**Prevalent Safety Issues in Hospitals**

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Hospitals play a vital role in providing healthcare services to patients. Nevertheless, these establishments suffer from various safety issues. Hospitals and healthcare facilities are among the most hazardous places to work globally. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), hospitals recorded a rate of 5.5 work-related injuries and illnesses for every 100 full-time employees (OSHA, 2013). Safety issues in hospitals affect both patients and healthcare workers. We divide prevalent safety issues into two major factors, i.e., patient safety issues and healthcare workers' safety issues.

Patient safety is the prevention of injuries, illnesses, and unfavorable effects on patients in health facilities (WHO, 2023). Within the health system, it is a framework for an organized campaign that creates procedures in health care that lower risks and reduce the occurrence of harm to patients. Safety issues in clinics lead to around 1 in 10 patients getting injured in health centers and 3 million deaths annually due to unsafe care (WHO, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic encumbered hospitals' ability to deliver healthcare services. The control of the proliferation of the disease from patient to patient in healthcare was unmanageable, leading to hospitalization and death in many hospitals (WHO, 2022).

Health workers face a range of risks to chemical, physical, and biological hazards that are harmful to workers and patients (CDC, 2022). Even though healthcare providers are vital to the health system, they are paid less attention to their well-being. It was evident that nurses and doctors are more stressed due to a shortage of personnel, increased workload, and longer shifts (CDC, 2022). Developing countries experience poor pay, and the unavailability of modern health equipment like protective gloves and face masks leads to significant problems. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many healthcare workers got infected by patients due to various safety issues. Some healthcare workers unknowingly infected patients with the disease while treating them (WHO, 2022). Surveys on overall wellness have revealed high rates of infection, death, and fear of uncertainty regarding continued impact (CDC, 2022).

**Patient safety issues**

Patients may be at risk of several hospital hazards, such as medication errors. Medication-related harm affects 1 out of 10 patients in health facilities (WHO, 2023). Regardless of increased knowledge and the implementation of electronic medical records, medication mistakes still occur (Mackley, 2017). Medication errors include incorrect dosages or medications. These errors can lead to harmful drug reactions, like allergies. In some severe cases, these fallacies have led to patient fatalities (Mackley, 2017).

Furthermore, patients may be at risk of hospital-acquired infections (Mackley, 2017). Prevalent diseases include pneumonia, bloodstream infections, surgical infections, and urinary tract infections. These infections are minimal, except for catheter-related pathogens, which are on the rise. Healthcare workers understand that most patients may be compromised on more than one antibiotic and exposed to many diseases, specifically inpatients, increasing the risk of developing these infections (Mackely, 2017). Unfortunately, patients can be exposed to bacteria through healthcare workers if proper protective equipment guidelines are not adhered to.

Patient misidentification is another safety issue (WHO, 2023). Many hospital personnel are involved in a patient's care, which can lead to the wrong blood tests recorded, the requisition of false blood products, and the discharging of newborn infants to improper parents (Mackley, 2017). Incorrect identification of patients can cause many problems and have severe effects on a hospital setting. It can lead to adverse effects, such as wrong-site surgery. The inception of barcodes and electrical medical records are steps the healthcare sector has taken to mitigate the safety issue (Mackely, 2017).

Lastly, patient falls are the most frequent safety issue in hospitals. Their rate of occurrence ranges from 3 to 5 per 1000 bed days, and most of them lead to injury (WHO, 2023). That is why many healthcare facilities have a fall prevention plan available. Many hospitalized patients may be weak and on multiple medications, leading to increased restroom usage. These factors can increase the risk of falls (Mackley, 2017).

**Healthcare workers' safety issues**

Nonfatal occupational injury and illness are rampant among healthcare workers. Work stress often includes the harmful physical and emotional feedback that happens when the requirements for a job do not match the needs of the physician or nurse (CDC, 2022). Work stress can lead to poor physical and mental health due to overloaded schedules, heavy workloads, and colleague bullying.

Unsafe work practices are another major safety issue for workers (CDC, 2022). Recapping and reusing syringes may cause the spread of diseases in hospitals. Cell phone usage in clinical areas may cause potential injury to the healthcare worker due to distraction and device contamination. Poor quality of personal protective equipment can cause the spread of infections such as COVID-19 to health workers (WHO, 2022). Improper disinfection and disposal of biohazard equipment has adverse effects on hospitals and, in many cases, has led to the spread of pathogens among health care providers.

Another safety issue is exposure to chemical hazards (CDC, 2022). These include medications, solutions, gases, and other toxic substances that are harmful to the body. Chemical exposure leads to inhalation of poisonous gases in hospital labs or accidental ingestion of hazardous substances due to poor concentration on the work at hand. Permeating chemicals through the skin with sharp objects can have fatal implications for healthcare workers; therefore, they must always be careful and wear protective material (CDC, 2022).

Finally, environmental hazards have many concerns for the safety of healthcare workers (CDC, 2022). These aspects of the workplace can cause injury due to inadequate equipment, improper workstation design, and hazardous flooring. Musculoskeletal injuries, such as back pain, are caused by the physical demands of patient care. Awkward postures and standing for long periods, especially during surgeries, can create musculoskeletal issues and fatigue (CDC, 2022).

Patient and health worker safety issues in hospitals have had many implications financially and socially for healthcare facilities. The World Health Organization has recognized hospital safety as an international health priority (WHO, 2023). The Organization has taken drastic steps in protecting hospitals by developing standards for preventing occupational hazards, advocating for the health and safety of health workers, and supporting countries to implement occupational health activities for workers (WHO, 2023). Ensuring a safe working environment and the welfare of clinical processes is one of the steps healthcare facilities should undertake to reduce safety concerns. The Global Patient Safety Action Plan provides a plan for action by hospitals to join efforts and properly implement healthcare safety initiatives (WHO, 2023). The objective is to reduce avoidable harm due to unsafe health care. Imagine a situation in which everyone is safe in hospitals.

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