

HOSPITAL MEDICINE New Medical Phenomenon

14 Oct 2018  0 comments [Share](#) |



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Hospital Medicine is a new medical phenomenon that has taken wide acceptance throughout the world. It has spread throughout the United States as well. It is the fastest growing specialty in the history of medicine. There are more than 50,000 hospitalists working in approximately 75 per cent of the United States hospitals, according to latest reports.

The hospitalists are mostly general internal medicine physicians catering to the needs of all acutely ill hospitalised patients. This is patient-specific programme which brings uniformity to patient care in the hospital. Emphasis is on efficiency in treating patient while providing quality care with minimum hospital cost and resources utilisation.

Since the implementation of Obama care, there is a lot of emphasis on admission either as outpatient (observation) or inpatient. Patient not meeting criteria for inpatient admission must be admitted as outpatient (observation). Observation patients must be discharged within 1-2 days and cannot qualify for skilled care services. Patients treated as Inpatient can qualify for skilled care services only if certified by therapist of the need. The hospitalists do not provide any outpatient services nor do they take care of any nursing home or skill care patients.

There have been numerous large scale studies showing effectiveness of the hospitalist programme. Research has proven that hospitalist programmes reduce the length of the stay, treatment cost and improves the overall efficiency of care for the hospitalised patients.

The credit for the hospitalist programme in Clinton goes to Donna Oliver, former CEO of Mercy Medical Centre whose determination and vision got the programme started in February 2008. Initially there was some resistance on part of many physicians about this programme. Family Physicians as well as some independent physicians in Clinton were easily convinced to give up their hospital practice.

Medical Associates internists and specialists who were board certified in their specialties continued in hospital patient care for many years. They gave up admission to hospitalists last year but assuming care the next day for continuity of care. Now, only hospitalists do all admissions to the hospital for all physicians until they are discharged. After discharge, they follow with their regular physician. The specialists are available for consultation and providing care in their own area of expertise.

The Hospitalist programme is future of medicine that needs to be accepted by the physicians and patients alike. It is the new phenomenon in medicine that has forced physicians to adapt to the new norm, mostly for the better.

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