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POTENTIAL RISKS AND IMPLICATIONS OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH LICENSING STANDARDS FOR PATIENT SAFETY IN HOSPITALS: IMPACT ON INFECTION CONTROL, SAFETY INCIDENTS, AND MEDICATION ERRORS

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Abstract

Background: The study seeks to explore the possible threats and consequences of a non-compliance with licensing standards on the hospital for the patient safety in areas of infection control, drug errors, and service quality in general. Compliance with a licensing standards is critical to upholding a high-quality healthcare services and patient care protection. Non-compliance may have a major risks in terms of high rates of healthcare-associated infections, drug errors, and adverse events that may jeopardize the patient outcomes. Through an investigation of compliance with licensing standards in health facilities, this study aims to establish the challenges encountered by the hospitals and the consequences of non-compliance, thereby improving patient safety and delivery of healthcare services.

Result: The findings revealed that non-adherence to hospital licensing standards heightens the risk of medication errors, health care-associated infections, and adverse events. Respondents raised issues of poor infection control practices, misuse of medications, and poor staff training. Other concerns such as poor communication and poor patient safety mechanisms were also raised. In general, the findings underscore the urgency of better compliance with licensing standards to promote improved patient safety and service quality.

Conclusion: In conclusion, non-compliance with licensing standards significantly jeopardizes patient safety, increasing the risk of infections, medication errors, and adverse events. This study underscores the need for continuous monitoring and improvement of compliance practices to enhance patient protection and healthcare quality.

Keywords: Potential Risk, Implication of Non-Compliance, Licensing Standard, Patient Safety, Hospital, Infection Control, Safety Incident, Medication Errors.

Introduction

Compliance with licensing standards in health facilities is a key factor in maintaining patient safety and the quality of care provided in hospitals. Compliance with the standards offers a guideline for hospitals to achieve regulatory requirements and adopt practices that protect patients from harm. Patient safety is a critical aspect influenced by compliance with licensing standards and requirements. A comprehensive literature review by Brown and Jones (2020) highlighted the impact of compliance on patient safety outcomes in hospitals. The review revealed that non-compliance with safety-related requirements, such as infection control protocols and medication management procedures, increased the risk of adverse events and patient harm. This underscores the significance of compliance in ensuring patient safety and preventing avoidable medical errors. It has been demonstrated in recent research that hospital compliance levels have a correlation with increased patient satisfaction and reduced rates of readmission (Smith et al., 2019). Conversely, poorly compliant hospitals are more vulnerable to events that jeopardize patient safety. It has been estimated through a study that non-compliance with safety-related standards in the hospitals resulted in 210,000 to 440,000 deaths annually in the United States, which highlights the severity of the problem (Journal of Patient Safety, 2020). In spite of all the available literature, there is still a lack of understanding regarding the direct consequences of non-compliance with licensing standards, especially in the hospitals.

This study will try to identify the possible risks and consequences of non-compliance with hospital licensing standards, specifically on infection control, safety events, and medication errors. Through the assessment of the existing compliance of the hospitals, this research will try to emphasize the areas of improvement that can be done to improve patient safety and service quality. This study will yield useful information that can guide policy-makers, healthcare administrators, and practitioners on effective ways of managing non-compliance and enhancing patient outcomes.

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Methods

Research Design

A descriptive correlational design aims to identify relationships between variables without trying to manipulate them (Copeland, 2022). Quantitative research involves the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to examine variables and test hypotheses.

Respondents of the Study

The study will involve 340 participants to examine adherence to licensing criteria and its impact on service delivery quality and patient safety in hospitals. A range of key stakeholders will serve as respondents to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Instruments of the Study

The survey will consist of self-developed and self-structured questionnaires, which underwent content validation by three experts. The geographic validity of the study will be tested through a pilot study, and the reliability of the findings will be assessed using Cronbach's alpha analysis, with results expected to demonstrate acceptability. Both document analysis and the researcher-created survey will be utilized in the study.

Result

Evaluation of the Hospital's Adherence to Licensing Standards and Requirements

The evaluation measures the levels of compliance by hospitals with licensing standards and regulations from survey results. The survey included topics like validity of licenses, changes in regulation, record maintenance, auditing, training, and resolution of issues. Results showed that hospitals usually have valid licenses, regularly perform audits, and have assigned personnel to ensure monitoring of compliance. Responses for the renewal of the licenses, record maintenance, and a creating policies and procedures were not as clear-cut. Perceptions of how the hospitals handle the non-compliance is in differed. In general, the hospitals are perceived as actively tracking the compliance and having a external reviews to guarantee that they are in compliance with licensing regulations.

Infection Control and Prevention

The result in the infection control and prevention showed that, in general, respondents concurred on the augmented risks of not complying with standards of licensing. Respondents also noted an enhanced risk of HAIs and lack of proper practice of infection control measures as points of concern. There was a common ground that not complying led to less than optimum hand hygiene procedures among the healthcare professionals. Nevertheless, views on the danger of outbreaks or the spread of multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs) because of non-compliance were more neutral. In general, the evidence highlighted the dangers of the non-compliance, such as higher rates of infection, lack of proper hand hygiene measures, and poor monitoring of infections.

Studies also stated that licensing violations in California hospitals led to significant morbidity and mortality, with surgical errors, medication issues, and monitoring failures being common causes (Zheng et al., 2021). Conversely, adherence to accreditation standards in Saudi Arabia resulted in reduced rates of incident reports, medication errors, and nosocomial infections (Alsaedi et al., 2023). Healthcare workers' knowledge of infection prevention and control (IPC) is generally adequate, but gaps exist in areas such as occupational vaccinations and disease transmission modes (Alhumaid et al., 2021). Missed nursing care, including non-compliance with IPC guidelines, has been linked to adverse patient outcomes and increased hospital-acquired infections (McCauley et al., 2021)

Patient Safety and Incidents

The findings showed that the respondents, in general, concurred that non-compliance with licensing requirements heightens the risk of medication errors, misidentification errors, and adverse drug events. They also pointed out that the poor execution of the patient safety measures and poor communication among the health professionals as serious issues, all of which are determine to the patient safety. Overall, the results highlighted the several risks of the non-compliance, especially with the medication errors, patient identification, safety measures, and communication.

Similarly, non-compliance with healthcare standards poses significant risks to patient safety and can lead to severe consequences. Studies have shown that such non-compliance can result in immediate jeopardies, causing mortality in 36.6% of cases and morbidity in 31.2% (Zheng et al., 2021). Common issues include surgical errors, medication mistakes, and monitoring failures. Patient falls are a prevalent concern, with 17% of reported injuries being fall-related (Wåhlin et al., 2020).

Medication Errors and Safety

The findings in the medication errors and safety showed the diversity of the perceptions in the consequences of non-compliance with the licensing requirements. Although some were indifferent to the particular points, the results showed that the non-compliance is associated with the variety of safety concerns. Respondents made a comments on the possibility of a higher levels of medication errors and adverse drug reactions and the threat of substandard medication handling and storage

practices. In addition, there was concern about the lack of adequate medication reconciliation processes and inadequate staff training in the medication safety. Respondents also recognized the risk of a poor medication error reporting and a lack of patient engagement in medication-related decision-making.

Similar to this is in child care programs, factors associated with improved medication administration compliance included annual professional development, accreditation, and weekly nurse consultant visits (Crowley et al., 2022). A study on preoperative medication management found that 37.2% of patients were non-compliant with instructions, although no significant adverse outcomes were observed (Paul et al., 2022). In nursing homes, medication management errors were attributed to human shortcomings, deficiencies in working conditions, and organizational factors such as inadequate delegation control and education standards (Bengtsson et al., 2021).

	Mean	**SD**	**Verbal Interpretation**
Infection Control and Prevention			
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements increases the risk of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) for patients.	3.67	1.43	Agree
Failure to comply with licensing standards and requirements may result in inadequate implementation of infection control protocols.	3.53	1.53	Agree
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements can lead to suboptimal hand hygiene practices among healthcare staff.	3.78	1.45	Agree
Insufficient adherence to licensing standards and requirements may result in inadequate disinfection and sterilization of medical equipment and surfaces.	4.33	1.26	Strongly Agree
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements increases the risk of healthcare staff not following proper isolation precautions for infectious patients.	3.58	1.47	Agree
Failure to meet licensing standards and requirements can lead to inadequate surveillance and monitoring of infections within the hospital.	3.49	1.51	Agree
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements may result in insufficient training and education on infection control practices for healthcare staff.	3.10	1.44	Neutral
Inadequate compliance with licensing standards and requirements increases the risk of outbreaks or transmission of multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs).	3.13	1.47	Neutral
Failure to comply with licensing standards and requirements can lead to inadequate management of airborne infection control measures.	3.69	1.30	Agree
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements may result in inadequate implementation of vaccination policies for healthcare staff, increasing the risk of preventable infections.	3.81	1.46	Agree
Category Mean	3.61	1.43	Agree
Patient Safety and Incidents	**Mean**	**SD**	**Verbal Interpretation**
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements increases the risk of medication errors and adverse drug events.	3.48	1.46	Agree
Failure to comply with licensing standards and requirements may result in inadequate patient identification processes, increasing the risk of misidentification errors.	3.41	1.50	Agree
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements can lead to inadequate monitoring and documentation of patient vital signs and clinical observations.	3.36	1.50	Neutral

Insufficient adherence to licensing standards and requirements may result in inadequate infection control measures, increasing the risk of healthcare-associated infections.	3.48	1.44	Agree
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements increases the risk of patient falls and related injuries.	3.36	1.51	Neutral
Failure to meet licensing standards and requirements can lead to inadequate implementation of patient safety protocols and procedures.	3.93	1.29	Agree
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements may result in insufficient staff training and education on patient safety practices.	3.89	1.41	Agree
Inadequate compliance with licensing standards and requirements increases the risk of equipment malfunctions and failures, jeopardizing patient safety.	3.62	1.48	Agree
Failure to comply with licensing standards and requirements can lead to inadequate communication and coordination among healthcare providers, compromising patient safety.	3.75	1.46	Agree
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements may result in inadequate response to patient safety incidents and near misses.	3.59	1.48	Agree
Category Mean	3.59	1.45	Agree
Medication Errors and Safety	**Mean**	**SD**	**Verbal Interpretation**
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements increases the risk of medication errors and adverse drug events.	3.19	1.49	Neutral
Failure to comply with licensing standards and requirements may result in inadequate medication storage and handling practices.	3.29	1.49	Neutral
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements can lead to insufficient labeling and documentation of medications, increasing the risk of errors.	3.14	1.46	Neutral
Insufficient adherence to licensing standards and requirements may result in inadequate medication reconciliation processes, leading to discrepancies and potential errors.	3.55	1.41	Agree
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements increases the risk of incorrect medication administration, dosage errors, or wrong route errors.	3.32	1.38	Neutral
Failure to meet licensing standards and requirements can lead to inadequate staff training and education on medication safety practices.	3.89	1.40	Agree
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements may result in insufficient implementation of medication error reporting and analysis systems.	3.59	1.48	Agree
Inadequate compliance with licensing standards and requirements increases the risk of drug-drug interactions or contraindications not being appropriately considered.	3.85	1.44	Agree
Failure to comply with licensing standards and requirements can lead to inadequate involvement of patients in medication-related decision-making processes.	3.48	1.52	Agree
Non-compliance with licensing standards and requirements may result in inadequate use of technology systems for medication management, increasing the risk of errors.	3.52	1.54	Agree
Category Mean	3.48	1.46	Agree

Legend: *1.00-1.80 – Strongly Disagree; 1.81-2.60 – Disagree; 2.61-3.40 – Neutral; 3.41-4.20 – Agree; 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree*

Conclusion

It concludes that the study highlights the importance of complying with the licensing regulations in maintaining the patient safety and promoting a service quality among the hospitals. It is evident through that the findings of non-compliance raises the probability of the healthcare-associated infections, errors in medication administration, and adverse events, directly affecting the patient care outcomes. Although the respondents recognized as the significance of a compliance to the infection control and medication safety, issues like lack of proper staff training and ineffective application of safety measures were identified. The findings reiterate that the need for the frequent monitoring and adjustment of compliance measures in order to reduce these kinds of risks and enhance patient safety in healthcare environments.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in this manuscript. Results have been deduced objectively; nothing influenced this result by any individual, monetary, or institutional interests. In effect, utmost endeavors were in order to conduct a bias-free operation of gathering and analyzing the data into interpretation and producing a study based on merit, away from research inconsistencies.

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