A master of public health must be the minimum prerequisite for a health minister: a timely proposal to discuss the necessary qualifications of the ideal health minister

Ten editorials described the ideal minister of health (MoH). The next step is to find out how to choose him/her. “Ethics is important. Trade is more important”, said a MoH during a European meeting on tobacco advertisement. One could not find a better example of the completely opposite of the ideal MoH. Why do we permit people that think as if they were trade ministers to become MoH? What is the safety valve that keeps such a (trade) Trojan horse outside the health sector?

I propose that a master of public health (MPH) should be the minimum qualification for anybody to be considered for this post. Otherwise s/he will: misinterpret health as something that keeps such a (trade) Trojan horse outside the health sector? For anybody to be considered for this post, (MPH) should be the minimum qualification for a health minister: a timely proposal to discuss the necessary qualifications of the ideal health minister

References

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Economically naive finance ministers would not last, while health naive MoH tend to flourish. Do health professionals recognize, accept, and expect a genuine lack of health sophistication among MoHs? The science of health differs from the politics of health, as the science of economics differs from the politics of economics, however nobody accepts a finance minister without studies in the science of economics.

Will the proposed safety valve work every time? Perhaps not, but someone can expect it to work most times. An MPH is just the minimum guarantee. Moreover, MPH holders could help a colleague to live up to the occasion; but first of all they should demand that nobody without an MPH could become a MoH. Public health managers “must be trained in public health to postgraduate level”; it is ironic that the same is not a prerequisite for the manager of managers, the MoH. Do we believe in born MoHs?

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