: social, psychological, economic, financial stimuli, career and family support; career planning and individual professional development, engagement requirement. These factors have influence on recruitment of young medical doctors for military service (Eglite, 2018; Richter, Hanhart, 2012; Miseta, Rendeki, Molnar, 2015). Civil companies as well have interests on engagement medical specialist after graduation from academic medical studies.

The aim of our study is to assess information level and interest of medical students to military service and military career, that allow assess gaps and identify problematic area in recruiting system for medical personnel, stress attention of recruitment system for getting young medical doctors for health care system in National Armed Forces that allows fulfil military tasks and decreasing expenses for health care of military personnel in peace or tactical military tasks time.

Methodology

We have provided Questionnaire about interest concerning military area into students` group (N = 87) in Riga Stradins University in Latvia. We proposed questionnaire for students in aged 20-31 years, 62 female

and 25 males, when they start planning their future medical career, their professional medical residency and medical professional employment. Questionnaire included five thematically modules (28 questions) that could be divided into: information module; military and professional education module; benefits module; specialists' qualification support module; social demographical module. The questions were answered on 5-point scale from 1 (low level) to 5 (high level). Questionnaire allows determine respondents' interest levels, their information levels about military medical career and recruitment procedures.

Results and Discussion

Questionnaire data allow get information about students' attitude and position concerning various aspects of medical military career and recruitment procedures. We found that 53.2 % of respondents have high level of interest (4-5 points from 5 points) to the military (medical) service in National Armed Forces as a military doctor, 36.2 % (3 points from 5 points) of respondents shown middle interest level to the military career in Armed forces, they preferred connect future career with civil medicine area, and 10.6 % (1-2 points from 5 points) of respondents shown low level of interest to military medical career in military service (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Distribution of respondents' answers concerning interest level (in points) concerning military doctor career in National Armed Forces (%).

Where 1 point – low level, 5 points – high level.

Questionnaire results indicated the problem of recruitment system of medical personnel such as a lack of information for target auditory (medical students) about recruitment procedure for military (medical) service. Summary of questionnaire results shown that 38.1 % of respondents had no any information (1 point from 5 points) about recruitment procedure in National Armed Forces, as well 44.7 % of respondents had very limited information amount (2 points from 5 points) from media services about military career. According questionnaire results we found that 17 % of respondents were very well informed about recruitment procedures and shown high interest level (4 points from 5 points) to military (medical) service. Questionnaire results shown that medical students paid attention and concentrated their effort for academic medical studies. They will plan professional medical career in civil life. The information about military service was not topical for students therefore interest about National Armed Forces and recruitment system to military (medical) service is low for largest part of respondents. Recruitment centre specialists should be more active in recruiting medical personnel, work to and with a target auditory (medical students) to find and to get individuals for military medical service. As an average questionnaire results shown, the interest level to information about military service and recruitment procedures is low for male students (1.7 points from 5 points) as well female respondents (1.9 points from 5 points). Students-aged 20-22 years had less informed (1.7 points from 5 points) about military service and recruitment procedures then students (3.3 points from 5 points) aged 29-31 years that connected to generation interests and differences. Recruitment requirements included health capacity check-up that is one of the crucial points in candidates' selection process for military service. Health capacity is essential as for successful military service as well for military career. We put a question "Do respondents have information about medical check-up procedures and health capacity control procedures". Students answers shown that 77.6 % had no information (1-2 points from 5 points) about health capacity control program, which is a main part for recruitment procedure (Figure 2).

Information about health check-up procedure and its requirements is found in military website. But any way recruitment centre specialists should stress attention on health capacity control program during meetings with candidates for military (medical) service as well. Female respondents had higher average

interest level and more information (2.5 points from 5 points) about health checking program than the male students (1.9 points from 5 points). Medical students are engaged in full time studies that are hard and time consuming and are priority of medical students' life. As we noticed the information about military service and recruitments procedure are not essential for students during academic medical studies in university. But from the other side military service need high level medical specialist with corresponding level of health capacity for military position, and health capacity evaluation is conducted according requirement of regulation of Ministry of Defence. Health capacity examination and evaluation procedure for candidates to military service (as well military medical service) were conducted by civil medical specialist in civil medical institution, the final conclusion about health capacity level of candidate to military service given by medical commission of Medical support centre of National Armed Forces, as questionnaire data shown 87.3 % of students have no information (1-2 points from 5 points) about such health capacity assessment system.

Figure 2. Distribution of respondents' answers concerning information level (in points) about health capacity control procedure for recruits in National Armed Forces (%).

Where 1 point – low level, 5 points – high level.

Selection procedures for future military personnel included as well psycho-diagnostic procedures that evaluated candidate ability to work in stress situation. Special psycho-diagnostic tests are conducted by specialist of Psychological service of National Armed Forces that allow select candidates to military service. As questionnaire data shown that 89.3 % of respondents had no exact information (1-2 points from 5 points), but small part of students-respondents (8.5 %) were well informed (4 points from 5 points) about that additional control (psychological tests) procedures. There were no gender differences in respondents' answers about information level of conducting psycho-diagnostic selections and psycho-diagnostic tests for recruits. Average information level of students about additional psycho-diagnostic control procedure was low (1.8 points from 5 points). Students aged 20-22 years had less information level about psycho diagnostic selections then students aged 29-31 years. Psycho diagnostic procedures have important place in section process of military personnel as well medical military personnel. Special military environment and various risks` situations with high stress surrounding, requires personnel who can work in groups and successfully fulfil military tasks. Psychodiagnostics' procedures are effective and qualitative for selection candidates for professional military service.

Specialists of recruitment centre should include psychologists in recruitment command that explain in detail for target auditory (candidate for military / military medical service) information about psycho diagnostic procedures.

Questionnaire results lighten one more important area of information deficit concerning physical preparedness tests requirements and procedures, and 40.4 % students had no any information (1 point from 5 points) about physical fitness check-up tests and their requirement, and 46.8 % of respondents had limited notion (2 points from 5 points) about physical sports tests standards for military system, only 10.6 % of respondents shown good level of understanding (4 points from 5 points) requirements of physical sport tests and procedures. Physical fitness requirement for male and females age groups are different. Future military medical specialist should have knowledges about physical fitness requirement for male and female in different age groups. Medical students during academic studies spent long study`s hours in academic auditoriums and in clinic, they didn't have enough time to take care about their physical fitness level. Therefore, candidates for military medical service could have a problem to pass basic physical fitness tests according recruitment procedures and requirement.

Questionnaire includes data about advertisement activities of Recruitment Centre by using social media resources that are used as information distribution about National Armed Forces. 40.4 % of medical students given positive assessment (4-5 points from 5 points) to information block in media resources, but in the same time more than half of respondents (59.4 %) had negative attitude (1-2 points from 5 points) to the advertisement campaign about military service in media resources. Advertisement campaign should be oriented annual to special periods of year than the essential information about military medical service reach target (medical students) auditory.

Information block in media resources is not effective for recruitment medical personnel for military service. Information platform for recruitment military medical personnel should contain information that is interesting or important for medical personnel (description of daily duties, place of military service/duty, pay, necessary basic military training requirement and recruitment procedure) (Richter, Hanhart, 2012).

Candidate to military medical services should graduate from basic military training course and military study program. Questionnaire data shown, that 97.7 % of respondents have lack of information (1.4 points from 5 points) about basic military training course, and 97.8 % of respondents have not any information (1-2 points from 5 points) about military medical course curriculum. Information deficit about military programs for medics and curriculum of medical specialists' course declined young medical specialists' interest level to military service and career.

As questionnaire data shown that 97.9 % of respondents had no information (1-2 points from 5 points) about the age limits for potential candidates to professional military service, 99.6 % of respondents were not introduced (1-2 points from 5 points) to enrolment rules. Therefore, recruitment specialist should provide with necessary information potential candidates to military service, distribute information booklet with information about military medical studies and professional courses, which improve military knowledge and professional skills. Respondents (91.4 %) had shown very low understanding level (1-2 points from 5 points) and notion about military medical career running in National Armed Forces for medical specialists (doctors).

Questionnaire data shown that more than 4/5 of respondents (83 %) support statement (4-5 points from 5 points) that military service gives new experience in professional medical area that could not be available in civil medicine (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Distribution of respondents' data about getting new experience in professional medical area during the service in National Armed Forces (%).

Where 1 point – low level, 5 points – high level.

Questionnaire included several questions that allow to evaluate respondents' readiness to continue studies in new – military medical area – for getting professional knowledges and skills. As questionnaire data shown 87.2 % of respondents are ready (4-5 points from 5 points) to challenges to get professional knowledges and skills in military medical area (Figure 4).

National Armed Forces of Latvia provided opportunity for students get to basic military training in Student Battalion of Land forces and after graduation from University join to army. Questionnaire data reflect respondents' attitude: 38.5 % of respondents accepted such statement (4 points from 5 points) that basic military training should be realize during medical academic studies in university, 17 % of

respondents taken neutral position (3 points from 5 points), and 44.7 % of respondents were not interested into it at all (1-2 points from 5 points) (Figure 5).

Figure 4. Distribution of respondents' answers about readiness to continue studies for getting new professional medical knowledges (%).

Where 1 point – low level, 5 points – high level.

Figure 5. Distribution of respondents' answers about readiness to participate in basic military training course before Residency in Medicine (%).

Where 1 point – low level, 5 points – high level.

Medical students have high academic load and the leisure time is very limited. Questionnaire data revealed that 38.3 % students shown readiness to support and to participate in basic military training. They were ready to join to Students battalion of Land Forces during academic studies in university (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Distribution of respondents' answers about readiness to participate in military training in Student battalion of Land forces (%).

Where 1 point – low level, 5 points – high level.

Students should be integrated in military service during their academic studies that allow increase in future number of young doctors who shown willingness join to National Armed Forces.

Conclusion

Recruitment of medical personnel is a challenge for recruitment system of National Armed Forces of Latvia. Military service connects to impact of various military surrounding factors that have impact and form a risk for health capacity. Medical support module is essential for each military unit. Recruitment system should

stress attention to getting young medical doctors for Armed forces. Medical academic studies in Latvia are realized in Riga Stradins University and in Latvia University, where the numbers of students of medical program increased from year to year. Young medical doctor after his academic medical studies continues studies in residency. Information about military medical service in National Armed Forces should be reinforced and focused to the target auditory – medical students. There are 17 % potential young medical specialists (doctors) who are interested in military career and military medical service and are shown readiness to participate in peacekeeping operations and connect their future professional medical career to National Armed Forces. As questionnaire data shown that 53.2 % of respondents have high level of interest to the military (medical) service in National Armed Forces as a military doctor, and 83 % students' respondents agree with statement, that military service gives new experience in professional medical area that could not be available in civil medicine. Students get opportunity to get basic military training in Student Battalion of Land Forces academic studies, that allow to continue military medical career in National Armed Forces; 38.3 % students are ready to participate in basic military training. Recruitment centre specialist spread activities in social media due to provide with essential information for medical students during academic studies in university. Recruitment system of young medical specialist should change and use new approach to solving problem how to get medical doctors for Armed Forces.

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