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How Do Healthcare Professionals Perceive Continuous Professional Development? A Cross-Sectional National Study from Jordan

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Abstract

Background: Continuous professional development is essential to enhance the knowledge and competency of healthcare professionals. However, no previous research from Jordan assessed the perception of healthcare professionals about continuous professional development. **Objective:** This research aimed at investigating the perception of healthcare professionals about continuous professional development in Jordan.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in the period between December 2017 till April 2018 in multiple healthcare settings in Jordan. The perception of 2,204 healthcare professionals including physicians, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, and allied healthcare professionals was investigated using a structured self-reported questionnaire. Assessment of perception included the perceived preferences and expected benefits of continuous professional development activities.

Results: The most preferred continuous professional development activity was journal\internet reading activity, while research-based activity was the least preferred. Journal\internet reading activity was significantly preferred activity in private sector (p=0.04). There was a significant difference in all the studied preferred continuous professional development activities between different HCPs (all p<0.05). The most perceived expected benefit of continuous professional development was enhancing knowledge while satisfying learning ambitions was the least. There was a significant difference in the expected benefits among health sectors and this included improving patient outcomes, improving personal skills, and enhancing personal knowledge (all p<0.05). There was also a significant difference in the expected benefits among healthcare professionals and this included improving the satisfaction of patients and their families, improving clinical outcomes of patients, changing current clinical practice, improving personal skills, and enhancing personal knowledge (all p < 0.05).

Conclusions: The perception of continuous professional development is varied between different HCPs and health sectors in Jordan. Future measures to design effective continuous professional development for Jordanian HCPs should consider this variation.

Keywords: Continuous medical education; continuous nursing education; continuing professional development; healthcare professionals; Jordanians; re-license.

INTRODUCTION

The provision of high-quality and safe healthcare services is at the forefront of policy agendas in health and social care. The factors that influence the delivery of highquality and safe care are complex and multidimensional. Healthcare organizations need to ensure that healthcare professionals (HCPs) are competent and accountable for the delivery of high-quality and safe care. If employers need staff who possess the right skills and knowledge to provide high-quality and safe care, then they must create workplace conditions that encourage them to continuous professional take part in development (CPD) activities [1, 2].

Recently, important steps have been taken regulatory revise the (legislations, regulations, and procedures) of the healthcare system and improve the quality of healthcare services in Jordan. One of these important pieces of legislation was the Renewal of Health Personnel Licensing Law No. (46) of 2018, which mandates that all health professionals in the Kingdom, Jordanians and non-Jordanians, are required to renew their licenses every 5 years after meeting the licensing requirements and requirements for development or CPD for each occupation. This suggests that further understanding of the perception of Jordanian HCPs about CPD is needed.

Continuous professional development has been available in Jordan through different activities such as annual conferences and training courses in different health sectors. However, to our knowledge, not all HCPs in Jordan have access to these conferences or training, and there are no structured and well-organized CPD activities that suit all HCPs in Jordan. In this context, the Human Resources for Health in 2030 (HRH2030) Activity in Jordan, in partnership with the High Health

Council (HCC) and the Jordan Medical Council (JMC), conducted a nationwide study on the factors influencing CPD effectiveness and practices in the healthcare sector in Jordan, which led to the development of a CPD roadmap to help align stakeholders under a shared vision: a fully functional CPD system by the year 2023 [3]. Evidence-based methods to restore, develop, maintain, and continuously improve core competencies of HCPs are considered a strategic necessity by policymakers and national stakeholders to achieve the expected national goals of Jordan Vision 2025 and its developmental program 2016-2019, the governmental action plan, and the national health strategy (2016–2020) in Jordan [4, 5].

Previous research on CPD among HCPs in Jordan is limited. Although one study offers useful data concerning the experiences of CPD among nurses in private hospitals [6], a gap remains regarding the perceptions of other HCPs including other health care settings about CPD. Therefore, this national study aimed to fill this gap by assessing the perceptions of HCPs about CPD in different health sectors in Jordan. This study was part of a larger project that was initiated and funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID, 2017).

MATERIALS AND METHODS Study design and settings

This study was a cross-sectional study that was conducted in the period between December 2017 till April 2018. The study was conducted in multiple health care settings in Jordan including the Ministry of Health (MOH), Royal Medical Services (RMS), educational hospitals (Jordan University Hospital [JUH] and King Abdullah II University Hospital [KAUH]), hospitals in the private sector, the United

Nations for Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). These research settings present three governorates including Irbid, Amman, and Al-Karak that cover the geographic distribution of healthcare facilities in the north, central, and south of Jordan, respectively. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethical Committee Boards of the research settings.

Sample size and participants

A large and convenient sample size of 2,204 HCPs was targeted in relation to the aim of this study. The study sample was stratified and clustered representing healthcare professions including licensed physicians, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, and allied HCPs. Participants were stratified based on their profession and health care provider sector. Based on statistics of the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Jordan for the number of currently practicing HCPs employed in each of the healthcare sectors (2016), participants from all healthcare provider sectors based on their business share proportion were included.

Data collection

The data were collected using a structured self-reported questionnaire that was adapted previous studies [7-10]. questionnaire included self-reporting of multiple demographic data such as gender (male or female), marital status (single, married, or divorced/widowed), education (diploma, bachelor (BA), master, or PhD), and country of the perceived education (Jordan, or countries from Arabic region, eastern Europe, western Europe, USA, or other countries). The questionnaire also assessed the main outcome of this study, which is the perception of Jordanian HCPs about CPD, and it presented two main attributes of CPD and included: (i) the perceived preference of HCPs about CPD

activities such as journal\internet reading activity, small group interactive setting, lectures in a large group setting, interactive computer programs, international conferences. national conferences. research-based activities. The perceived preference of each CPD activity was assessed using a five-point Likert item (1=very low to 5=very high) in which participants reported their willingness to participate in CPD activities; (ii) the expected benefits of CPD such as satisfying learning ambition, improving relationships with colleagues, improving the satisfaction of patients and their families, changing attitudes, improving patients' clinical outcomes, changing current clinical practice, improving personal skills, and enhancing personal knowledge. Each expected benefit was also assessed using a five-point Likert item (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) in which participants reported their agreement about each expected benefit of CPD.

Procedure

The study was advertised in research settings to facilitate the process of data collection. Eligible participants signed a consent form after reading an information sheet that briefly described the project, including contact information of the research team. Participants were then requested to fill in the study questionnaire and they were instructed to ask for clarification if needed. Privacy and confidentiality of data were strictly maintained throughout all stages of the research. The anonymity of participants was assured by the removal of personal details and the use of identifier codes. Participants were assured that results would be reported in aggregates and data would be discarded appropriately once data analysis was complete.

Statistical analysis

R statistical computing software (R Core Team, 2019) was used for the analysis of the data. Chi-squared test was used to test differences in proportions between categorical variables, while an independent sample *t*-test and one-way ANOVA were used to test differences in means or variations between continuous variables. A *p*-value of <0.05 was the cut-off point of statistical significance.

RESULTS

This study included a total of 2,204 participants. Of those, 1,115 (51%) were males, 1,072 (49%) were females, and 17 (0.8%) did

not report their gender. The mean age of study participants was 32.9 years (standard deviation (SD) 9.3 years) and of those, 572 (30%) were from MOH, 1108 (50.3%) from the private sector, 201 (9.1%) were from teaching hospitals, 323 (14.7%) from the RMS. Table 1 presents the sociodemographic characteristics of the study participants by health sector. Furthermore, of the study participants, 457 (20.7%) were physicians, 400 (18.1%) dentists, 462 (21%) nurses, and 452 (20.5%) allied HCPs. Table 2 presents the sociodemographic characteristics of the study participants by profession.

Table 1: Participants' socio-demographic characteristics by health sector (n=2204).

	•	Health sector						
Characteristic		MOH (n=572)	Private sector (n=1108)	Teaching hospitals (n=201)	RMS (n=323)	Total (n=2204)		
Gender	Male	301 (27%)	584 (52.4%)	114 (10.2%)	116 (10.4%)	1115 (51%)		
	Female	265 (24.7%)	522 (48.7%)	86 (8%)	199 (18.6%)	1072 (49%)		
Marital status	Single	143 (17.3%)	535 (64.6%)	56 (6.8%)	94 (11.4%)	828 (38.2%)		
	Married	411 (31.4%)	540 (41.3%)	142 (10.8%)	216 (16.5%)	1309 (60.4%)		
	Divorced/widowed	7 (21.9%)	16 (50%)	2 (6.2%)	7 (21.9%)	32 (1.5%)		
Education	Diploma	143 (41.7%)	123 (35.9%)	22 (6.4%)	55 (16%)	343 (15.7%)		
	BA	334 (22.6%)	814 (55.1%)	111 (7.5%)	217 (14.7%)	1476 (67.5%)		
	Master	52 (20.4%)	124 (48.6%)	54 (21.2%)	25 (9.8%)	255 (11.7%)		
	PhD	39 (34.5%)	40 (35.4%)	14 (12.4%)	20 (17.7%)	113 (5.2%)		
Country of	Jordan	429	845 (48.4%)	178 (10.2%)	293	1745		
graduation		(24.6%)			(16.8%)	(79.4%)		
	Arab country	42 (19.7%)	146 (68.5%)	12 (5.6%)	13 (6.1%)	213 (9.7%)		
	Eastern Europe	88 (56.1%)	57 (36.3%)	4 (2.5%)	8 (5.1%)	157 (7.1%)		
	Western Europe	5 (11.1%)	34 (75.6%)	3 (6.7%)	3 (6.7%)	45 (2%)		
	USA	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	5 (0.2%)		
	Other	4 (12.5%)	22 (68.8%)	2 (6.2%)	4 (12.5%)	32 (1.5%)		

Table 2: Participants' socio-demographics characteristics by profession (n=2204).

Tuble 2	I ul ticipulità 30	Profession (n=2204).					
Factor	Category	Physician (n=457)	Dentist (n=400)	Pharmacist (n=433)	Nurse (n=462)	Allied HCP (n=452)	Total (n=2204)
Gender	Male	375	210	193	185	152	1115
		(33.6%)	(18.8%)	(17.3%)	(16.6%)	(13.6%)	(51%)
	Female	79 (7.4%)	184	240	273	296	1072
			(17.2%)	(22.4%)	(25.5%)	(27.6%)	(49%)
Marital	Single	187	134	232 (28%)	135	140	828
status		(22.6%)	(16.2%)		(16.3%)	(16.9%)	(38.2%)
	Married	254	251	190	316	298	1309
		(19.4%)	(19.2%)	(14.5%)	(24.1%)	(22.8%)	(60.4%)
	Divorced/widowed	8 (25%)	5 (15.6%)	6 (18.8%)	6	7	32 (1.5%)
					(18.8%)	(21.9%)	
Education	Diploma	1 (0.3%)	11 (3.2%)	54 (15.7%)	111	166	343
					(32.4%)	(48.4%)	(15.7%)
	BA	296	263	344	320	253	1476
		(20.1%)	(17.8%)	(23.3%)	(21.7%)	(17.1%)	(67.5%)
	Master	68	104	30 (11.8%)	22	31	255
		(26.7%)	(40.8%)		(8.6%)	(12.2%)	(11.7%)
	PhD	85	22	3 (2.7%)	1 (0.9%)	2 (1.8%)	113
		(75.2%)	(19.5%)				(5.2%)
Country of	Jordan	213	240	404	450	438	1745
graduation		(12.2%)	(13.8%)	(23.2%)	(25.8%)	(25.1%)	(79.4%)
	Arab country	96	87	15 (7%)	10	5 (2.3%)	213
		(45.1%)	(40.8%)		(4.7%)		(9.7%)
	Eastern Europe	110	38	5 (3.2%)	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.9%)	157
		(70.1%)	(24.2%)				(7.1%)
	Western Europe	15	20	7 (15.6%)	0 (0%)	3 (6.7%)	45 (2%)
		(33.3%)	(44.4%)				
	USA	3 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	5 (0.2%)
	Other	17	13	2 (6.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	32 (1.5%)
		(53.1%)	(40.6%)				, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,

The reported perceived preference of CPD activities by study participants demonstrated that journal or internet reading activity was the most preferred CPD activity with a mean preference score of 3.87 /5, while research-based activity was the least preferred with a mean preference score of 3.47/5 (Figure 1). There was no significant difference in the

perceived preference of CPD activities between health sectors except the activity of journal or internet reading activity which was significantly preferred in the private sector (mean= 3.92/5, p=0.04) (Table 3). However, there was a significant difference in the perceived preference of all the studied CPD activities between HCPs (Table 4).

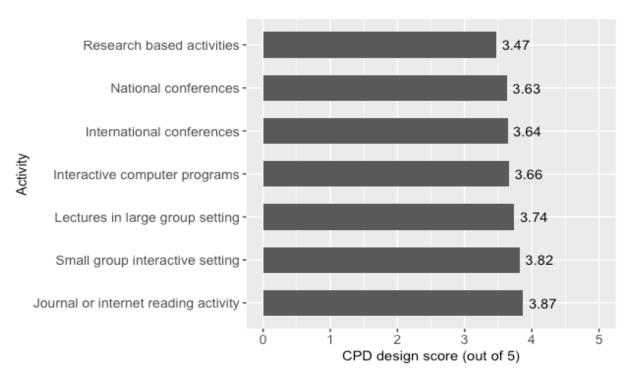


Figure 1: The reported perceived preference of CPD activities among HCPs in Jordan.

Table 3: The perceived preference of CPD activities by health sector

	Health sector				
Item	МОН	Private sector	Teaching hospitals	RMS	<i>p</i> -value
Lectures in large group setting	3.78	3.69	3.8	3.8	0.11
Small group interactive setting	3.91	3.8	3.8	3.74	0.06
Interactive computer programs	3.72	3.63	3.73	3.61	0.18
Journal or Internet reading activity	3.78	3.92	3.86	3.84	0.04
National conferences	3.71	3.58	3.56	3.67	0.08
International conferences	3.69	3.63	3.72	3.54	0.26
Research-based activities	3.51	3.42	3.52	3.52	0.38

Table 4: The perceived preference of CPD activities by profession.

	Profession					
Item	Physician	Dentist	Pharmacist	Nurse	Allied HCP	<i>p</i> -value
Lectures in large group setting	3.81	3.75	3.69	3.8	3.64	0.042
Small group interactive setting	3.97	3.93	3.72	3.78	3.7	< 0.01
Interactive computer programs	3.8	3.5	3.68	3.63	3.66	< 0.01
Journal or Internet reading activity	4.02	3.99	3.91	3.69	3.74	<0.01
National conferences	3.87	3.87	3.43	3.45	3.53	< 0.01
International conferences	4.08	3.81	3.51	3.43	3.37	< 0.01
Research-based activities	3.73	3.43	3.44	3.33	3.39	< 0.01

The reported perceived expected benefits of CPD activities (e.g. percentage of participants who answered strongly agree\agree that CPD activity is beneficial) demonstrated that enhancing knowledge was the most expected benefit (87.2%) while improving relationships with colleagues (72.1%), and satisfying learning ambitions (71.1%) were the lowest expected benefits. There was a significant difference in the perceived expected benefits of CPD activities between health sectors and this included

improving patients' outcomes, improving personal skills, and enhancing personal knowledge (all p<0.05) (Figure 2). There was also a significant difference in the perceived expected benefits of CPD activities between HCPs and this included improving the satisfaction of patients and their families, improving the clinical outcomes of patients, changing the current clinical practice, improving personal skills, and enhancing personal knowledge (all p<0.05) (Figure 3).

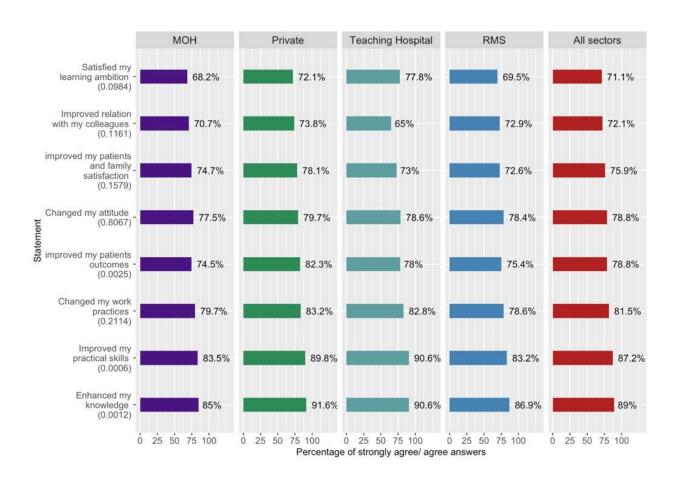


Figure 2: The differences in the reported perceived expected benefits of CPD among health sectors in Jordan.

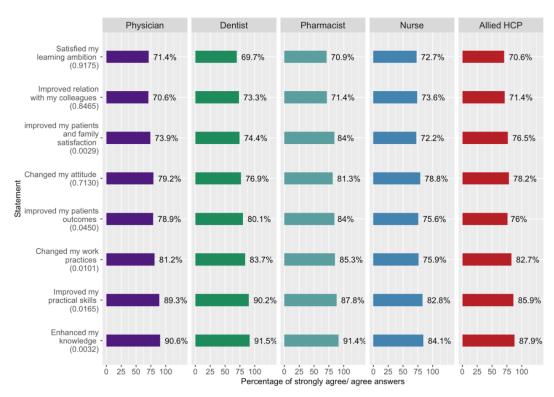


Figure 3: The differences in the reported perceived expected benefits of CPD among HCPs in Jordan.

DISCUSSION

We surveyed a large sample of HCPs in Jordan from different health professions and health care sectors to explore their perception of CPD. We found a variation in their perceptions including preferences and expected benefits of CPD, and this suggests the importance of consideration of such variation in design of future CPD interventions for HCPs in Jordan.

Our results demonstrated journal or internet reading activity was the most preferred CPD activity, while research-based activities were the least preferred overall among HCPs. This is almost in line with a previous study that found that e-learning was the preferred CPD method among nurses in the UK [11]. However, a study from Scotland found that learning from peers was the most preferred CPD activity among clinicians [12]. We also found that physicians, in

particular, consider attending international conferences as a major preferred resource for their CPD. This is similar to a study by Schostak et al. [13], which revealed that the highest scores for positive CPD experiences were conference attendance, local events, and reading journals. Likewise, a study from India found that attending symposiums was the preferred CPD method among dentists [14]. Overall, online learning activities and conferences seem to be a commonly preferred CPD activity and therefore, professional bodies and policymakers in Jordan need to think now about these activities as an attractive model to promote CPD among HCPs.

HCPs in Jordan also reported that enhancing knowledge and developing practical skills were the most expected benefits of CPD. Similar results were reported in a study conducted by Schostak et al. [13] from the United Kingdom, which showed that the effectiveness of CPD relates to the impact on knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, behaviours, and changes in workplace practice. In the latter study, respondents agreed that CPD is essential to effective practice and to an individual's development within the profession, whether or not those results are in career progression. It was also linked to "personal learning needs" that would "result in learning outcomes which are mostly translated into practice", and it was frequently associated with appraisals, through the perspective of "gap filling" in skills, attitudes/behaviours, or knowledge [13]. A study from the US also reported that pharmacists believe that they can develop their knowledge and skills when adopting the CPD approach in their life-long professional development [15]. Another study by Davis et al. [16] found that CPD provides an opportunity for HCPs to practice skills that can lead to a change in professional practice and, on occasion, healthcare outcomes. Similarly, a study from Australia reported that nurses found CPD is an opportunity to sustain competence and introduce new skills as required for contemporary practice needs [17]. Overall, the intention of HCPs behind being involved in CPD is mainly for the aim of enhancing knowledge and competency. These expected benefits by HCPs can be a guide for future CPD programs in Jordan and globally in which the aim and content of such programs need to focus on enhancing knowledge and competency of HCPs.

Limitations

Although this study has revealed important findings regarding the perceptions of Jordanian HCPs about CPD through the use of a large and representative sample, there were some limitations. Firstly, the study

utilized a cross-sectional design, which only captured data at a single point in time. This limited the ability to establish causality or assess changes in perceptions over time. A longitudinal design would provide more robust insights into the trends and changes in perceptions of CPD among healthcare professionals. Secondly, the data collected relied on self-reported responses from the healthcare professionals. This introduced the possibility of response bias, as participants may provide answers which are perceived as socially desirable or may not accurately reflect actual perceptions and preferences. Thirdly, there was no formal validity and reliability testing of the questionnaire used which could be valuable in future research.

However, the adaptation of the questionnaire included a face validity assessment of the used Likert items by the study co-authors.

Lessons to practice

- The significant variation in the preferred activities and the expected benefits of CPD among HCPs in Jordan need to be considered when developing future CPD.
- Future CPD programs in Jordan may consider online learning and conferences as an expected preferred CPD activity by Jordanian HCPs.
- Future CPD programs must enhance the knowledge and competency of HCPs in Jordan as they expected such benefits.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethical Committee Boards from Jordan University of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Health (MOH), Royal Medical Services (RMS), and targeted private hospitals. Date: 11/12/2017, number: 23/111/2017.

Consent

Consent forms were obtained from all participants.

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Authors contributions

Concept design: NY, HA, RA, MG; definition of intellectual content, NY, HA, RA, MG; literature search: NY, AA, OQ; acquisition of data: OQ; analysis and interpretation of data: NY, AA. HA. All authors participated in drafting and revising the manuscript and approved its current version. NY is the guarantor of the integrity of the whole work

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كيف يرى العاملون في مجال الرعاية الصحية التطوير المهني المستمر؟ دراسة وطنية مقطعية من الأردن

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الملخص

الخلفية والاهداف: يعد التطوير المهني المستمر أمرًا ضروريًا لتعزيز المعرفة والكفاءة لدى المتخصصين في الرعاية الصحية، ولكن لا يوجد أبحاث سابقة من الأردن قامت بتقييم تصور المتخصصين في الرعاية الصحية حول التطوير المهني المستمر. و يهدف هذا البحث إلى التحقيق في تصورات المهنيين في مجال الرعاية الصحية في الاردن حول التطوير المهني المستمر.

منهجية الدراسة: أجريت دراسة مقطعية في الفترة ما بين ديسمبر 2017 حتى أبريل 2018 في العديد من مؤسسات الرعاية الصحية في الأردن. تم التحقيق في تصور 2004 من المهنيين في مجال الرعاية الصحية بما في ذلك الأطباء وأطباء الأسنان والصيادلة والممرضات والمهنيين في مجال الرعاية الصحية المتحالفة باستخدام استبيان منظم للإبلاغ الذاتي. وشمل تقييم الإدراك التفضيلات المتصورة والفوائد المتوقعة لأنشطة التطوير المهني المستمر.

النتائج: كان نشاط التطوير المهني المستمر الأكثر تفضيلاً هو نشاط قراءة المجلات والإنترنت في حين كان النشاط القائم على البحث هو الأقل تفضيلاً. وكان نشاط قراءة المجلات والإنترنت هو النشاط المفضل بشكل كبير في القطاع الخاص (P=0.00). كان هناك فرق كبير في جميع أنشطة التطوير المهني المستمر المفضلة المدروسة بين مختلف مقدمي الرعاية الصحية كلها (P<0.05). كانت الفائدة المتوقعة الأكثر إدراكًا للتطوير المهني المستمر هي تعزيز المعرفة بينما كان إرضاء طموحات التعلم هو الأقل .كان هناك فرق كبير في الفوائد المتوقعة بين القطاعات الصحية، وشمل ذلك تحسين نتائج المرضى، وتحسين المهارات الشخصية، وتعزيز المعرفة الشخصية جميعها قيمة .(0.05)0) وكان هناك أيضًا فرق كبير في الفوائد المتوقعة بين المتخصصين في الرعاية الصحية، وشمل ذلك تحسين رضا المرضى وأسرهم، وتحسين النتائج السريرية للمرضى، وتغيير الممارسة السريرية الحالية، وتحسين المهارات الشخصية، وتعزيز المعرفة الشخصية جميعها قيمة .(p<0.05)

الاستنتاج: يختلف تصور التطوير المهني المستمر بين مختلف مقدمي الرعاية الصحية والقطاعات الصحية في الأردن .وينبغي التدابير المستقبلية لتصميم تطوير مهني مستمر فعال لمقدمي الرعاية الصحية الأردنيين أن تأخذ هذا الاختلاف في الاعتبار.

الكلمات الدالة: التعليم الطبي المستمر، التعليم التمريضي المستمر، التطوير المهني المستمر، المدخصصين في الرعاية الصحية، الأردنيون، إعادة الترخيص.