



Hotel Services In Hospitals

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Abstract

Hospitals, which play an important role in the prevention of diseases, improvement and maintenance of health levels, carry out their activities in high competition conditions with the services of diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation. In addition to the medical services of good quality hospitals provide, another factor in ensuring patient loyalty and satisfaction is hotel services. The aim of this study is to emphasize and offer information about the role, importance, and activity area of hotel services at hospitals. With this aim, the hotel services at hospitals will be explained, referring to the practices and literature information.

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INTRODUCTION

Hospital establishments are socio-economic institutions founded to satisfy the medical needs of the people. Hospitals are complex organizations operating in a dynamic environment with an important place in the service sector like hotels, banking, and transportation. With regard to the effective and efficient operation of the hospital in this context, beside the medical sections, the accommodation and food services, such as support services have an important place. The hotel services at hospitals are defined as the services such as welcoming the patient, referral to the patient rooms, cleaning and maintaining the general environment of the hospital, and food services (Sevin, 1998: p.2).

The quality management system includes continuous qualitative improvement and improvement of consumer satisfaction. Patient satisfaction is an important criterion used in the evaluation of the quality of medical services. Patient satisfaction could be expressed as an emotional reaction to the quality of the medical services observed during a certain medical treatment. In other words, "patient satisfaction: a measurement of the patient's evaluation of quality and service provided by the hospital employees" (Nor, 2011:p.6).

Today, hospitals take into account hospitality in patient care services to increase customer satisfaction. The hospitals are physically designed to have the comfort of a hotel. The design of modern hospitals is inspired by hotels and takes into account the factors such as patient satisfaction, expectations of families, and financial matters. Designing of the hotel services of a hospital is a complex process which takes into account planning, systematic thinking, and other factors. Apart from the medical services, the hotel service among support services has a positive effect on the patient's trust and loyalty as well as the trust and loyalty of their relatives to the hospital. Moreover, it is an element of the service approach of good quality (Shirzadi et al, 2016:p. 1). In addition, food services provided at hospitals are one of the ingredients supporting medical services provided to the patient. The failure of the food services of a hospital could lead to the hunger of the patients, lower patient satisfaction and loss of revenue. In addition to the medical treatment, hospital accommodation, hospital environment, nutrition, and catering are important factors in the improvement and development of the permanent quality of the hospitals when the patient stays in a hospital. Besides, it has a positive effect on the recovery of the patient. According to a study, it has been established that inadequate food services provided at the hospital and not monitoring the nutrients of the patients led to the protein-calorie deficiency and weight loss. In this context, the inadequacy of factors such as the quality of the food offered to the patients, its service, and the behaviour of the staff during the service and lack of alternative foods would lead to negative consequences such as malnutrition and weight loss. In this context, food services play an important part in the efforts to increase patient satisfaction.

Following findings have been established in a study conducted by Wright, Connely and Capra (2006) on the quality of food services at the hospitals. According to the findings of the study, with regard to the food quality, the taste, variety and the seasoning of the meal, the temperature of the hot foods and the texture of the vegetables and the meat have important effects on the general food service satisfaction scores of the patients in the acute care. Besides some features such as service presentation and the help of the staff, dinnerware/cutlery and food tray presentation, amount of the meal, and choosing a healthy diet were included in the study and it has been established that they affect the food service quality. A study conducted by Hwang, Eves and Desombre (2003) explains the

hospital food services and patient satisfaction with the following factors (Woo-Deaguero, 2014: pp. 12-16). Satisfaction factors related to the hospital food services are listed as: the taste of the food, temperature of the food, timing of the food service, the eating environment, the presentation of the food, informative Menu, and food distribution service staff.

CONCEPT OF HEALTH

It is difficult to come up with a definition of health which can include all its dimensions and which everyone can agree upon. Health is the absence of disease in the most general sense.

According to the definition of The World Health Organization (WHO) health is the state of being spiritually, physically and socially in good condition (Yıldırım, 1994:p. 10).

A conference was held in Ottawa in 1986 about healthcare and it mentioned mandatory prerequisites in order to be healthy. These prerequisites are stated as follows; to ensure that each individual has adequate income, appropriate education, adequate and balanced nutrition, appropriate environmental conditions, management services and resource planning in accordance with social justice and equity principles, and a peaceful environment in society. In addition to these opportunities individuals should have the states ensuring that they form their health policy, and financing and organization models taking into account their own health problems, priorities and resources (Ates, 2012:p. 4).

When health is evaluated as service feature we realize that they are labor-intensive abstract services; medical services are urgent and cannot be postponed; there is a high level of specialization in health care; the service-receiver are dependent on the service-provider in many aspects and healthcare output cannot be measured (Ates, 2012:p. 4-5).

Depending on the nature of the service offered in the field of health, the health service is a preventive and therapeutic health service. The preventive health services in Turkey are carried out by the Ministry of Health. The preventive health services include services on issues such as improving environmental health conditions, raising people's awareness of health, eliminating infectious diseases and family planning. Therapeutic health services are diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation and carried out by the inpatient treatment institutions in our country (Sevin, 1998:p.5). The health services are divided into three in terms of their main features as the preventive, therapeutic and rehabilitative medical services.

In the field of health services and primary health care services, healthcare organizations are grouped into two categories as inpatient and outpatient. Inpatient medical institutions are hospitals; whereas outpatient medical institutions are categorized as home health, health center, dispensary, family planning center, maternal child health centers, health group presidency and public health laboratories (Ak:1990).

HOSPITAL ESTABLISHMENTS

According to the definition of The World Health Organization (WHO) hospitals are "inpatient establishments which provide services grouped under the heading of observation, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation, where the patients receive short-term treatment" (Menderes, 1990:p. 4).

In Our Country, according to the definition in the Ministry of Health, inpatient regulation, hospitals are institutions where those who are sick, injured, possibly ill and wish to check up on their health status receive ambulatory or inpatient observation, examination, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation, and where people also give birth (Ministry of Health).

Hospitals have the characteristics of a health institution because of treatment services, of a business managed on economic policy, of an educational institution for the training staff, of a professional organization due to the work of those who serve different purposes and tasks within its body, and of a research institution because of the study in the medical field (Alpugan; Haftaci, 1995:p. 273-274). "Hospitals are establishments which are to provide health services within the scope of economic principles and at a maximum level"(Menderes, 1990, p. 4). The main objective of the hospital operation is to produce and sustain the diagnosis and treatment services that will provide the best benefit to the patient, to generate income for the continuity of this service, to provide collective service and social benefit to the society, and to produce the minimum input and the highest benefit level. Hospitals are classified according to their function, their ownership structures, size (number of beds), duration of hospital stay (long-short), their accreditation status, availability to the general population and their service types. In our country in the field of health service providers are categorized as hospital under the supervision of the Ministry of Health, University Hospitals and private hospitals.

Depending on the structure of the hospital, there are four kinds of functional activity areas in the hospital (Rowland, 1984:p. 1):

- Nursing functions
- Business or fiscal functions
- Ancillary or professional services,
- Support services

In order to give an account of the formation of the general business functions in hospital establishments, hospital functions could be categorized as follows (Sevin, 1998:p. 16-17):

- General management function
- Service production functions
- Medical service production
- Hotel services production
- Marketing and sales function
- Financing function
- Research and development function.

HOTEL SERVICES AS SUPPORT SERVICES IN HOSPITALS

Service businesses produce products or services or values which satisfy the needs in both categories. They have to do so in desirable quality, quantity and time and productively. Health services are services that must keep ready to use at any moment. Hospital establishments' primary service production is medical services. These services include outpatient clinics, operating rooms, laboratories, research, preventive services, pharmacy, and nursing services. However when the medical function of the hospital is abstracted, hospitals are wholly hotel services in function. The production and presentation of hotel services in hospitals are carried out by the hospitality and food departments and could be defined as a revenue-producing department. In addition to the accommodation and food service, there are other service revenues defined within the scope of hospitality services which satisfy other needs of the patient, such as newspapers and magazines sales, phone services and laundry. Hospital operations are services that meet patients' primarily diagnosis and treatment needs, and secondarily hospitality, food and beverage, and other needs. However, the hotel function which is a secondary aim of the hospital in addition to its main goal has not been researched well and remained obscure (Sevin, 1998:p. 26-29).

In 2014, the Ministry of Health in our country created "Health Hospitality Service Delivery Guide." In this guide, with the occurrence of health hospitality term, services are categorized into 13 service headings, namely staff, consultation and reception / guidance, patient admission (data entry), cleaning, waste management, refectory, security, patient / sample transportation, tailoring, and religious services. (Kozak, Gulenc, 2017:p. 5).

Patient Admission

Patient admissions the checking the patient into the hospital, generally in a year, for at least one night stay. Each patient goes through the admission procedure only once during their stay at the hospital. The Admissions Office is the part of the hospital where the first time patient applications are made, which provide counseling services, and where the information needed about the patient is recorded according to the patient's health problems before referring the patient to the relevant section. The primary function of the department is the patient admission, discharge and in case of death, necessary procedures and responsibility (Sevin, 1998:p.26).

Accommodation services

Accommodation Department can be defined as Admissions Office, housekeeping and service units. The admission of the patient to the hospital, referral to the proper sections, and the cleaning of patient rooms, corridors and hospital areas are the main functions of this department. Services related to maintenance and cleaning of floors and rooms in hospitals are defined as Housekeeping. This concept defined as "housekeeping" in foreign literature coincides with floor services in meaning. The housekeeping department has an important place in the efficient operation of the hospital. The methods and techniques applied in the implementation of hospital housekeeping services activities vary. As the service in this area require a special expert knowledge, these services in modern hospital management are carried out by the housekeeping department. The workload of housekeeping department varies depending on the number of patients. The functions of the housekeeping department in hospitals are categorized as daily and periodic cleaning and sustainable maintenance. The housekeeping department has relations with other departments such as food, purchase, technical service, laundry, tailor, patient admission, laboratory, and

outpatient center. Patient relationship service could be defined as the uniformed hospital staff which provide services related to patient admission and discharge. Their main functions could be listed as welcoming the patient, helping with counseling services, moving the patient and their belongings to the patient room after the admission, making purchases for the patient and recording these purchases in the admission office under the patient's name (Sevin,1998: p.26-38).

The Ministry of Health Inpatient Treatment Institutions Regulation (ITIR) define the patient room and their features (M.H. ITIR).

Patient Rooms and Their Features: It is common practice in inpatient treatment institutions to organize the patient rooms for one or two people. However, considering the physical conditions of the institution, it is possible to organize rooms for more patients.

Patient rooms are categorized as follows:

- a) Private Room: With one room, refrigerator, television, telephone and part and equipment for the refreshment of the companion, bathroom, sink, and toilet,
- b) First classroom: With one bed, toilet, bathroom, sink, and equipment for the refreshment of the companion,
- c) Second classroom: With two or three beds, some space among the beds, toilet, bathroom, sink.

Also with regard to patient rooms, in ITIR there is a clause that "during the continuation of the urgency and emergency, regardless of the class difference the patient will be admitted to the empty bed. Any changes to the room classes established will be notified to the Ministry of Health."

Food services

The food services in the hospital is considered to be one of the important departments of the hospital. Good nutrients matter in the treatment of the patient and is a part and parcel of the main treatment. Scientific studies proved that satisfactory nutrients make the recovery of the patient faster. Medical experts suggest that daily nutrient levels require a special care in the treatment of the patient. The food department in the hospital cooperate with medical staff and administration in providing healthy food to the patients. At the same time, hospital management accepts the importance of good nutrition service in public relations (Maceachem, 1962:p. 592-593).

The main goal of the food services department in a hospital is the production and service of foods in order to meet the food need of the hospital, for the patients and the staff. ITIR stipulated that hospitals should provide food one time to the intern students and medical and supportive medical staff who has training at the hospitals, three times to those who work at the institution all the time and on-call staff, and at the institutions which practice shifts, as many as required to those who do shifts at the institution. (M.H.ITIR.)

The food department can be defined as the supply, kitchen, restaurant, cafeteria, and service units. The main functions of this department are the purchase of food, preparation of standard prescriptions, and production and service of food (Sevin, 1998:p.37-45).

Laundry services

The laundry services at a hospital provide services such as the cleaning of the clothes, linens, towels provided by the hospital to the patient, and staff uniforms. They also carry out the colour, use and cleaning controls of the laundry. The management of hospital laundry is important both for human labour and for proper use of resources. The most important part of laundry cost is directly correlated to the proper application of washing methods. The space required for the hospital laundry can be established by the hospital's bed number. In general hospitals, 7.5-9.5 kg (14.5-7 feet) of laundry is washed per patient per day. The hospital laundry should be spacious and well-equipped enough to wash the amount necessary for the hospital's bed number (Sevin, 1998:p. 92; Fernandez, 1962:p. 146.)

Technical services

The technical services department at a hospital carries out maintenance services for the efficient and economic management of the hospital building, environment and equipment. The maintenance program carried out by this department consists of the control and maintenance of stationary and portable equipment, the physical condition of the hospital, all inner and outer areas and the gardens surrounding the hospital. At the hospital, technical services carrying out their tasks do so according to a program. With the successful application of this program, the department ensures the long use of the equipment, lower costs and continuity of functions. The factors which affect the success of the department could be listed as the employment of appropriate and qualified staff, the support of other departments or managers, the continuity of periodic training of the department staff and the program according to the necessities of the work, and supply of necessary equipment and resources by the hospital management (Sevin, 1998:p. 92-93).

Conclusion and Suggestions

In our country, the hospital reform efforts carried out by the Ministry of Health defines hospital hotel services as health hotel services. This effort formed a hotel services guide within the scope of health hotel services, defining the services under different categories and offering instructions on the service provided by the hotel staff. Again in the Ministry of Health ITIR there are duties and their definitions related to the hospital hotel services. Health hotel services aim to provide systematically services within the scope of quality standards such as cleaning, food, security, laundry, welcoming and directing the patients, temperature-sound-light level, air conditioning, garden design, car park, and valet.

Today patients have different health services and their expectations from medical services as well as the hotel services are high, seeking out a better service.

The feedback from the patient satisfaction survey is important for the hospital management to identify the strong and weak points for continuous improvement. Moreover, the analysis of patient satisfaction is a valuable tool not only to increase the market share or profits but also to develop strategies (Nor, 2010:p.16-20).

The aims of hospital hotel services are to welcome the patient by friendly staff, inform the patient without further ado, direct them in the right way, offer good and comfortable room services and food services of good

quality with good presentation, taste and nutrients during the treatment and ensure that the patient leaves the hospital healthy and happy.

Although the hotel services provided at the hospital are distinct from the medical treatment which is the primary service, they have a positive effect on the quality of the medical service provided, on the patient satisfaction and the attitudes of the patients and their companions toward the hospital. In addition, offering other services within the scope of food services or health hotel services will improve the reputation of the hospital, giving them a competitive edge against their rivals.

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