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Assessment of demand for accreditation services in Hyderabad: A pilot study.

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Assessment of demand for accreditation services in Hyderabad: a pilot study.

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I. Introduction³:

Accreditation is a professional and national recognition to facilities that provide high quality of care. It is implicit that the particular health facility has voluntarily sought to be measured against high professional standards and is in substantial compliance with them (Lewis 1984). It is a vehicle for systematic external reviews of procedures, managerial systems, physical infrastructure and resources. This compares with professionally agreed standards of procedures and resources. Accreditation is a useful indicator of quality of care as it implies comparison of the health facility with certain minimum standards.

Sustainability of voluntary accreditation system is closely linked to the demand for it. The ultimate source of demand for accreditation are the consumers of private hospital and nursing home services. Though the size of private sector and its coverage has been increasing in India, there has not been any effort to accreditation services offered by them. The purpose of this pilot study is to make a rapid assessment of the demand for the accreditation services by the users of private sector of health care institutions, and to develop a methodology for full scale studies.

II. Materials and methods:

Ten private hospitals / nursing homes in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad were picked up from the A.P Health Institutions Database (APHIDB) maintained by IHS. An exit poll of the patients who are discharged from the selected hospitals / nursing homes was done. The data was collected from the patients discharged patients within the hospital. Follow up visits were made to their homes for the main interview. In addition to the patient, one attendant was interviewed to assess his / her perception of the standard quality of care. A semi-structured interview format was introduced [Annexe-1]. A short format was used for the primary exit poll for patients [Annexe-2]. A separate format was used to interview the attendants at home [Annexe-3].

III. Results:

Each respondent was asked if the facilities in the hospital / nursing home were adequate. Majority (96%) of the respondents have said that the facilities were adequate in the hospitals. Describing their points of satisfaction they spoke about the basic ones like the water facilities and the toilet facilities. They have also mentioned about the canteen, electricity, transport, availability of fruits, telephone (local and STD), proper ventilation, quality of food and also the accommodation. Some of them have appreciated that they have facilities like a generator

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when the power go cut and canteen facility which was very convenient. The distance of the bus stop from the hospital / nursing home is also one of the factors to look into because few respondents have mentioned that it was convenient for them to visit the patient.

A very small number (4%) of the respondents have mentioned that the facilities provided in the hospital / nursing home are not adequate. Though some of them have a canteen facility, the quality of the food is not good according to some of the respondents. While some hospitals are far away from the bus stop, still others do not have an STD facility. They have spoken about the facilities which are essential in a hospital. They feel that these are some of the facilities which every hospital / nursing home should see that they have.

There are a number of varied factors which have impressed the respondents about the hospital. Most of them have said that they were impressed by the treatment of the doctors. Some of them were impressed by the care taking of the nurses, while still others were impressed by the maintenance of the hospital / nursing home. Elaborating about the doctors approach, one of the respondents expressed that she was very patient and gently and this itself half heals the patient. This shows that they do not mind about the other factors. They are ready to compromise with the other factors if they are satisfied with the treatment of the doctors. While the rest were not impressed by anything in the hospital / nursing home and feel that everything was at an average level only.

The most beneficial factor for the recovery of the patients' health was said to be the treatment of the doctors. They feel that the doctors are specialised in their own respective fields. By this it is clear that most of the patients go in for a particular hospital if the doctors and their treatment is good. They feel it is the primary factor and the rest is secondary. Some of the respondents have given the credit to everything that the hospital has done and said that the treatment is just part of the whole process, unlike those who go in if they are satisfied with the performance. They say that everything has its own contribution for the recovery of their health. Everything includes the care taking of the nurses, the maintenance of the hospital / nursing home, the attitude of the others towards them and also the facilities provided.

All the respondents (100%) have said that they had benefited from the stay in the hospital / nursing homes. Here they have explained the reasons for their admission i.e. their health problem. We had 72.5% female respondents and 27.5% male respondents. When asked about the comforts in the hospital 92% of them have said that they were comfortable. Most of them were satisfied with the facilities provided. They did not have any major problems, at the same time some of them were impressed by the gentle behaviour of the doctors and nurses which made them more comfortable.

A small sector (8%) of them have said that they were not comfortable because of some reasons like the bore well water which they were not used to, the lack of generators when the current was off while it was too hot which they could not bear. Some of them were uncomfortable with the smell of the hospital. While the others were uncomfortable because of the strict rules in the hospital.

Speaking about the living rules we can say that the private hospitals do not have any particular living rules except for the general rules for maintenance of silence, cleanliness and in some hospitals the visitors have to enter the room bare foot. Most of the private hospitals / nursing homes do not have any particular rule for the attenders or the visitors. They can visit the patient at any time unlike some other hospitals which are very strict about the same. They keep the gate locked always and allow the visitors only during the visiting hours. Some of the respondents have commented about such rules saying that it is very convenient for them to

visit the patient at their convenience in the hospital while the others had said they should be strict so that the patient is not disturbed most of the time.

Most of the hospitals have "good" doctors who are specialised in their own fields. Some of them explain to the patient about his or her problem in detail which some of the respondents appreciated highly. 80% of the respondents have said that the hospitals are good in terms of doctors. 10% have said that they are excellent while the remaining 10% said they are at an average level. The hospitals in terms of nurses are as follows: 5% have said that the hospital / nursing homes are excellent in terms of the nurses, 45% of them are good and 50% of them are at an average level. Some of the respondents were not satisfied with the service of the nurses. They said that they are either not well qualified or not very experienced. They do not bother about the patient. They said that the attender of the patient has to go and remind them if the glucose in the bottle was being given to the patient got over.

In terms of medical and surgical equipment half of the hospitals have the basic equipment like an X-ray Unit and a Laboratory. Around 40% of the respondents have said that the hospitals are good in terms of medical and surgical equipment while the remaining 10% said they are excellent with some advance and latest equipment. In terms of living comforts more than half (60%) of the hospitals are on an average level with the basic facilities. While 30% of the hospitals are good with some more facilities like canteen, generators, STD facility within the premises and so on. One tenth of the hospitals are excellent in terms of living comforts because they have facilities like air coolers, refrigerators and coloured televisions.

Regarding the patients visiting the same hospital again if needed most of them (80%) have given a positive response saying that they would because of various reasons like the good treatment in the hospital, the maintenance of the hospital, the care taken by the nurses and most of all the convenience in terms of the distance from their house and the flexibility in rules for visiting. While the remaining 20% said that they would not visit the same hospital again if needed because of reasons like inconvenience in terms of distance. They had been there because they were referred by some other hospital. The respondents have given a number of reasons for choosing that particular hospital such as personality reasons, information reasons, social influence reasons, economic reasons, personal motivation reasons and philosophical reasons.

Most of the respondents felt that staff, particularly the doctors and nurses expressed concern. Other hospital staff are not taken so much into consideration. Some of them have compared the doctors and the nurses of the government hospitals with the private hospitals. They have said that the staff in the private hospitals do show their concern to the patients much more unlike the government hospitals where they do not bother much.

Regarding the third party inspection of standardisation of medical and surgical equipment the vast majority (86%) of the respondents agreed. They felt that by doing so the quality of the services in the hospitals / nursing homes would increase because they would be conscious of the quality of facilities provided and the equipment present. They would be more accountable and would be aware of the monitoring and evaluation of the same. While 14% of the remaining respondents felt that there is no need for such an inspection because irrespective of it, the hospitable is accountable for every thing they do. They are aware of the needs of the patients and to meet those needs they should render the best of their services. Therefore they disagree with the idea of a third party inspection of standardisation of the medical and surgical equipment. When asked whether the quality control should be met within the existing fees, the overwhelming majority (97%) of them agreed to it saying that they already charge

quite high and they should be able to meet the quality within the charged fees. While 3 % say that they are ready even to pay more than they are actually paying but would need the best quality of service.

Large majority (72%) of the respondents feel that the billing was rational while 28% feel that it was high. This again depends on the economic background of the respondent. Regarding the standard code for billing more than half (62%) feel that they should have a standard code so that people would be prepared to pay. They would know how much it would cost and they need not keep guessing their bill till the last day. While the 38% of them think that the billing depends on the patient's treatment, his duration of stay in the hospital, the place of his stay, general ward or a special room and his economic background. Therefore it varies from patient to patient.

Most of them (77%) did not have any problem in accessing the patient while 23% had some problem due to the rigid rules in the hospital. None of them had any problem in securing medicines for their patients.

IV. Summary and conclusion:

This study has revealed some of the important factors that contribute to the assessment of a private hospital / nursing home by the patients. The quality of the doctor was found to be the single most important consideration. It was found that the patients took a lot of care to assess professional competence and empathy rating of the doctors. There seems to be a relatively better flow of information in the market place about the doctors competence.

Next to the quality of doctors, patients and their attendants had done assessment of the living conditions and facilities in the nursing home. However in respect of quality of nurses and nursing care, professional equipment and diagnostic facilities of the hospital, availability of information to the patients was relatively less. Thus in these areas a larger proportion of the respondents perception was either average or less than average.

Majority (86%) of the respondents felt the need for a third party inspection of the hospitals / nursing homes for compliance to standards. Most of them also felt that it should be possible for the nursing homes to get their facilities assessed within their fee structure.

Thus there is a perceived need among the private hospitals / nursing homes for an accreditation system. Among the various components of facilities those that do not get adequately assessed through the market mechanism need to be emphasised by the accreditation system i.e. the qualification of the nurses, quality and adequacy of nursing services, diagnostic, medical and surgical equipment.

V. References:

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VI. Annexe - 1: Questionnaire for the patients in the hospital.

1. Name of the hospital:
2. Institution in (Code):
3. Name of the patient:
4. Address:
5. Age:
6. Sex:
7. Were the facilities in the hospital?
8. What impressed you the most about the hospital?
9. Which part of the hospital was the most beneficial for the recovery of your health?

VII. Annexe-2: Questionnaire for the home visit.

A. Interview with the head of the household:

1. Who all attended on the patient when he / she was in the? Any two addresses:
 - i.
 - ii.

B. Interview with the:

1. Did you benefit from the stay in the?
2. How?
3. Identify the most important things that the hospital did for you to improve your health?
4. Comfortable during the stay in the? IF Yes/ No, Why?
5. The living rules in the hospitals?
6. What are the rules for attenders of the patients?
7. How would you rate the hospital in terms of the following facilities:
 - i. Doctors:
 - ii. Nurses:
 - iii. Medical and surgical equipment:
 - iv. Living comforts:
 - v. Who are the doctors who attended on you?
8. Would you go to the same hospital again if you need?
9. Would you send some one else who gets sick in the house to the same hospital?
10. Why?
11. Was the billing in the hospital rational?
12. Do you think there is any need to have some standard code for billing?
13. Is a third party inspection for standardisation of surgical and medical facilities needed?
14. Do you feel the hospital should meet the quality control within existing fees or should it charge a little extra?
15. Did the staff show concern to you? Who?
16. How much did you spend in this whole episode?

VIII. Annexe-3: Questionnaire for the attenders.

1. Did your patient benefit from the stay in the hospital? How?
2. Identify the most important things that the hospital did for your patient to improve his / her health.
3. Was your patient comfortable during the stay in the hospital? If Yes / No why?

4. What are the living rules in the hospital?
5. What are the rules for the attenders of the patients?
6. How would you rate the hospital in terms of the following facilities:
 - i. Doctors:
 - ii. Nurses:
 - iii. Medical and surgical equipment:
 - iv. Living comforts:
7. Who are the doctors who attended on your patient?
8. Would you go to the same hospital if you need?
9. Would you send someone else who gets sick in the house to the same hospital? Why?
10. Was the billing in the hospital rational?
11. Do you think there is any need to have some standard code for billing?
12. Is a third party inspection for standardisation of surgical and medical facilities needed?
13. Do you feel the hospital should meet the quality control within existing fees or should it charge a little extra?
14. Did the staff show concern to your patient? Who?
15. Did you have any problem in accessing your patient?
16. Did you find any problem in securing medicines for your patient?

Annexe - 4

Table-1.1: Quantitative results of APHIDB Exit Poll - [Patients & Attendants]

Variable	Yes			No			Total responses		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
Adequate Facilities	8	16	24	0	1	1	8	17	25
	32	64	96	0	4	4	32	68	
Benefit from the stay	11	29	40	0	0	0	11	29	40
	28	65	100	0	0	0	28	73	
Comfort	11	26	37	0	3	3	11	29	40
	28	63	93	0	8	8	28	73	
Visit again if needed	7	25	32	4	4	8	11	29	40
	18	65	80	10	10	20	28	73	
Recommended the hospital	7	26	33	4	3	7	11	29	40
	18	65	83	10	8	18	28	73	
Concern shown by the staff	11	28	39	0	0	0	11	28	39
	28	73	100	0	0	0	28	73	
Third party inspection	9	24	33	1	4	5	10	28	38
	24	63	87	3	11	13	26	74	
Quality Control [Within fee]	10	27	37	1	0	1	11	27	38
	26	71	97	3	0	3	29	71	
Rational billing	9	20	29	2	9	11	11	29	40
	23	50	73	5	23	28	28	73	
Standard code for billing	4	19	23	7	7	14	11	26	37
	11	51	62	19	19	38	30	70	
Problem in accessing the patient	0	5	5	5	12	17	5	17	22
	0	22	23	23	55	77	23	77	
Problem in securing medicines	0	2	2	5	15	20	5	17	22
	0	9	9	23	68	90	23	77	
Overall response in %	21	59	79	7	14	21	27	73	100

Report generated at IHS as on : 24/06/94, data as on 10/06/94)

There are two rows for each variable; top one is count and bottom row is in percent.

¹ Report generated through the Exit Poll computerised database in Fox pro 2.0 at IHS

Table-2.1: APHIDB Exit Poll: Rating of hospitals in terms of personnel & facilities
[Patients & Attendants]

Rating	Male		Female		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Excellent	1	33	2	66	3	7
Good	8	26	23	74	31	75
Fair	0	0	3	100	3	7
Average	2	67	1	33	3	7
Below Average	0	0	0	0	0	0
Excellent	0	0	2	100	2	5
Good	3	23	10	76	13	32
Fair	3	60	2	40	5	12
Average	5	25	15	75	20	50
Below Average	0	0	0	0	0	0
Excellent	2	50	2	50	4	10
Good	5	29	12	70	17	42
Fair	1	14	6	85	7	17
Average	3	25	9	75	12	30
Below Average	0	0	0	0	0	0
Excellent	1	20	4	80	5	12
Good	3	27	8	72	11	27
Fair	3	37	5	62	8	20
Average	4	25	12	75	16	40
Below Average	0	0	0	0	0	0

¹ (Report generated at IHS as on 24/06/94, data as on 10/06/94)

¹ * Note : Y= Yes, N= No, M= Male, F=Female and T= Total, []= Percentage

² All percentages expressed in terms of total respondents.

¹ Report generated through the EXIT POLL computerised database in Fox pro 2.0 at IHS

Table-1.2: Quantitative results of APHIDB Exit Poll - [Patients]

Variable	Yes			No			Total responses			
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All	
Adequate Facilities	6	14	20	0	0	0	6	14	20	
	30	70	100	0	0	0	30	70		
Benefit from the stay	6	14	20	0	0	0	6	14	20	
	30	70	100	0	0	0	30	70		
Comfort	6	13	19	0	1	1	6	14	20	
	30	65	95	0	5	5	30	70		
Visit again if needed	4	12	16	2	2	4	6	14	20	
	20	60	80	10	10	20	30	70		
Recommended the hospital	4	13	17	2	1	3	6	14	20	
	20	65	85	10	5	15	30	70		
Concern shown by the staff	6	14	20	0	0	0	6	14	20	
	30	70	100	0	0	0	30	70		
Third party inspection	5	11	16	1	2	3	6	13	19	
	26	58	84	5	11	16	32	68		
Quality control within existing fee	6	13	19	0	0	0	6	13	19	
	32	68	100	0	0	0	32	68		
Rational billing	5	10	15	1	4	5	6	14	20	
	25	50	75	5	20	25	30	70		
Standard code for billing	2	9	11	4	3	7	6	12	18	
	11	50	61	22	17	39	33	67		
Problem in accessing the patient	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	
	0	100	100	0	0	0	0	100		
Problem in securing medicines	0	2	2	5	15	20	5	17	2	
	0	9	9	23	68	90	23	77		
Overall response %	25	64	89	5	7	12	30	70	100	

¹ Report generated at IHS as on: 24/06/94, data as on 10/06/94)

¹ There are two rows for each variable; top one is count and bottom row is in percent.

¹ Report generated through the Exit Poll computerised database in Fox pro 2.0 at IHS

Table-2.2: APHIDB Exit Poll: Rating of hospitals in terms of personnel & facilities
[Patients]

Rating	Male			Female		Total	
	#	%		#	%	#	%
Excellent	0	0.00	1	100.00	1	5	
Good	5	29.41	12	70.59	17	85	
Fair	0	0.00	1	100.00	1	5	
Average	1	100.00	0	0	1	5	
Below Average	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Excellent	0	0	1	100.00	1	5	
Good	2	25	6	75	8	40	
Fair	1	50	1	50	2	10	
Average	3	33	6	66.67	9	45	
Below Average	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Excellent	2	67	1	33.33	3	15	
Good	5	29	5	71.73	7	35	
Fair	0	0	2	100.00	2	10	
Average	2	25	6	75.00	8	40	
Below Average	0	0	0	0.00	0	0	
Excellent	1	33	2	66.67	3	15	
Good	2	29	5	71.43	7	35	
Fair	0	0	1	100.00	1	5	
Average	3	33	6	66.67	9	45	
Below Average	0	0	0	0	0	0	

¹ (Report generated at IHS as on 24/06/94, data as on 10/06/94)

¹ * Note : Y= Yes, N= No, M= Male, F=Female and T= Total, []= Percentage

² All percentages expressed in terms of total respondents.

¹ Report generated through the EXIT POLL computerised database in Fox pro 2.0 at IHS