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WORLD PATIENT SAFETY DAY

"LET'S MOVE TOWARDS HARM FREE CARE"

December 9th, every year, marks the World Alliance for Patient Safety Day. The World Health Organization (WHO) launched this Alliance day in 2005 to increase the awareness of unsafe healthcare. The purpose of Patient Safety Day is to revolutionize high level support and commitment to tackle patient safety issues in all parts of the world.[1]

The discipline of patient safety highlights the importance to prevent harm to patients, caused by the process of healthcare itself. Improving patient safety means reducing harm to the patient.[3]

Why Patient Safety is a concern?

Recent advancement in technology has created an immensely complex healthcare system. This complexity brings many challenges for healthcare staff in order to keep the patient safe. Though, a lot of people are treated successfully but there are times when things can go wrong. Estimates show that in developed countries as many as one in 10 patients is harmed while receiving hospital care.[3]

What are the main issues affecting Patient safety?[3]

- **Diagnostic Errors:** such as wrong, missed or unintentional delayed diagnosis.
- **Health Care-Acquired Infections:** These are the errors which occur during patient's hospitalization.
- **Medication Errors:** are when a patient gets the wrong medication, or when he or she receives the right medication but in the wrong dosage.
- **Readmissions:** A readmission is when a patient needs to return to the hospital less than 30 days after being discharged.
- **Wrong-Site Surgery:** Wrong-site surgery means an operation done on the wrong part of the body or on the wrong person.
- **Communication:** Proper communication between the hospital workers as well as between the patient and doctor.

What can you, as a patient, do for your own safety?[4,5]

- Make sure that your name is rightly spelt on all the medical files and lab reports;
- Ask questions to your doctor or medical staff if you have doubts or concerns regarding the medications or any medical procedure;

- If you do not follow the details provided, take a relative or friend to help you ask questions and understand the answers;
- Make sure that you understand the pros and cons of the surgery if you need one;
- Tell your doctors or therapist about all the medicines you take (including over-the-counter drugs and dietary supplements);
- Also give details about the allergies you have, the diseases you have suffered from earlier or any surgery that you may have previously undergone;
- If you are not sure about the medical advice given, get a second opinion about the treatment options;
- Report any adverse effects you develop after taking medicines to your treating physician; If you have a health insurance policy, discuss it with your doctor;
- Always maintain a copy of your own health records.

How to improve Patient Safety? [1,4,5]

- Application of lessons learned from business and industry
- Adoption of innovative technologies
- Education of the providers as well the consumers
- Improvement of the error reporting systems
- Development of new economic incentives

● Precautions for patients & health practitioners[3]

- **Hand Hygiene:** Wash/ sanitize your hands frequently while providing any kind of care to the patients.
- **Gloves:** Wear gloves while coming in contact with the patient.
- **Facial Protection:** Wear a surgical, eye wear or face shield while treating the patient.
- **Linen:** Proper sterilization of linen before every use
- **Needles:** Dispose the contaminated needles after every use.
- **Patient care equipment:** Clean and disinfect the reusable equipments before using it for another patient.
- **Dispose off the waste:** Ensure proper disposal of biomedical waste (waste produced in the hospital)
- **Etiquettes:** Cover the nose/mouth while coughing / sneezing. Use a tissue/ handkerchief.

● Patient Safety: A Brief Comparison

- Though patient deaths due to lack of safety measures are common in India, the concept of 'Patient Safety' still remains foreign to us and must be internalized on an urgent basis, says Ms. Maheshvari Tamboli, Clinical Research Manager, Hill Top Research Inc., Florida, USA. "Both India and USA have private and public healthcare, and important policy decisions are being made which will influence health in these countries in the years to come. However, lack of basic facilities like safe water, food and sanitation are issues which India is finding tremendously difficult to overcome. The 'everything goes' (sab chalta hai) attitude of healthcare professionals (as well as patients and their relatives!) results in numerous loss of lives inside Indian hospitals. Cases of side-effects and morbidity are even greater, but no concrete pharmacovigilant steps are taken to prevent medication and healthcare errors. Thus, patient safety is an issue where Indian healthcare system should really learn from the West, since each and every life counts." Ms. Tamboli also writes for Association of Clinical Research Professionals.



WEAR GLOVES



HAND WASH



SURGICAL



DISPOSE WASTE

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