

Accreditation-A Public Reporting Of Healthcare Quality Data

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Abstracts: Internet facility provides the easy and accurate access of the hospital performance on key metrics and because of this information the consumer has become more knowledgeable. Further, more to empower the consumer to make informed decision public reporting of healthcare data is Essential & that initiates the concept of 'Report Card' model for Hospital. Accreditation of hospital is public recognition awarded by National Healthcare Accreditation Body on the achievement of standard level of performance. National Accreditation Board for hospital and healthcare providers (NABH), set up to establish and operate Accreditation programme for Healthcare organization. Concept of Accreditation can be utilized successfully as a 'Report Card' is reviewed in this article [Joshi H et al NJIRM 2012; 3(4) : 148-151]

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Introduction: "Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of intelligent effort." Public report which indicates the quality of services provided by the hospital started before few years only. It reflects the standards of services rendered by the hospital to the patients, it indicates the standards of performance quality of the hospital. Following the successful model of how other consumer goods and services are graded on a variety of criteria, healthcare gurus believed that the time for following the same model for hospitals had come. This need was spurred during the beginning stages of the healthcare evolution because the number of hospitals were increasing, consumers were getting more involved in their care processes, the internet boom had taken place allowing for easy access of information,-and most importantly with increasing healthcare costs but supposedly questionable care being provided, there couldn't have been more compelling reasons to initiate the "report card" model for hospitals.

Accreditation of hospital can be a success in providing "Report Card" for healthcare quality data. Since then consumers have had the ability to research hospitals and review their performance on key metrics such as mortality, infection rates, antibiotic timing, costs, readmission rates, patient satisfaction to name just a few. Overtimes, as consumers have become more knowledgeable about healthcare the number of reportable metrics have increased both in scope and detail and they will continue to do so, so long as the data is meaningful. While the internet continues to be

the main source of this information, the media in general has realized the potency of this and hospitals' performance data can now be found periodically in newspapers, journals and even billboards, and for all we know a mobile phone application may also be available!

The intent behind allowing access to such information is simple-to empower the consumer to make informed decisions about their care, with the over-arching goal of transparency. The culture of transparency in healthcare is vital because consumers have an important stake in the outcome of care provided. Patients feel confident that they are in good hands when they are in a setting which endorses transparency while striving to continuously improve. At the same time transparency is also essential for clinicians as an open culture motivates them to feel safe in identifying the gaps in the system and then work towards addressing them.

Hospital Accreditation: Hospital Accreditation is a public recognition by a National, Healthcare Accreditation Body, of the achievement of accreditation standards by a Healthcare Organization demonstrated through an independent external peer assessment of that organization's level of performance in relation to the standards.

In India, Heath System currently operates within an environment of rapid social, economical and technical changes. Such changes raise the concern

for the quality of health care Hospital is an integral part of health care system. Accreditation would be the single most important approach for improving the quality of hospitals. Accreditation is an incentive to improve capacity of national hospital to provide quality of care. National accreditation system for hospitals ensure that hospitals, whether public or private, national or expatriate, play, there expected roles in national health system.

Confidence in accreditation is obtained by a transparent system of control over the accredited hospital and an assurance given by the accreditation body that the accredited hospital constantly fulfills the accreditation criteria.

Benefits of Accreditation

Benefits for Patients: Patients are the biggest beneficiary among all the stakeholders. Accreditation results in high quality of care and patient safety. The patients are serviced by credential medical staff. Rights of patients are respected and protected. Patients satisfaction is regularly evaluated.

Benefits for Hospitals: Accreditation to a hospital stimulates continuous improvement. It enables hospital in demonstrating commitment to quality care It raises community confidence in the services provided by the hospital. It also provides opportunity to healthcare unit to benchmark with the best.

Benefits for Hospital Staff: The staff in an accredited hospital is satisfied lot as it provides for continuous learning, good working environment, leadership and above all ownership of Clinical processes* It improves overall professional development of Clinicians and Para Medical Staff arid provides leadership for quality improvement with medicine and nursing.

Benefits to paying and regulatory bodies: Finally, accreditation provides an objective system of empanelment by insurance and other third parties. Accreditation provides access to reliable and

certified information on facilities, infrastructure and level of care.

NABH - Accreditation: National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) is a constituent board of Quality Council of India (QCI), set up to establish and operate accreditation programme for healthcare organizations. NABH has been established with the objective of enhancing health system & promoting continuous quality improvement and patient safety. The board while being supported by all stakeholders, including industry, consumers, government, has full functional autonomy in its operation.

NABH provides accreditation to hospitals in a non-discriminatory manner regardless of their ownership, legal status, size and degree of independence.

International Society for Quality in Healthcare (ISQua) has accredited "Standards for Hospitals", 2nd Edition, November 2007 developed by National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH, India) under its International Accreditation Programme for a cycle of 4 years (April 2008 to March 2012J. The approval of ISQua authenticates that NABH standards are in consonance with the global benchmarks set by ISQua. ISQua is an international body which grants approval to Accreditation Bodies in the area of healthcare as mark of equivalence of accreditation program of member countries. The hospitals accredited by NABH will have international recognition. This will provide boost to medical tourism.

Impact of Public Reporting: "Competition is the keen cutting edge of business, always shaving away at costs." While the primary intent of public disclosure of healthcare performance was to have this data be used by consumers, the reality appears to be something else. Studies indicate that it is indeed a rare occurrence when consumers utilize this information to select a hospital.¹ There are several possibilities for this ranging from consumers not aware of the availability of hospital

performance, difficulty, in understanding clinical quality measures and possibly because despite knowing hospital A is better than hospital B, the patient may still opt to get admitted in hospital A for practical reasons such as geographical proximity.

The unintended benefit of public reporting of data has been that it has motivated hospitals to start tracking their performance as well as perform comparatives and benchmarking on quality metrics. This increased transparency is serving as a catalyst for hospitals to provide better care.

In countries where performance metrics are reported publicly², hospitals closely monitor this data to a) ensure its accuracy and b) identify how to better the care they provide by "competing" with other hospitals. Hospitals have identified areas of improvement and have put in place process of care changes resulting in improved outcomes, based solely on the display of this vital data published studies have shown that public reporting has had a positive impact on length of stay, readmission and mortality rates.³ That's the momentum and heightened sensitivity this has generated. This competition has led to request from hospitals to provide benchmarks such as the top 10th percentile, national average, state average and further stratifications such as bed size, type of institutions etc. thereby allowing for a more normalized, "apples to apples" comparison. Naturally, the top performing hospitals capitalize on this data to try and increase revenue and build their brand while the others leverage this to learn and improve by example.

Another positive impact of this has been that the disclosure of such data is being used by to shape policies and healthcare reform. Globally, healthcare costs are rising with deteriorating quality and safety. Policy makers and economists review and monitor this data to link performance with costs and then determine what healthcare models may be effective. Successfully implemented quality improvement processes at hospitals are identified and analyzed to create a replicable model in other hospital healthcare

insurance companies too have realized the value of hospitals publicly reporting their data because studies have indicated that hospitals that report this data have lower- healthcare costs and perform better.⁴ And naturally, low costs with no negative impact on quality is what third party payors strive for so tracking this information is beneficial to them.

Limitation of Report Card: As with all publicly reported data, hospital performance reporting can and does have its limitations. The most frequent reason for push-back from hospital has been that the data is not risk-adjusted. For example, mortality rates reported for a hospital do not differentiate between preventable deaths (attributed to poor quality of care) versus inevitable death (because the patient was extremely unwell).⁵ However while some experts indicate that the answer is not risk-adjustment as that too has its limitations-only those factors can be risk-adjusted that can be measured and identified. Other advocates of healthcare quality and safety indicate that risk-adjustment should -be irrelevant in healthcare because regardless of the condition of the patient, there should not be any room for error or for not having a positive outcome.

Another concern that clinicians have is around the evidence based guidelines that serve as benchmarks for determining whether appropriate care was provided or not. Physicians have indicated that care needs to be personalized for each patient and no guideline is all-inclusive enough to incorporate all patient variables. Here is the role of Accreditation like NABH, JCI which ensures the quality of Healthcare provided.

Role of Accreditation: When performance Metrics is reported publicly in from of report card it observes the better quality care Provide hospital. As the accreditation by NABH or JCI, itself ensures the quality care. It can be considered as public Report card or Public Reporting of Health care Quality Date.

The Future :_In Present situation (scenario) it appears that Public reporting is here to stay. Given that it does in fact ultimately impact the consumer/Patient in a positive way. This will trigger the improvement efforts of the Hospitals to achieve a standard in form of accreditations, Efforts will need to be made to just educate the community on the availability of this data but more importantly on what it can do for them. In this association Hospital accreditation will have the desired result that of an empowered consumer.

In the best of all words, with the advent of electronic Medical records, active surveillance applications, advanced clinical decision support tools, internet availability Public reporting May become redundant as all patients are given the appropriate care proactively due to accreditation that results in positive outcome for all.

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