

CONSUMER-DRIVEN PATIENT-CENTRIC CARE: HUMAN RESOURCE CHALLENGES FOR HEALTHCARE MANAGERS

MEDI.PRAMUKH¹

DR.C.MADHAVIAH²

Abstract

Healthcare is the needy industry for any country, India is still a developing country and in need of much more advancement in healthcare setting when compared to the developed countries, Though India is still looking for health for all, there is a much need for the patient-centric care as the advanced consumers are expecting more quality of services from the healthcare professionals. Patient centric care is much needed to bring out the quality output and to maximise the satisfaction of patients. This paper tries to discuss the managerial implications for bringing patient centred care to happen in India by discussing the literature review.

Keywords: *Healthcare Industry, Patient-centric care, Consumer driven*

Introduction

The institution of medicine describes the patient centric care as “Providing care that is respectful of and responsive to patient individual patient preferences, needs and values and enshrining that patient values guide all clinical decisions “Patient centered care is treating the patient with care and dignity and respecting the individual values of the patients at all the times and considering the patients individual needs throughout the process of care and maintaining the physician and patient communication firm . It also includes the integration of the technology to serve the patient better and showing a significant difference in the patients overall experience.

The values of the patient which turns the patient in to a separate individual with his own preferences, ideas and thoughts makes him unique from the other patients in the hospital. Patient centric care honours the patient needs, respects his traditions and cultural values and brings out the most cost effective care available to him as well patient centric care is now considered to be one of the dimension of the service quality in healthcare setting.

Patient centric care does not essentially mean of gaining all the authority by patient and abducting physician but it is more of understanding patient specific needs and responding to them. Implementation of patient-centric care brings some changes however the time of visit duration with physician remains same. Other Observations includes improvement in patient

¹Doctoral Scholar, Department of Management, Pondicherry University, Karaikal Campus, Karaikal-609605.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Pondicherry University, Karaikal Campus.

satisfaction, increased physician satisfaction, less number of malpractice complaints. A patient comes to the healthcare setting with certain expectations and those expectations always continue to be increased.

Patient expectations

Patient expectations can be described as with what needs the patients are going to encounter when they are entering in to a new health care setting, be it communication with the doctor, the services by front office executive, the cool breeze when they get in the hospital or it could be their diagnostic report which may or may not arrive in time. Reactions to unmet expectations can range from disappointment to anger and when the patients are not met their expectations to be fulfilled they are not following up for the next visit. Managing the patient expectation's makes the patient to feel relaxed in his consultations and reaching his expectations brings back the patient to follow up with the same hospital.

For managers the emergency department is said to be difficult to reach the expectations as the patients and his supporters are with anxiety and stress with the patient's condition and when those expectations are not met, high chances of getting anger or the anxiety situations could cause to express their anger on managers on the spot.

Consumer driven health care or health care consumerism is known to be establishing the care around the consumers who said to be patients. Typically in India the care which is provided is paternalistic which use to revolve around the physician but with the increase awareness of quality in healthcare industry among patients and healthcare providers bring new shift to consumer driven care in which the healthcare stakeholders including pharmacies, physicians, health insurance companies and hospitals look after the consumer satisfaction who is the centre of health industry and this can be understood better by the definition.

This patient-centred approach has been described as one where “the physician tries to enter the patient's world, to see the illness through the patient's eyes” –McWhinney

Health care sector said to be one of India's largest sector in terms of both the employment and the revenue that yields. Healthcare sector is divided in to two major categories which are public and private, Major public sector is owned by the government which mainly focuses on the primary healthcare in rural areas which consists basic healthcare facilities to the rural people and the private sector provides majorly secondary and tertiary care and the tertiary care mainly focuses on the metro cities and tier I and tier II cities and, the cost of health care is so cheap when compared with US and western Europe which costs one tenth to them, with the profound resources of physicians and health staff India gives competitive cost to its peer countries in both Asia and Western countries.

The Indian healthcare market value is US\$ 100billion by January 2016 which is expected to reach US\$ 280 billion by the year 2020, which is a compound annual growth rate of 22.9percent and the Indian medical tourist industry is expected to reach US\$ 6 billion by 2018 which demonstrates a tremendous scope in healthcare tourism industry. The increase in number of hospitals getting accreditation with accreditation bodies like NABH shows the increased awareness in both the healthcare providers as well in the health care seekers. The greater the awareness of quality in the health care seekers the greater the need of improvement in the quality for the healthcare providers which boosts the healthcare industry to achieve new heights. Which results to concentration of private sector investments in healthcare sector.

Patient centred care understood sometimes as of implementing the external infrastructures like gardens and lakes which are view stations by many health care provider organizations⁵ rather than implementing actual infrastructure that drives the patient in to patient centred care like implementing technologies that help the patients that ease the admission with the physician and stores his personal health records securely and providing cost effective care. Patients usually do have questions towards the physicians about their health condition and the complications of medicines prescribed, and the necessity of taking medicines and much more questions which can be clarified by only concerned physician with proper communication , in patient centred care physician and patient communication said to be the most effective part, patient centred communications results in increased satisfaction, affection towards the physician and results in good outcomes of care.

Communication between patient and physician normally happens when the patient (client) comes with the specific illness and then physician said to have the ability to heal or give a new life to the patient from what he is phasing .in this setting the patient seems to deprived and the physician appears to be provider of new life and this ability of physician makes the communication union complex, between patient and physician paternalistic .which favours the physician most of the time. But when the informed/informative model (consumerism) introduced, the style of consumer approach to the physician changes, in this model the patient treated as consumer or health seeker. this model signifies the needs of the consumer, gives priority to his concerns and the physician starts to understand and he is able to diagnose the patient problem from patient perspective, where values and claims of patients treated as valid and patient has the ability to take customised treatment by physician which favours the patients social status as well gives him increased space and satisfaction.

The patient sometimes comes to the physician with different sources of information, the information may come from the source of internet , mass media or by neighbour but when the

patient has the information related to his diagnosis he may approach the doctor for clarification of about his diagnosis, the type of treatment he is going to get and the cost of his treatment , when the patient done with clarifying his doubts from the acquired knowledge he may get the additional information from the physician about his condition and the precautions for the illness he have. This process of consulting physician and exploring the knowledge he had can only be done when the patient is having good communication with the physician.

Patient centred care said to be implemented in the following ways according to picker institute.

Communication

Communication to be effective, one should have the ability to adapt and he must be responsive during the exchange of information. Effective communication depends on the behaviours of the physician, behaviour and perceptions of the patient the ultimate purpose of communication between patient and physician is to provide a ‘whole person care’ to the patient. Studies show that the physicians with high care communication style led the patient in to gain the high satisfaction than a physician with the low caring communication. Thus the physician likely to communicate with care and compassion with the patient to ensure the satisfaction of the patient.

Physical comfort

Patients requires comfort in stressful health conditions, some of the needs are mostly met by the support groups of the patient but other needs remains same. comfort is defined for nursing as the satisfaction of basic human needs for relief, ease, or transcendence that arise from stressful health care situations. Physical comfort denotes pain management of patient, clean and tidy surroundings along with daily living activities which should make the patient stay pleasant or at least comfortable staying in the health care setting.

Emotional support and alleviation of fear and anxiety

Detection of depressive disorders in the elderly in primary care is important since they are associated with significant burden and costs and since effective treatment is available. The prevalence of depression in an elderly population is estimated at 12–15%, depending on diagnostic criteria and methodology.

Involvement of family and friends

For a successful treatment to be happen there should be support of family and friends, when patients are under depression with their health conditions, it's the family , friends and religion beliefs will bring him in to normalacy, Thus the health care providers must admit and implement the accompany of family and friends to provide patient centric care.

Transition and continuity in healthcare

Traditional treatment in healthcare settings must be transitioned to a new system which focuses the patient as whole and gives timely treatment and encourages the patient to take active part in the decision making, following up the patient which includes remembering the patient to take medicines through sms or phone calls, informing the patient about the next visit and fixing a schedule to the patient, and bringing cost effective care to the patient with best available knowledge and resources.

CHANGING ROLE OF HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS:

In order to achieve patient centred care, the consultation between physician and patient must run long³ since the physician and patient ratio is very low in government hospitals, many individual states are depending on private health care sector (Central Bureau of health intelligence). According to stats there is only one physician for every 11,000 people in government health care. When more of the people depends on the private health care sector, the more burden on health care managers.

Regardless of the environment contexts, Health administrators and managers at all the departments and levels serve a significant role. With relation to patient centred care the managers have to play some other roles along with their traditional roles like treating the client with the empathy, and the communication between the patient and healthcare manager should be informative, comforting. Managing the limited time constraints, utilising the resources accordingly are big challenges in patient centred care for managers. And there are no authentic regulations for the healthcare managers which gives a small scope to them in the government health care sector.

Managerial Implications:

The following challenges may be addressed to the Health Care Managers with respect to Patient centred care.

- 1) Time constraints- Healthcare Manager has to deal with the patient and physician time, Since the Physician and patient ratio is low in India (CBHI), the physician will have more demand and less time to deal with the patient, meanwhile the patient wants to spend much time with physician in clarifying his doubts regarding his illness and the precautions he must undergo.
- 2) Communication- The patient and physician communication is considered to be one of the constituent factors to provide patient centred care., likewise the communication between the every health care provider and patient is very essential, regardless of the

limited health care administrators and limited sources , the health care manger may have not undergone the training to communicate with the patient.

- 3) Emotional support – Apart from the regular duties the health manager should able to give emotional support to the patients, whenever they approached him, vice versa. Which is challenging. In general, managers also suffer along with the doctors more than expected.
- 4) Information Technology- Acquiring the current technology in hospitals is important to ensure patient satisfaction., so it is important to manager as well to adapt the new technologies in the field.

Conclusion

Though the patient centric care is having much potential to exaggerate the patient satisfaction levels in India, it is still in infancy stage, and the doctor and patient relation believed to be still in paternalistic stage. Less number of doctors to the population, heavy working hours for the physician and complex structure of healthcare in the government sectors makes the patient centric care mere impossible in near future. However with the increased consumer awareness and increase in the standard of quality living the patient centric care is expected to start and bring the innovative changes in India.

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