Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Perspectives for Health Information Management Practitioners

SAMUEL BULUS KAZE[1], VICTORIA ALIYU ABDULLAHI[2], DALLAH PLANGSHAK ANTHONY[3]

[1]Faculty of Computing and Information Technology, Newgate University Minna
[2]Health Initiative for Safety and Stability in Africa (HIFASS)
[3]APIN (Public Health Initiative)

Abstract- Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a foundational theory in psychology, presents a five-tier model outlining human needs organized into a hierarchical structure, often depicted as levels within a pyramid. For Health Information Management (HIM) professionals, understanding this hierarchy offers insights crucial to enhancing interactions with patients and colleagues, thereby fostering comprehensive healthcare practices. The hierarchy posits that lower-level needs must be fulfilled before individuals can progress to higher-level needs. HIM practitioners, by recognizing and addressing these hierarchical needs, can establish supportive environments that promote well-being and optimize professional performance. This understanding aids in tailoring healthcare information strategies to align with human motivational dynamics, thereby enhancing patient care and organizational effectiveness. This article explores Maslow's hierarchy within the context of HIM, emphasizing the distinction between deficiency needs (lower levels) and growth needs (higher levels). It discusses how addressing physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs can significantly impact HIM practice, from ensuring data security and job stability to fostering innovation and professional development.
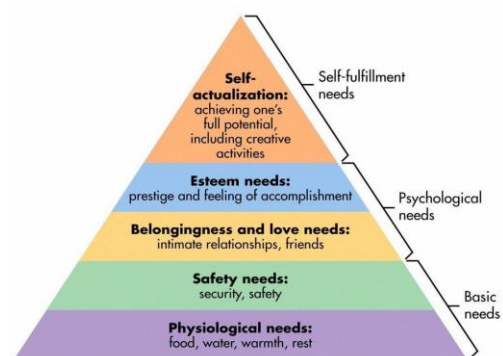
Index Terms- Health Information Management, HIM Practitioners, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

I. INTRODUCTION

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology that outlines a five-tier model of human needs, commonly illustrated as levels within a pyramid. For Health Information Management (HIM) professionals, understanding this hierarchy can enhance interactions with patients and colleagues, ensuring a comprehensive approach to practices in health information.

The hierarchy is structured such that lower-level needs must be fulfilled before individuals can address higher-level needs. By recognizing and addressing these hierarchical needs, HIM professionals can create a supportive and efficient environment that promotes well-being and optimal performance.

II. DEFICIENCY NEEDS VS. GROWTH NEEDS

Maslow's five-stage model of human needs can be divided into deficiency needs and growth needs, a distinction that is crucial for Health Information Management (HIM) practitioners to understand in their professional roles.

Deficiency Needs (D-needs): The first four levels of the hierarchy are referred to as deficiency needs. These include physiological, safety, love and belonging, and esteem needs. These needs arise from a state of deprivation and motivate individuals when met. In the context of HIM, if these basic needs are not fulfilled, patients and healthcare staff will be focused on addressing these deficiencies. For example, if a HIM professional is working in an environment where their safety or job security is threatened, their ability to perform their duties effectively will be compromised.

Physiological Needs – These are the basic fundamental needs of human survival, for HIM professionals in the work context, it involves

receiving adequate pay or wages which is sufficient to cover their basic needs of life, which in turn motivates the professional and enhances job satisfaction and productivity. Next is the availability of a workplace free from injury and fatigue, through the provision of basic work equipment, like comfortable, chairs, tables, proper lighting systems in the records library, and well-fitted shelves, which promotes comfort and physical health. Lastly, ensure that HIM professionals have dependable access to the devices they require, including computers, safe networks, and medical information systems. This technological tool facilitates the smooth processes of data entry, record keeping, and information retrieval with efficiency.

Safety Needs - Creating a secure environment for health records, and protecting patient data from unauthorized disclosure. also ensuring job stability for HIM practitioners through Stable organizational structure, prospects for growth and advancement, and well-defined career paths.

Love and Belonging - Fostering a collaborative and supportive workplace with colleagues and other healthcare providers, where HIM professionals feel a sense of community and belonging. Professional networking to build relationships, share knowledge, and stay updated with the latest trends and innovations in the profession.

Esteem Needs - Recognizing and valuing the contributions of HIM practitioners, providing opportunities for professional growth and achievement.

As these deficiency needs are met, individuals can focus on higher-level needs.
Growth Needs (B-needs): The top level of Maslow's hierarchy is known as growth or belonging needs. These needs do not stem from a lack but from a desire to grow and reach one's full potential. For HIM professionals, this means pursuing advanced certifications, engaging in continuous professional development, or innovating within the field to improve health information systems.

Maslow initially posited that lower-level needs must be fully satisfied before higher-level needs can be addressed. However, he later clarified that the satisfaction of needs is not an "all-or-none" phenomenon. This means that while HIM practitioners may need to focus on certain deficiency needs, they can simultaneously pursue growth needs to some extent. For example, a HIM professional might seek further education (a growth need) while still ensuring job security and data protection (deficiency needs).

Understanding the balance between deficiency and growth needs allows HIM professionals to create an environment that supports both their development and the effective management of health information.
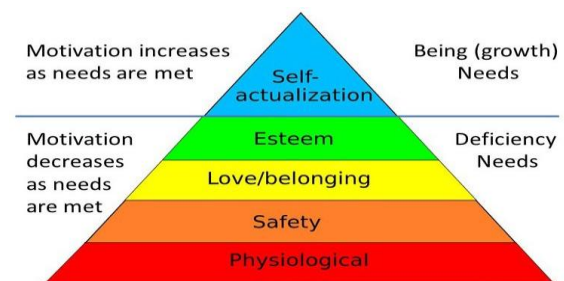
When a deficit need is "more or less" satisfied, it diminishes, allowing our activities to focus on fulfilling the next set of unmet needs. These become our most pressing needs. For Health Information Management (HIM) practitioners, once basic needs like job security or a safe working environment are met, attention shifts to higher-level needs such as professional recognition and development.

However, growth needs, unlike deficit needs, do not disappear once engaged. Instead, they may become even stronger. These needs arise from a desire for personal and professional growth rather than a lack of something. For HIM professionals, growth needs could involve seeking advanced certifications, developing new skills, or innovating within the field. When these growth needs are reasonably satisfied, HIM practitioners can strive towards self-actualization, the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy.

Every HIM professional is capable of and has the desire to progress up the hierarchy towards self-actualization. This involves achieving one's full potential and making significant contributions to the field. However, progress is often interrupted by unmet lower-level needs. Life experiences such as job loss or workplace challenges can cause HIM professionals to move between different levels of the hierarchy.

Therefore, progression through Maslow's hierarchy is not strictly linear. HIM practitioners may fluctuate between different needs based on their circumstances. Understanding this dynamic can help professionals navigate their career development and personal growth effectively.

III. THE ORIGINAL HIERARCHY NEEDS A FIVE-STAGE MODEL

i   Physiological Needs: These are the basic biological requirements for human survival, such as adequate wages to be able to cater for basic survival needs like; food, drink, shelter, clothing, warmth, sex, and sleep. Maslow considered these needs the most important, as all other needs become secondary until these are satisfied.

ii Safety Needs: Once physiological needs are met, the next level focuses on safety and security. This includes protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, and freedom from fear.

iii Love and Belongingness Needs: After physiological and safety needs are fulfilled, social needs become important. This level involves feelings of belongingness and the need for interpersonal relationships, motivating behaviors such as forming friendships, intimacy, trust, and acceptance.

iv Esteem Needs: Maslow classified esteem needs into two categories: (i) self-esteem (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence) and (ii) the desire for reputation or respect from others (status, prestige). Recognition and respect from peers, supervisors, and the broader healthcare community are important for motivation and professional development.

v   Self-Actualization Needs: The highest level of the hierarchy involves realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, and seeking personal growth and peak experiences. This represents a desire "to become everything one is capable of becoming" (Maslow, 1987, p. 64).

Maslow posited that human needs are arranged in a hierarchy:

Over several decades, Maslow refined his hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1943, 1962, 1987). He proposed that the hierarchy's structure "is not nearly as rigid" (Maslow, 1987, p. 68) as initially described. This insight is particularly relevant for Health Information Management (HIM) professionals, who must understand the dynamic nature of human motivation.

Maslow observed that the order of needs might be flexible based on external circumstances or individual differences. For instance, some HIM professionals may prioritize self-esteem and professional recognition over social needs, while others may find that creative fulfillment, such as developing innovative health information systems, is more critical than basic physiological needs.

Furthermore, Maslow (1987) emphasized that most behavior is multi-motivated. He noted that "any behavior tends to be determined by several or all of the basic needs simultaneously rather than by only one of them" (p. 71). For HIM professionals, this means recognizing that their actions and motivations, as well as those of their colleagues and patients, are influenced by a complex interplay of various needs.

IV. HIERARCHY OF NEEDS SUMMARY

(a) Human beings are motivated by a hierarchy of needs.
(b) These needs are organized in a hierarchy of prepotency, where more basic needs must be more or less met (rather than fully satisfied) before addressing higher-level needs.
(c) The order of needs is flexible and can vary based on external circumstances or individual differences. Most behavior is multi-motivated, meaning it is simultaneously influenced by multiple basic needs.

V. THE EXPANDED HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Maslow's original five-stage model (1943, 1954) has been expanded to include cognitive and aesthetic needs (Maslow, 1970a) and later transcendence needs (Maslow, 1970b). These changes resulted in a

seven-stage model and an eight-stage model, developed during the 1960s and 1970s.

1. Biological and Physiological Needs - Air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc. Ensuring these basic needs are met is crucial for maintaining well-being and productivity.
2. Safety Needs - Protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, etc. This includes ensuring data security, job stability, and a safe work environment.
3. Love and Belongingness Needs - Friendship, intimacy, trust, acceptance, receiving and giving affection and love, and affiliating with groups (family, friends, work).
4. Esteem Needs - These are divided into two categories:
    (i) Esteem for Oneself: Dignity, achievement, mastery, and independence. Professional recognition and self-confidence are key.
    (ii) Reputation or Respect from Others: Status and prestige. This includes respect and recognition from peers and the broader healthcare community.
5. Cognitive Needs - Knowledge and understanding, curiosity, exploration, need for meaning, and predictability. This involves ongoing education and staying current with industry advancements.
6. Aesthetic Needs - Appreciation and search for beauty, balance, form, etc. This could relate to the design and usability of health information systems.
7. Self-Actualization Needs - Realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth, and peak experiences. Professionals strive to reach their full potential and contribute significantly to their field.
8. Transcendence Needs - Helping others achieve self-actualization. For HIM professionals, this involves mentoring colleagues and contributing to the broader healthcare community's growth and development.

MASLOW'S MOTIVATION MODEL
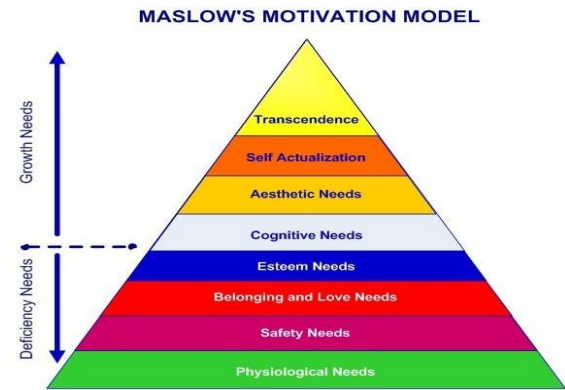
Self-actualization

Instead of focusing on psychopathology and what goes wrong with people, Maslow (1943) formulated a more positive account of human behavior, focusing on what goes right. He was interested in human potential and how we fulfill that potential, which is particularly relevant for Health Information Management (HIM) professionals seeking personal and professional growth.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow (1943, 1954) stated that human motivation is based on people seeking fulfillment and change through personal growth. Self-actualized individuals are those who are fulfilled and doing all they are capable of. For HIM professionals, this could mean excelling in their roles, contributing to innovative projects, and continually seeking to improve their skills and knowledge.

The growth of self-actualization (Maslow, 1962) refers to the need for personal growth and discovery throughout a person's life. For Maslow, a person is always 'becoming' and never remains static in these terms. In self-actualization, a person finds a meaning in life that is important to them. For HIM professionals, this ongoing growth might involve pursuing further education, leading health information initiatives, or mentoring colleagues.

As each individual is unique, the motivation for self-actualization leads people in different directions (Kenrick et al., 2010). For some, self-actualization can be achieved through creating innovative health information systems, for others through teaching, research, or leadership within a healthcare setting.

Maslow (1962) believed self-actualization could be measured through the concept of peak experiences, which occur when a person experiences the world

totally for what it is, resulting in feelings of euphoria, joy, and wonder. For HIM professionals, peak experiences might include successfully implementing a major project or making a significant impact on patient care through improved information management.

It is important to note that self-actualization is a continual process of becoming rather than a perfect state one reaches of 'happily ever after' (Hoffman, 1988). This ongoing journey is crucial for HIM professionals who strive for excellence in their field.

Characteristics of Self-Actualization for HIM Professionals

1. Efficient Perception of Reality - They perceive reality efficiently and can tolerate uncertainty in the ever-changing healthcare environment.
2. Acceptance - They accept themselves and others for who they are, fostering a supportive workplace.
3. Spontaneity - They are spontaneous in thought and action, and able to adapt to new challenges.
4. Problem-Centered - They focus on solving problems rather than being self-centered, improving healthcare systems.
5. Sense of Humor - They possess an unusual sense of humor, which can ease stressful situations.
6. Objectivity - They can look at life and situations objectively, crucial for data analysis and decision-making.
7. Creativity - They are highly creative, bringing innovation to health information management.
8. Resistance to Enculturation - They resist enculturation but are not purposely unconventional, maintaining ethical standards while being open to new ideas.
9. Concern for Humanity - They are concerned for the welfare of humanity, enhancing patient care and community health.
10. Appreciation of Life - They have a deep appreciation of basic life experiences, which can translate into a compassionate approach to patient data management.
11. Interpersonal Relationships - They establish deep, satisfying relationships with colleagues, fostering collaboration.
12. Peak Experiences - They experience moments of profound achievement and fulfillment.
13. Need for Privacy - They understand the importance of privacy, both for themselves and in protecting patient information.

14. Democratic Attitudes - They possess democratic attitudes, valuing the input of others in decision-making processes.
15. Strong Moral Standards - They uphold strong moral and ethical standards, crucial for maintaining trust in health information management.

Behaviors Leading to Self-Actualization for HIM Professionals

(a) Experiencing life with full absorption and concentration, approaching tasks with dedication.
(b) Trying new things and embracing innovation in health information systems.
(c) Listening to their feelings in evaluating experiences, rather than relying solely on tradition or authority.
(d) Avoiding pretense and being honest in their work and interactions.
(e) Being prepared to be unpopular if their views differ from the majority, advocating for best practices.
(f) Taking responsibility and working hard to improve health information management.
(g) Identifying and overcoming personal defenses, continuously striving for self-improvement.

Applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in Health Information Management

Maslow's (1962) hierarchy of needs theory has profoundly influenced various fields, including Health Information Management (HIM). Rather than reducing behavior to responses to the environment, Maslow (1970a) adopts a holistic approach, considering the complete physical, emotional, social, and intellectual qualities of an individual and how they impact their professional performance and growth.

1. Basic Needs - Just as students must fulfill their physiological needs to focus on learning, HIM professionals need to have their basic needs met to perform optimally. This includes adequate wages, rest, nutrition, and a safe working environment. A tired or hungry HIM professional will struggle to manage health information effectively.

2. Safety Needs: HIM professionals must feel emotionally and physically safe within their workplace. This safety extends to job security, a stable work environment, and protection from

workplace hazards. Ensuring these needs are met allows professionals to concentrate on their tasks and contribute effectively to their teams.

3. Social Needs: Feeling accepted and valued within a team is crucial. HIM professionals need positive interpersonal relationships, trust, and acceptance from their colleagues. These social connections foster a collaborative work environment where individuals can thrive and support one another in achieving common goals.

4. Esteem Needs: Recognition and respect within the workplace are vital for HIM professionals to reach their full potential. Building self-esteem through acknowledgment of achievements and contributions can significantly enhance their performance and motivation. When professionals feel valued and respected, they are more likely to take initiative and pursue excellence in their roles.

5. Self-actualization: Self-actualization for HIM professionals involves realizing their personal and professional potential. This can be achieved through continuous learning, personal growth, and taking on challenging projects that push their boundaries. Self-actualized professionals find meaning and fulfillment in their work, driving them to innovate and excel.

To foster an environment where HIM professionals can achieve self-actualization, it is essential to:
- Create supportive and inclusive workplaces.
- Recognize and reward contributions and achievements.
- Provide opportunities for professional development and continuous learning.
- Encourage innovation and creative problem-solving.

CONCLUSION

While Maslow's theory offers valuable insights, it is essential to recognize its limitations. His methodology, primarily based on biographical analysis, is subjective and may not generalize across all populations. Additionally, Maslow's assumption that lower needs must be satisfied before higher needs can be pursued does not always hold. For instance, professionals in challenging environments may still seek and achieve higher-order needs like love, belongingness, and self-actualization despite unmet basic needs.

Contemporary research, such as that by Tay and Diener (2011), supports the existence of universal human needs but suggests that these needs do not always follow a strict hierarchical order. For HIM professionals, this means that while basic needs are important, higher needs can be pursued simultaneously, enhancing overall well-being and job satisfaction.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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