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# Hospital Management: Doctors' Role and Responsibilities

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The word 'Hospital' has got its origin from the Latin word 'Hospes' which means guest i.e. a place where a patient is accommodated as a guest and should be treated as a guest with dignity and honor. In context of the Indian culture, wherein a guest is taken akin to God, services provided to an ailing patient are not less than worshiping God. Hospital is a complex organisation wherein the doctors together along with people of different expertise and skills work to fulfil the common goal of care and cure of the ailing patient. Apart from treatment of their patients, the doctors today have a bigger role to play in the management of hospital affairs and other important functions for them as professionals which include training and education of the undergraduate and postgraduate medical students, nurses and paramedical, health promotion and prevention of diseases, medical research and rehabilitation work and heath awareness and education to the community.

The Supreme Court of India has said that a person cannot file a consumer complaint against a doctor after getting free of cost treatment from a government hospital. However, in terms of Consumer Protection Act (Section 2 (1) (d) (ii), a consumer is the one who hires or avails of any service for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid or partly promised, which means patients getting paid treatment are consumers, and hence with higher expectations for better services and facilities in health care institutes. The service quality in hospitals depends on the people including the doctors who provide it. Deficiency in service, negligent service, hospital mishaps during treatment, are the potential causes directly or indirectly responsible for litigations against the doctors or the hospitals.

The services in respect of any hospital include not only the patient cure, care and satisfaction, but also hospital safety and regulatory standards, financial issues, quality management, communication and counselling, medical tourism and medicolegal aspects of hospital management, medical records and updating the services in accordance with changing pattern of disease and treatment approach.

Fire safety, electrical safety, mechanical safety, biological safety, radiological

safety and other safety aspects in hospitals for the patients are some of the situations which may damage or disturb patient cure and safety undergoing treatment and demands participation of the medical staff including the doctor along with the technical experts of such fields as a part of better hospital management and the doctor under whose direct care is the patient, holds the bigger responsibility for the safety of the patient.

Non-compliance of regulatory standards in hospital management can lead to disruptions, poor quality of care, safety issues and substantial fines. Overutilization of resources, low staffing levels, system control by insurance companies and inflated price of patient care are some of the financial issues affecting patient care and hospital management. Awareness and education about rights and responsibilities of patients, updating and improving the communication and counselling skills, removing barriers for better patient satisfaction, command on public relationship, understanding and meeting needs of patient services, are all very important aspects of hospital management with leading role of the doctors to ensure the compliance.

Any breach of duty, by act of omission or commission, owed by the doctor to his patient to exercise reasonable degree of skill and care, will damage the patient care as well as hospital reputation and management, thus demands the main responsibility from the doctors. Under vicarious responsibility, although master is held responsible for the negligence of his servants within the scope of the employment, at the end it is the consumer and the patient and the family in respect of the hospital management, who is at loss by damage or death which requires the doctors' bigger role and responsibilities in the best interest of their patients.

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