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Development and use of humanities collection in hospital libraries in Hyderabad: a survey

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ABSTRACT

Humanities have a prominent role in medical education and practice as well as patient care. Therapies like Music therapy, Bibliotherapy, and Spiritual healing, etc. have proven their impact on healing. Nowadays, hospitals are developing their own library and information systems. But, are these libraries developing required materials on humanities? A survey was conducted at selected hospital libraries in Hyderabad to determine the extent to which they acquired and used humanities resources for patients and physicians. The survey results suggested that humanities resources were not acquired or used to any extent in the hospital libraries in Hyderabad. The authors suggest implementation of national and international standards and international action and other various strategies through which humanities collections could be acquired and used.

INTRODUCTION

The whole universe as a system consists of inter-related and inter-dependent subsystems or units. The universe of knowledge, pertaining to the universe, obviously consists of inter-related and inter-dependent subjects/disciplines. The supplementary and

complementary relation between and among different subjects is quite evident from the existence and emergence of various inter-disciplinary subjects such as biochemistry, physical chemistry, geochemistry, geopolitics, economic geography, etc. The assumption that inter-relation exists only among subjects belonging to a particular faculty is not true.

Inter-relation also exists between and among subjects belonging to different faculties. Subjects like industrial psychology, medical ethics, medical Jurisprudence, social medicine, and social ecology, etc. form examples for the same. If chemistry and biology form the base for Medicine, humanities prove to be a utilitarian complementary for therapeutics, hence there emerged Medical Humanities. There are examples of many a great work in the field of humanities that have changed the whole world. They have changed the behavior of millions. Vedas, Bhagavadgeeta, Upanishads, Bible, Quran, etc. have brought in revolutions in the human society. They provided moral, spiritual and philosophical base to the society for social and individual reforms and control, self-control and self-management. Self-control and self-management are very important for a patient who suffers from ill-health, especially severe ill-health. Without self-control and courage, it will be very difficult for one to deal with health management.

Health on one side, mental agony, anxiety on the other side, pull down the well-being of a person. It is in view of this, works like, Carnegie's *How to stop worrying and start living*, Canfield, Hansen, Aubary and Mitchell's *Chicken soup for the surviving soul*, Hill's *You can work your own miracles*, etc. have proved to be the best sellers and important works. There are several such works that are a must for patients in getting them prepared for any kind of medical treatment.

Patient's preparation to cooperate with physicians/treatment is quite essential. For this a moral, spiritual and mental boost is necessary that can be provided by the works in the field of humanities. The need for pleasant and inspirational reading proves to be a necessity at the post-therapeutic stages, also. Even the physicians need to be strong at these areas of moral, spiritual and philosophical base to provide right counseling and advice to the patients, and also to develop effective communication, understanding and relationship. The Medical Humanities explore how the humanities, traditionally concerned with recording and exploring human experience, engage with specific experiences of patients, doctors, health, illness, and suffering. In view of all the above, humanities collection in hospital libraries forms a crucial part.

Further, humanities have a prominent role in therapy and patient care. Therapies like Music therapy, Bibliotherapy, Spiritual healing, etc. and books on inspirational reading especially on Art of living, Philosophy, Biography, etc. have proven their impact on healing. The merit of these therapies is that they seldom have side effects and proved to work wonders as supplementary and complementary therapies. Macnaughton (2000:24) is of the opinion that "Imaginative identification with the characters involved will allow them at least vicarious experience of these problems before having to deal with them as doctors in a clinical situation. Students may also learn useful skills from the humanities, such as what makes for good—and poor—oral communication, from drama; or the skill of analysis and argument (as we shall later see) from philosophy."

Evans and Greaves (1999) state, As the General Medical Council suggests that engagement with the humanities might offer several benefits, including fostering clinicians' abilities to communicate with patients, to penetrate more deeply into the patient's wider narrative, and to seek more diverse ways of promoting well being and reducing the impact of illness or disability. For chronic illness in particular (where biomedicine offers only a partial response) clinical medicine seems likely to serve its patients best by incorporating into their treatment an appreciation of individual patients' experience. This might help to avoid over prescribing (or occasionally under prescribing) and over dependence. Again, a narrowly causal view of how people become ill in the first place is inadequate to understanding the role of psychosocial factors in aetiology and how they fuse with physical factors. Hence a more "narrative" understanding of illness might be important diagnostically as well.

Presently Medical world is almost well aware of this fact. It is quite evident that in United Kingdom a number of universities are now employing lecturers in the medical humanities. The University of Durham has set up a Center for the Arts and Humanities in Health and Medicine (CAHHM). The center deals with all the aspects of the arts in health with a major emphasis on medical education and on the evaluation of educational activities involving the arts. Grant (2002) presents substantial reasons to include humanities in the core curriculum of medical education viz. 1) to increase understanding of human condition, 2) to expose students to the critical analysis of ideas, 3) to make more allowance for individual differences, etc. He also presents in schematic manner how other disciplines, such as: economics, education, English literature, psychology, philosophy, politics, mathematics, history, art history, law, sociology, anthropology, archaeology, religious studies and theology, have contributions to make doctor-patient and other relationships.

There is also a greater awareness regarding the importance of library and information support services in the modern hospitals. Lindner and Sabbagh (2004: 94) state that for over twenty years the library staff has provided consumer/patient information to the public and patients at Englewood Hospital and Medical Centre, Englewood, New Jersey. Schneider (2005: 75) states, "the librarians have worked cooperatively with clinicians for more than 20 years to provide quality, evidence-based consumer health information on demand for patients, family, and staff." There are many such studies that report the library support service in the hospitals.

The trend is that the hospitals are developing their own library and information systems to meet the reading and information needs of both the physicians and the patients. But, are these libraries developing required materials on humanities? This is an important issue to be addressed. It is the patient, who is the center of the health care system, is grievously ignored, and especially in connection with developing patient oriented collection and services in the hospital libraries. The situation in the developing countries may be of greater concern because of lack of awareness, proper system, resources, budgets, etc. Therefore, there is a need to carry out a study with regard to the state-of-the-art of the humanities collection in the hospital libraries in the developing countries.

Medical humanities is still in the first flush of youth—if not infancy—and questions about its nature, scope, and identity continue to occupy those engaged in it. One of these questions concerns its relationship to the “arts in health” movement, and thus to the therapeutic roles for creative and expressive arts in the clinical situation. This relationship is far from clear, and on examination it is a complicated and intriguing one (Evans H M & Greaves D, 2002). Under such circumstances the state of the affairs of medical humanities in medical education and humanities collection in hospital/medical libraries medical can easily be understood.

However, in the advanced or developed present society, every hospital should have a patient library with considerable collection of books/reading material on humanities besides health information. In view of this in order to find out the state of humanities collection in hospital libraries a survey of the hospital libraries in twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad (referred to as Hyderabad) was carried out. Hyderabad, a city in south India, has occupied a place in the world map, as an I T hub and knowledge city. It has seen overall development that a model city is expected to achieve. Hyderabad is a representative city in India with the nature of metropolitan city, progressive city, knowledge parks, R&D institutions and Universities. It is the city of Hyderabad where there are many ISO 9001:2000 certified organizations, fortune five hundred companies, Joint Commission International (JCI) accredited hospital, etc. In a way Hyderabad can be called as a representative city of a developing country. The state-of-the art of collection development and use of humanities collection in the hospital libraries in Hyderabad will almost represent the state-of-the art of humanities collection in the cities in developing countries. The situation in such an advanced city will certainly prove to be an indicator to the state-of-the art of the problem in developing countries in general and India in particular. Hence, the survey is conducted with the following objectives and methodology.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the state-of-the art of development of humanities collection in hospital libraries in Hyderabad.
2. To find out the use of humanities collection in the hospital libraries in Hyderabad
3. To present a strategy for developing humanities collection in hospital libraries.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study deals with the state-of-the art of development of humanities collection and its use in hospital libraries in Hyderabad (India). Further, it confines itself to the use of humanities collection by the patients and caregivers and the library services to them. However, it also partially covers physicians demand for humanities literature and the state of medical humanities in general.

METHODOLOGY:

Survey method was used to carry out the study. As Hospital libraries are not available with every hospital, the popular corporate and Government hospitals and some of the hospitals with 150 beds that are bound to have a library were served with a questionnaire. In all twenty-five libraries were served with the questionnaire, whereas 20 libraries have responded. Besides the questionnaire method, unscheduled interview was also conducted to gather data/information from physicians and librarians. The following are the data and findings of the study.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA:

The questionnaire designed for collecting the data regarding the state-of-the art of Humanities collection in hospital libraries contained questions on the size of library collection in general and humanities collection in particular, budget allocation for humanities collection, use of humanities collection, etc. The following tables present the data on the above listed aspects.

STATE OF THE HUMANITIES COLLECTION IN THE HOSPITAL LIBRARIES:

The hospital libraries contain reasonable size of collection. Of the libraries 50% fall under the category of libraries with size of collection between 1000-5000 volumes. The library with least number of books contains 786 volumes whereas; the largest one is with 24,878 volumes. However, only one library that has 4500 collection houses a collection of 50 books on humanities (Table 1). In other words, Only one library has humanities collection that too it is the library of JCI accredited hospital.

Table 1. Size of book collection in the hospital libraries

No. of volumes	No. of libraries	Percentage Of libraries	No. of libraries With Humanities collection	Percentage Of libraries
Less than 1000	4	20		
1000 – 5000	10	50	1	5
5000 – 10000	1	5		
10000 – 15000	1	5		
15000 – 20000	3	15		
20000 and above	1	5		
Total	20	100	1	5

BUDGET ALLOCATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES FOR PATIENTS/CAREGIVERS IN HOSPITAL LIBRARIES:

Of the libraries 15% allocate budget for non-medical books (Table 2), whereas only one library has developed a small collection of books in humanities (Table1). Only one library i.e. 5% of the libraries allocated 5% of its budget for humanities collection.

It is 25% of libraries that serve patients and their caregivers with information; however none of them lends books to patients/caregivers. In fact, only 15% of the libraries are formally permitted to render information services, whereas, 10% of the libraries provide services occasionally on humanitarian grounds.

Of the responding libraries 85% stated that they are agreeing with the idea of providing patients with information. However, 25% of the libraries provide patient/caregivers with books on humanities, fiction and entertainment. It is clear from table 1 that only one library contains collection on humanities. When clarification was sought the librarians stated that they provide patients and caregivers with entertainment magazines and newspapers. 95 percent of libraries agree that humanities collection is as important as medical collection in hospital libraries. Only 25% of the libraries have stated that patients and caregivers approach the library for library resources (Table 2).

Table—2: Budget allocation and library services for patients in hospital libraries

	Percentage of libraries providing the service	Percentage of libraries not providing the service
Allocation of specific budget to non-medical documents	15	85
Providing patients/caregivers with Information	25	75
Lending books to patients	0	100
Authorized/permitted to provide patient with library services	15	85
Agreeing with the idea of providing patients with library service	85	15
Providing patients with books on humanities, fiction, and entertainment	25	75
Agreeing that humanities collection is as important as medical collection in health /medical libraries	95	5
Patients or their attendants/care givers approaching for library resources	25	75

TYPE OF MATERIALS USERS REQUEST FOR

Generally, patients and their caregivers approach the hospital libraries for newspapers and magazines. The data (figure 1) also show that 25% of the libraries have stated that patients/caregivers request the libraries for newspapers and magazines. Comparatively, less percentage of libraries has stated that they request for audio records, Internet and books. However, none of the libraries stated that they request for the video records.

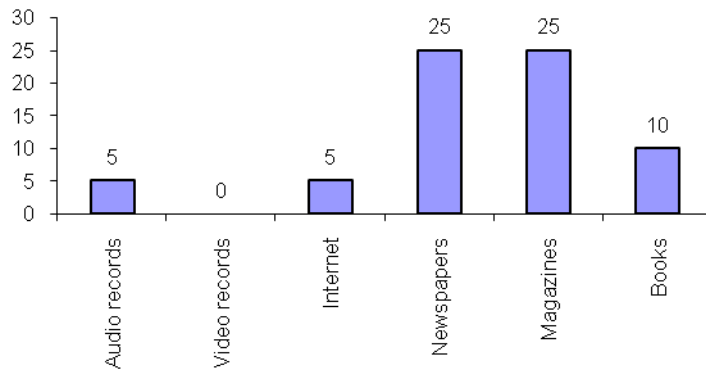


Fig: 1 Bar diagram showing data about percentage of libraries that indicated type of Materials users request for

SUBJECT-WISE DEMAND FOR BOOKS BY PATIENTS/CAREGIVER

All the 25% of libraries, which have stated that they provide patients and caregivers with information, responded that patients/caregivers demand for books on first aid, general medicine and diseases. 5 to 10 percent of the libraries have stated that the patients/caregivers demand books on philosophy, biography, Meditation and Art of living.

Subject	%demand
First Aid	25
General medicine	25
Diseases	25
Philosophy	5
Biography	5
Meditation	10
Art of living	10
Spiritualism	Nil
Religion (including religious scriptures)	Nil
Music	Nil
Other fine arts	Nil
Cinema	Nil
Others (please specify)	Nil

FINDINGS

The study revealed that the idea of developing humanities collection in hospital libraries is almost non-existent. In view of this the question of use of humanities collection in the hospital libraries does not arise. If this is the state-of-the art of development and use of humanities collection in hospital libraries in a progressive and advanced city like Hyderabad, the state-of-the art in small cities and towns in developing countries can easily be understood.

It is surprising to note that the situation instead of improving seems to be regressing considerably because "the idea of healing through books is not new one—it can be traced back in history, from the days of the first libraries in Greece" (Bibliotherapy,1982). Wikipedia records that bibliotherapy is an old concept in library science. In the US it is documented as dating back to the 1930's. ... especially after WWII, because the soldiers had a lot of time on their hands while recuperating. Also, the soldiers felt that reading was healing and helpful. In psychiatric institutions bibliotherapeutic groups flourished during this time. The books kept the patients busy, and they seemed to be good for the general sense of well being for a variety of reasons (Wikipedia, 2008). The enumeration of patient's/hospital libraries in Ranganathan's Colon Classification (CC) and Dewy's Decimal Classification (DDC) indicate that there exist patient/hospital libraries which in turn denote that there was concern for the reading needs of patients. Whereas, now in advance society, information and knowledge society, the idea of providing reading materials to patients is diminishing or almost vanishing.

Compared to the practices of the recent past the present practices are not encouraging. While collecting data for present study through the interview of librarians and doctors one of the doctors at Gandhi hospital mentioned that previously an NGO used to serve the in-patients with reading materials for recreative and inspirational reading. Now (he could not specify exactly how many years back the service was stopped) there is no such service.

From the above, it is clear that the situation is regressing, may be due to several reasons. Whatever may be the reason(s), the reality is that patients are not provided with reading material that has healing and comforting effect. It is again interesting to note that cable TVs have entered into the patients' rooms and there is a radical change in the reading habits due to the intervention of new media, Internet, etc. However, there is a need to carry out studies to find out whether such media have as much healing effect as the reading has?

From the interview of two of the librarians belonging to Kamineni hospital library and Apollo hospital library, which are the corporate hospitals the following, was found out: The Kamineni Hospital library has a programme of visiting the in-patients on holidays, especially on Sundays, and offering them the reading material and information on health care. Whereas the Apollo hospital library had an open access patient's library, consisting of books on humanities and general books on health care, without being manned by

library staff. Their experience was that there was considerable loss of books. As a result they had to close this service.

As far as the use of humanities collection in hospital library is concerned as mentioned earlier the question does not arise, as almost all libraries do not contain reasonable size of collection on humanities, however the survey reveals that there are some patients/caregivers (25%) approach libraries for their resources (Table 2). Though, it is minority of the libraries i.e. 5 to 10 percent of the libraries (Table 3) which have mentioned that the patients/caregivers demand for books on philosophy, biography, art of living, meditation, etc. gives a hint that there are patients and caregivers who are interested in reading documents on humanities. This indicates that there is scope for increasing demand for library resources from patients/caregivers provided awareness and interest are created among them towards library services and value of reading in the process of healing.

Most of the librarians while responding to the interview stated that their users do not find time for reading especially the physicians. The invariable answer was “Where is time for them to read?” However it is at Gandhi hospital, the librarian was found collecting material on art of living for a user (doctor). When she was asked, “Whether the library users approach for material on art of living and humanities?” The response was “There is only one doctor who seeks material on humanities, especially on art of living.” When clarification was sought, as the library does not include the humanities collection how they provide humanities information? The response was that the material is collected/provided from newspaper clippings and journal articles.

STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING HUMANITIES COLLECTION IN HOSPITAL LIBRARIES

Every hospital should have a “patient's library” containing books on humanities for recreative and inspirational reading besides non-book recreative materials and information sources on medicine and health care.

As per the official norms in India/Andhra Pradesh, all hospitals with 150 and more beds should have a library. This norm clearly indicates there is no official compulsion on all hospitals that have less than 150 beds. This deprives the patients of small hospitals of the library facilities and services. To improve the situation the official norm should be **“Every hospital should have a library to serve the reading and information needs of patients/caregivers besides the physicians.”**

Every hospital library should allocate a part of its budget on humanities collection, because, there is a demand for library resources and services from the patients/caregivers (Table 2).

Though some libraries stated that patients/caregivers approach library for its resources, majority of the libraries i.e. 75% (Table-2) have stated that patients/caregivers do not

approach the library for its resources. This shows that there is lack of awareness or lack of interest or lack of mobility on their part. It is in view of this the hospital libraries should provide outreach services by visiting the patients/caregivers and create awareness and interest in them to utilize the library resources and services. This should be practiced as the basic mission and philosophy of clinical librarianship in hospital libraries to take the library out of the library walls as exhorted by Lamb in 1973(Lamb, 1984).

The hospital libraries may explore the local, regional, national and international resources to develop their collection on humanities. They must endeavor to attract the local resources such as scholars, academics, industrialists, and philanthropist to gift the libraries with valuable books on humanities from their personal collections and/or extend financial aid as per their capacity. There are instances where health science libraries have developed their resources by collaborating with different foundations/organizations. Englewood Hospital and Medical Center has collaborated with the Meland foundation Network for Medical and Health Information. Its founder Robert Nelson, established an office for the foundation on the second floor of the library. The mission of the foundation is to provide information and inspirational literature to patients and families (Lindner-Sabagh, 2004).

A hospital library should also ensure measures to check book loss at the time of discharging of the patients by imposing production of “no dues certificate” from the library by the patients/caregivers.

In hospital libraries book selection committee should be formed to select valuable books on humanities. The book selection process should also provide a place for suggestions of patients/caregivers.

The local NGOs may be motivated and attracted to provide reading material to the inpatients in those hospitals where there are no libraries. "About 300 institutions were identified as the humanities libraries whether governmental and non-governmental dealing with different aspects of the subject [in India in the year 2002]" (Sodhi, 2002:109). In his study Sodhi dealt with seven libraries in Hyderabad itself. When there are 300 humanities libraries spread all over India, the hospital libraries can tap the recourses of those libraries that are located in their respective cities. Besides, the local public libraries may also be requested to extend their mobile library services to the inpatients of the hospitals. The hospital library should endeavor to coordinate the services of NGOs, Public libraries, and humanities libraries in their city/state in ensuring library services to patients. Where there is feasibility they can also form active network for resource sharing among themselves and other libraries in their city.

Finally, the accrediting bodies/federal/state/local governments should develop necessary regulations for developing and maintaining effective library and information services for patients in all categories of hospitals at the time of their establishment or recognition and inspection.

CONCLUSION

Humanities collection forms a significant part of hospital/patient's libraries, as reading has a healing effect. Recreational and inspirational reading has both healing and soothing effect.

Every patient should respond to the treatment given by his/her physician, otherwise administration of the treatment would become very difficult. A well-informed and knowledgeable patient would respond in a better way compared to misinformed and ignorant one. At the same time the physicians also should have shared concern with creative imagination in health care and respect the feelings, privacy, preferences of the patients.

There is a need for philosophical, ethical, and moral base for everyone to develop right attitude, required courage and confidence. To prepare for painful treatment such as surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, dialysis, etc. patients need courage and confidence. This can be ensured by works on philosophy, art of living, religion, etc. that have great impact on human mind and attitude. "Here then humanistic, artful, medicine becomes both a healing art and the occasion of a therapeutic art in health." (Evans and Greaves, 2002)

Standards for hospital libraries 2002 and *Standards for hospital libraries 2002 with 2004 and 2007 revisions* do not exclusively mention patients' libraries/sections in hospital libraries and development of humanities collection in these libraries. However, they cover patients and their families (caregivers) under standard 7: "The library actively promotes Knowledge Based Information (KBI) services and resources to all user groups and provides evidence thereof." As it does not clearly mention about humanities collection, it is desirable to have exclusive provisions for humanities collection and patient's library services in these standards so that there will be formal support to the hospital libraries to develop humanities collection and provide library services to the patients.

Further, the standards do not specify the need for hospital libraries, especially patient's library, in every hospital. As a result, provisions for establishment of library in a hospital is implied under standard 8: "All KBI functions are performed in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations." Even this is also not clear. Under such circumstances, those federal, state, and local laws that do not stipulate regulations regarding establishment of hospital libraries would render the patients of the hospitals under their jurisdiction deprived of the hospital/patient's library services.

It is in the "*Standards for hospital libraries in Germany*" (2004) that a clear provision for patient's library and recreational readings is made as follows: "Ideally, besides the scientific library there should also be a patients' library providing the patients of the hospital with patient education materials, information brochures, recreational literature, etc."

On lines with the above German Standards, it will be better if every country develops their Hospital Library standards to suit their own local needs.

The very theme of the World Library and Information Congress: 74th IFLA General Conference and Council; Health and Biosciences Libraries Section "The Role of Humanities in Medical Education and Patient Care", itself indicates that IFLA section on Humanities is committed towards launching a global movement in this regard. It will be befitting on its part to make necessary recommendations for incorporation of required provisions/regulations for the development of humanities collection in hospital libraries in the *Standards for hospital libraries 2002* its forthcoming revision and also for inclusion of the same in the criteria for Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation process.

If hospital libraries promote healthy reading habits among the patients and the medical education incorporates Medical Humanities as part of the core curriculum they will be rendering a great service to the ailing millions and every hospital whether it is a small or large should give importance to the aspect of healing without side effects and painful treatment.

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