

If and released in a  
manner calculated to



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

If an editor understands the hospital's problems, he can help enormously. However sensational reporting cannot always be prevented. In such cases, it may be worthwhile to hold a press conference and be frank.

When something has gone seriously wrong and consequences may be of legitimate public concern, to await questions and then provide patchy answers is to court disaster. Legitimate information must be volunteered as early as possible. Clearance of all material intended for release must be controlled by the chief of public relations who would consult the concerned departmental chief. The material should be put on a format and released in a manner calculated to benefit the hospital. Information regarding the condition of hospital patients, especially VIP's and very serious patients, should be guarded and preferably governed by an approved code. Interviews of patients by the press or taking their photographs should only be permitted if the patient or his or her relatives consent and if it is in the hospital's interest.

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#### **Medical Information and Information Regarding Patients:**

Information concerning the medical staff for release for public consumption, except medical papers for professional publications, is required to be cleared by public relations. Needless to say, such information and medical facts should be within the ambit of medical ethics. No information regarding patients should be released without the consent of the patient (for which a consent form must be signed by the patient), and the consent should be "informed consent". All questions about the hospital, its operations and its

patients which are likely to be publicly quoted or published must be cleared and replied only by the chief of public relations.

### **3. Nursing Services:**

Whatever may be their physical condition, the psychological needs of patients demand a strong sense of its recognition by nurses.

The nursing staff must learn to assess with a refined judgement what are the patients' needs without, more often than not, the voluntary declaration of how he or she feels or wants. To this end, the nursing education programme should be able to prepare them adequately for performance of the patient activities related to their cultural bases. The hospital administrator on his part must determine the patient expectations from the hospital; communicate them effectively to all levels of supervision and through them to the nursing staff for creation of better team spirit. Problems identified through consumer critique can be tackled by managerial efforts which involve nothing but thoughtfulness, concern for patients' needs are respect for human dignity than anything else (Ray, 1979).

### **4. Role of Women's Voluntary Organisation:**

There is considerable scope of women's voluntary organisations not only to improve public relations but also in easing some of the administrative burdens of the hospital. These organisations have been doing commendable work for many worthwhile causes, including health care, and there is no reason why their services should not be utilised on a bigger scale in hospitals.

In many western countries, millions of women give their dedicated time to voluntary hospital services. In USA, the service is formalised in the form of “Womens Hospital Auxiliary”. The NHS of England has demonstrated the effectiveness of community involvement especially in long- stay hospitals and utilises the services of volunteer’s extensively. For the last 20 years, the NHS has shown its appreciation of volunteers by appointing voluntary service coordinators to get the best out of it, and to enhance the effectiveness of voluntary service contribution. Voluntary effort by such organisation can be utilised in hospital wards, in the OPD, at the reception and enquiry counter, in managing gift shop and in fund raising. However, it is through their work, generally establishing community contact and educating the community, which their public relations value lays. The volunteers should be made conversant with the general functioning of the hospital in order to make effective community contact.

However, it should be made certain that such services do not attempt to exercise authority in the administration of the hospital and become a liability than an asset. Usually, they can be of inestimable value, provided working relationship between such organisations and hospital administration are laid down on mutual understanding.