

CHAPTER 1

HOSPITALS – AN INTRODUCTION

Definition

Hospital is an organization of public health. It is an institution which takes care of the health and diseases of people with the help of sophisticated equipments and instruments, by a group of specially trained persons.

As many people think, hospital is not only a place where sick people are taken care off; it also looks after the health or well being of the people and maintains it. It tries to keep them in good health and disease free by undertaking immunization, educational program and by teaching personal and social hygienic practices.

Classification

Hospital can be classified according to their

- I. Size
- II. Ownership
- III. System of treatment and
- IV. Specialization.

I. Size Basis

Hospitals are classified more conveniently as per the size that is the number of beds available to admit and treat patients. Thus there are hospitals with,

- A. Less than 20 beds
- B. Between 20 to 100 beds and
- C. Above 100 beds (up to 1000 and more)

They can be referred as small, medium and large hospitals. Many hospitals run by private practitioners fall under the first category of small hospitals, where there may be one or two general wards available.

A couple of doctors may be working here and these hospitals may not have much diagnostic facilities like clinical lab, x-ray, scan etc. They send the patients to outside agencies for these services. Primary health centers (PHC) run by government can be classified under this category and they are all aptly called as primary care hospitals, where majority of patients go to get treatment first for their illness. Many of these hospitals are not open at nights.

Medium size hospitals are those opened in small towns like Taluk head quarters. Here 5 to 10 doctors may be working including one or two specialists. Some diagnostic facilities are available in these hospitals. From primary level hospitals, little complicated cases are sent to these secondary care hospitals for treatment. Up to 100 beds are available here in few essential wards like, medical ward, surgical ward, paediatric ward and maternity ward. These hospitals work day and night.

Large hospitals are highly specialized hospitals with almost all facilities and they have bed strength of 100 to 1000. District head quarter hospitals, Teaching (Medical College) hospitals and big private, corporate hospitals fall under this category. They are also called as tertiary hospitals or referral hospitals because more complicated cases from first two types of hospitals are referred here for further treatment. More than 50 doctors and 300 or so Paramedical professionals are working here in 3 shifts throughout the day.

II. Ownership Basis

Hospitals can also be classified according to the ownership. There are two broader categories.

1. Government owned hospitals and
2. Private hospitals

1. Government Hospitals

Starting from Primary Health Centers in small villages to Taluk, District and Medical college hospitals in cities, large number of hospitals are owned by State Governments. There are many quasi/semi Government hospitals, also called local body hospitals like municipal hospitals, (municipal) corporation hospitals and panchayat union hospitals. These are run by local bodies which are getting financial aid from Government for this purpose.

Central Government also owns some hospitals like Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) hospitals, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) etc. Many hospitals are being run by central government under takings or

corporations to serve a particular group of people like, railway hospitals, port trust hospitals, military hospitals, ESI hospital, etc.

2. Private Hospitals

There are many private hospitals of same size, if not bigger than Government hospitals. They are established by trusts, societies, and families or by individuals. They have all sophisticated instruments, facilities and doctors with different specializations. They are also called corporate hospitals. e.g.: Apollo Group of Hospitals. Medium and small private hospitals are also available in all the cities and towns of our country. These private hospitals are having facilities and standards equivalent to that of Western countries and hence lot of patients from abroad are coming to India to have medical treatment at very less expenses (medical tourism).

III. System of Treatment Basis

These groups of hospitals are those in which different systems are followed for treatment. They are Ayurveda Hospital, Siddha Hospital, Unani Hospital or Homeopathy Hospitals. The physicians in these hospitals are educated and/ or having experience in these systems and they are using medicines of these systems for treatment. These hospitals or physicians are popular in rural areas because they are there, even before allopathic system was introduced by British Rulers in our country.

IV. Specialization Basis

Hospitals can also be classified according to the specialized services offered in a particular hospital. For example there are few hospitals which treat only a particular part of the body or a particular disease. Thus we have two groups:

Group I

- A. Eye hospital
- B. Dental hospital
- C. ENT hospital
- D. Chest hospital and
- E. Skin hospital

Group II

- (i) Psychiatric hospital
- (ii) Orthopedics hospital and
- (iii) Communicable and infectious diseases hospital.

This apart, there are some other hospitals for giving treatment to special group of patients like Children's hospital, Maternity hospital etc. In all these hospitals doctors who are qualified in particular specialization are employed.

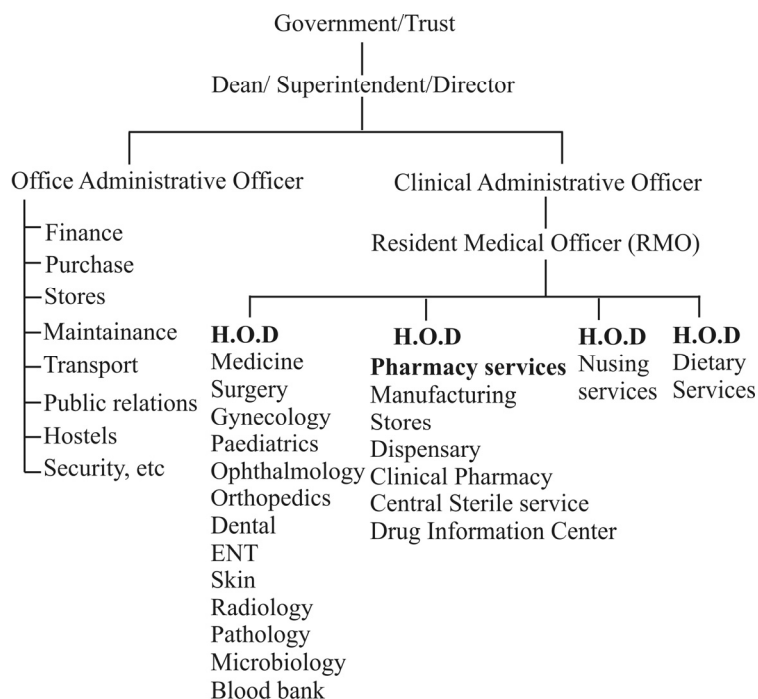
Thus in a big country like India there are varieties of hospitals and practices. Government of India has recently brought a legislation, by name, Clinical Establishments Registration act, which envisage, registration of all types of hospitals and clinics. Hence here after, they can also be classified according to the facilities available in them, into Grade I, II, III etc.

Organization

The nature and size of organization of a hospital differ according to the need. The organization of a big hospitals have two separate wings, one for the clinical administration another for office administration. The structure of these wings is given below:

The clinical administration and office administration both have many divisions or departments and each of this section are headed by qualified persons with specialization in the particular subject and experience. Needless to point out large administrative bodies require persons with special training and education in hospital administration.

Flow chart of a Hospital Organization



Medium size hospitals like Taluk hospitals and hospitals in small towns differ in the above organizational set up, that some of the sections may not be available with them. They are added whenever necessary. Because these hospitals are too big to control by an individual, the Government or trust constitutes various committees to assist Dean, in his administration.

These committees are called Governing council or Board of Directors. They have members from the trust and various departments of the hospital and even outside. People's representatives like MLA, MLC, MP or MC are given membership in Government Hospital Councils to function effectively and to meet the aspirations of the people.

Apart from this, various sub committees are also formed at various levels of the hospital for the same reason e.g.: Finance committee, purchase committee, development committee, ethical committee etc. Thus big hospitals are organized.

Administration

The above committees regularly conduct meetings and forward their recommendations to the Governing council or Board of Directors, where these recommendations are considered, approved, modified or rejected. The approved decisions are then implemented by the Dean, either through his office administrative or clinical administrative wing.

Only policy matters and/or decisions involving huge sum of money are thus routed through the governing council, other small issues and day to day affairs are decided by the Dean himself and implemented. However, Dean reports all the important matters to the Council or Trust or Government through periodical reports.

Functions

The major functions of a hospital are,

1. Treatment of patients
2. Prevention of diseases and
3. Education of public

As pointed out above, hospitals are not only treating the patients but also preventing the disease from occurring and spreading. They undertake large scale immunization programs by vaccination drive and other programs like oral polio drops campaign, health camps to identify and/or prevent diseases in particular area and population etc.

As we know, prevention is better than cure, Government of India gives more importance to this and many public health programs like mosquito eradication, chlorination of drinking water etc, are promoted through various Government bodies.

In order to achieve the aim of 'Health for all', prevention and treatment alone are not sufficient unless general public are aware and cooperating with schemes. Hence large scale education campaign is carried out to create awareness among people, about diseases, preventive methods, nutrition and personal and social hygienic practices, by posters, cinema, TV and other medias, by hospital and public health authorities.

Questions

Short Answer Questions

1. Define hospitals.
2. Draw a flow chart of Hospital Administration.
3. What are secondary care hospitals?
4. Why the referral hospitals are called so?

Long Answer Questions

5. Classify hospitals and explain each one of them in detail.
6. What are the functions of a hospital? Explain.
7. How big hospitals are administered? Enumerate the role of various committees formed in hospitals.