

Magnet/NABH “Setting Standards in Nursing Practice” - Indian Scenario

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Abstract: This article explores some of the major developmental changes being brought over the last few years in the healthcare industry in India. It is an effort to take inspiration from Magnet Hospitals in America and to improve nursing services in India. The background of it and the issues that need to be resolved in order to have standards equal to Magnet Credentials are also being touched.

Keywords: NABH, Magnet Status, Nursing practice, Web based learning, Tourism Healthcare

1. Introduction

India is one country which is growing in the medical world and patients from different parts of the world are coming to India for treatment. Apollo group of hospitals, Fortis, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Christian Medical College are some of the good hospitals. In the past few years, there has been great pressure to improve the quality of nursing care in India. Because nurses are integral part of the hospital and play a pivotal role in patient care, a need is always felt to make improvements in nursing practice.

The purpose of nursing profession is to provide safe, competent and ethical nursing with compassion, comfort, collaboration and knowledge. For this a nurse needs to have clinical judgment, right attitude, good communication skills, and knowledge regarding care. The standards are the pre requisites to promote good nursing care and they act as a catalyst for self regulation and improvement also. So guidelines are laid down for evaluating the nursing services and they are applicable to all the health care organizations. In this context India has also tried to improve its standards in the field of healthcare, so that “Tourism Healthcare Industry” could boom. In America Magnet status hospitals are considered as the standard hospitals with best nursing care and an inspiration is sought from this.

2. Concept of standardization in hospitals:

The Magnet hospital concept is more than 20 years old. In 1980s, the American Academy of Nursing appointed a task force on hospitals as there were numerous issues about this profession at that time. They recognized the areas of problems and one of them was improper health care facilities. Before the task force no one has ever tried to explore the standards needed to improve health care facilities. So they set up certain standards in order to create hospitals that would attract and retain the nursing staff. Later on this study was published as “Magnet Hospital: Attraction and Retention of Professional Nurses.” Later many researchers contributed to Magnet literature. Most notable among these nurses were Marlene Kramer and Linda Aiken. [1]

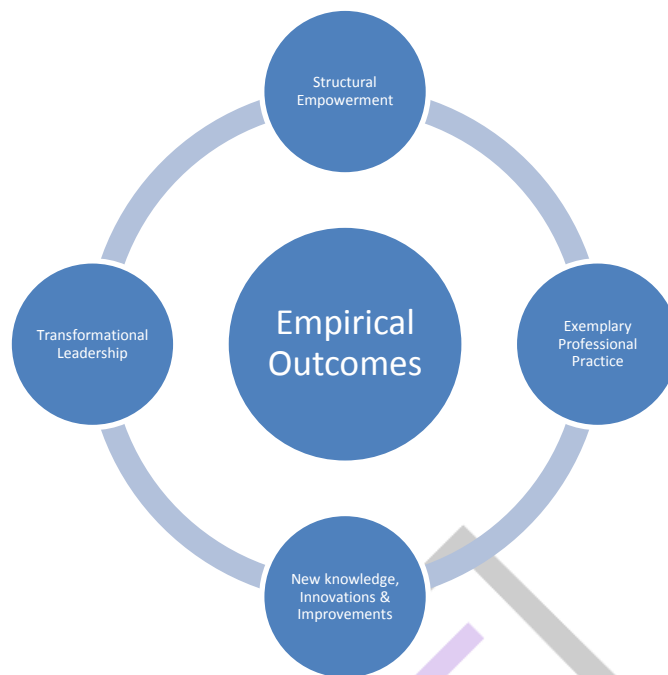
In 1990, the American Nurses Association Board of Directors approved the creation of Magnet Hospital recognition Program based on an earlier study which identified 14 characteristics of healthcare organizations that excelled in recruitment and retention of registered nurses. In 1994, ANCC awarded the first Magnet status to the University of Washington Medical Centre in Seattle, WA.

By 2000, ANCC had received numerous requests to expand this program outside US. In 2002, ANCC changed its name to Magnet Recognition Program [2].

Magnet status is the highest national recognition awarded to a hospital or medical center for excellence in nursing. It is just like Hallmark status given to gold ornaments. Magnet status is given to hospitals that excel in patient care and gives patients or other healthcare requiring people with a quality nursing care. It has also been proved through analytical studies that the patient care is better in hospitals with magnet status. In these hospitals there is an environment that empowers nurses and values their contributions.

In US, hospitals are evaluated after every four years to observe the improvements being applied in patient care and quality of other procedures [3]. So to get Magnet status, each and every hospital or clinics have to bring improvements in every field of patient care. The professionals from the nursing council evaluate these hospitals, which includes very stringent quantitative and qualitative measures. Right from the entry of customer in hospital to clinical outcomes, and nursing care all are scrutinized [4].

It is considered as the highest recognition for nursing excellence. The program also offers an avenue to disseminate successful nursing practices and strategies. It's a growing body of research and indicates that Magnet hospitals have higher percentage of satisfied nurses, lower vacancy of nurses, improved clinical outcomes and improved patient satisfaction. Below is the “Magnet Model” to show its various aspects.



The Magnet Model

Transformational Leadership: Senior nurses and other health care professionals are responsible to prepare the junior staff for future.

Structural Empowerment: The infra structure, policies, programs, systems of health care in an organization together work miracles.

Exemplary Professional Practice: The patient has to be treated in an extraordinary professional nursing practice so that it could set an example.

New Knowledge, Innovation and Improvements: The new methods, procedures, rules and regulations as well as ethical or moral responsibility contribute to a nursing profession, welfare of patient and goodwill of an organization.

Empirical Quality Outcomes: Checking the improvements on regular basis makes an organization outshine and it improves standards too.

Benefits of Magnet Hospital

The research shows that Magnet facilities consistently have an upper hand on non Magnet:

For Patients

-Mortality rate is low, shorter length of stay in hospital, increased stability in care with positive results, increased rate of satisfaction and confidence levels.

For Nurses

-Higher rates of job satisfaction, Better delivery of quality care, Autonomy in clinical practice, Lower incidence of needle stick injury.

For Hospitals

-Increased retention and recruitment of nurses, Collaborative work environment, and Lower rates of staff nurse turnover, increased attraction of high-caliber physicians and specialists.

3. Beginning of Nursing Standards in India:

In India too inspiration was taken from Magnet Status hospitals and a need was always felt to improve standards of nursing care. Therefore in 2011 a report was published on “Reshaping Nursing Profession in Indian Hospitals” –by Dr. Jothi Clara J. Michael and in this it was emphasized that we need to equip the nurses with advanced knowledge and competence in a manner that they are able to prove their potential. A need was felt to bring this concept in India. In India NANE- National Accreditation for Nursing Excellence is similar to the Magnet Status Hospitals in developed countries [5].

In India now we have **National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH)** to set up, to establish and operate accreditation system for healthcare organizations. NABH was established to promote continuous quality improvement in healthcare providing organizations. The board is being supported by all stakeholders, including industry, consumers, government and has fully functional autonomy in its operation. It works in a non discriminatory manner. In addition, **International society for Quality in Healthcare (ISQua)** has accredited “Standards for Hospitals”, 3rd edition, November 2011 developed by NABH under its International Accreditation Program for a period of 4 years (April 2012 to 2016). The approval of ISQua authenticates that NABH standards are in agreement with the global bench marks set by ISQua. The hospitals accredited by NABH have international standards and recognition. This will provide boost to medical tourism.

The Structure of NABH [6]

NABH is the Institutional member as well as the member of Accreditation council of International Society for quality in Healthcare and is the founder member of Asian Society for quality in Healthcare (ASQua). Its main bodies are:

Accreditation Committee:

-Recommends the Board to grant certification or otherwise based on evaluation of assessment reports & other relevant information.

-Approval of the major changes in the scope of Certification

-Recommending to the board on launching of new initiatives

Technical Committee:

-Drafts standards & associated documents

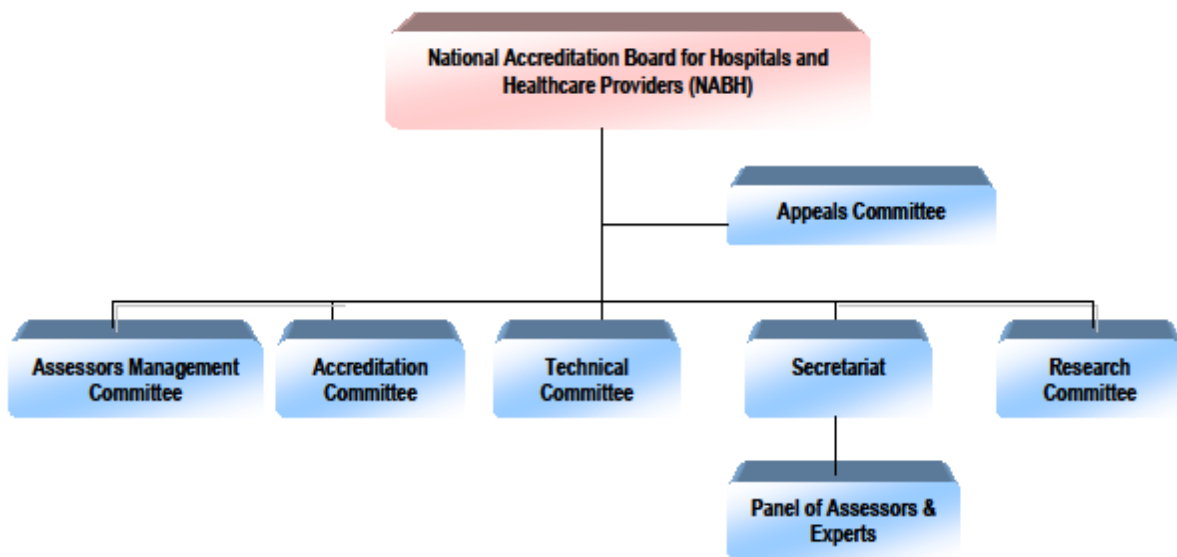
-Periodic review of standards

NABH Secretariat:

The Secretariat coordinates the entire activities related to NABH Accreditation to hospitals & healthcare organizations

Panel of Assessors and Experts:

A panel of trained and qualified assessors for assessment of hospitals is always there.



4. NABH Standards & its Working:

NABH Nursing Excellence Standards:

The standards are prepared by the technical committee and it contains complete set of standards for evaluating nursing service for grant of certification. The standards provide framework for quality of care for patients and improvement in nursing services. The standards also help to build a quality culture at all level and across all the functions of hospital. NABH Nursing Excellence Standards has 07 chapters incorporating 48 standards and 216 objective elements for guidance.

Outline of NABH Nursing Excellence Standards:

1. Nursing Resource Management -NRM
2. Nursing Care of Patient- NCP
2. Management of Medication -MOM
4. Education Communication and Guidance -ECG
5. Infection Control Practices -ICP
6. Empowerment and Governance -EG
7. Nursing Quality Indications -NQL



All the norms being set by NABH has many useful impacts on the various fields of healthcare system. Among these are:

Impact on patients:

The patients are serviced by highly qualified or credential nursing staff which results in best care and patient safety. So the patients are one of the biggest beneficiaries.

Impact on hospitals:

This certification program improves the whole system of the hospital. It enables a hospital to provide quality care and raises the confidence level too. People trust the services being provided by certified credential hospitals.

Impact on nursing staff:

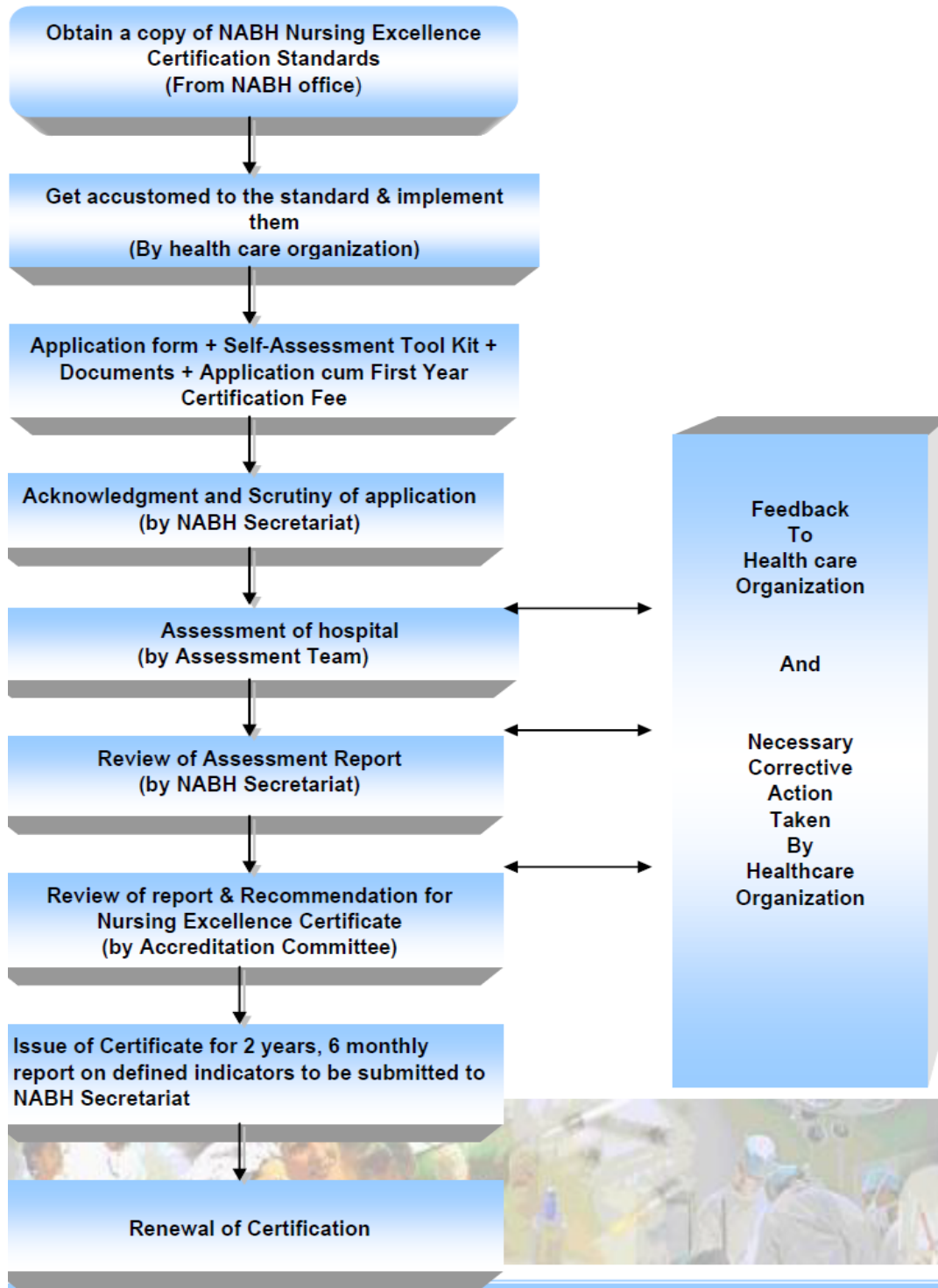
- It gives high job satisfaction
- Provides an environment that recognizes and rewards competence
- Professional growth and development by continuous opportunities and support
- A structure that encourages decision making at the bedside over clinical issues
- Low turnover and more stability
- Focused professional autonomy
- Leadership opportunities
- Enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration with feeling of teamwork
- A culture that supports and respects a nurse

As is being written earlier Magnet credential in US and NABH credential in India are both providing exclusive accreditation system. It is a system which will provide respect and recognition to a nurse.

When an application is obtained from a hospital it is carefully scrutinized and if all the norms are fulfilled the hospital is issued unique reference number. This number is quoted in all future correspondence by the hospital. In order to award Nursing Excellence Certificate an assessment report is being prepared by the Assessment Team being appointed by NABH. This involves comprehensive review of hospital's nursing functions and services.

The certificate is issued for a period of two years and after that reassessment is done. Below is the procedure followed by NABH:

Preparing for Nursing Excellence Certification



5. Suggestive Measures to Achieve Goals:

Hospitals always face increasing demand to improve their nursing care along with improvements in all other fields [7]. To do so we need to equip our nurses with advanced technology, education and facilities.

The standards cannot be achieved if the nursing staff is not well equipped in knowledge and technology.

To achieve Standards in nursing care the nurses has to keep them updated in field of technology and education. It is a common administrative dilemma to teach RNs working in various shifts and in various locations. The effective answer to this problem is to develop Web-delivered education program on research based nursing practice that could be assessed at anytime from anywhere by staff RNs [8].

For this expert faculty can record lectures and distribute among the learners so that they can begin and stop the lectures whenever they want. For this the content has to be in easy language, it should grab attention of the user and learners' objectives should be solved too. Feedback must also be taken.

The Web-based learning is an effective method as it is self directed study using computer techniques.

The user can have freedom in assessing the course and can read the explanations as many times as needed. This system allows the user to rewind, hear and see information numerous times. There is a lot of freedom in this [9]. There could be multiple users and this method is cost effective too. Web-based program provides mass delivery of the study material at any suitable time. Web-based program is based on evidence based practice and assists the hospitals to achieve credentials.

Conclusion

The outcome of this credentialing system is that it gives certain dignity to an organization. But to get NABH credential or Magnet status does not mean that an organization has achieved everything. It is a continuous journey to improve day by day. The travelers who actually take the time to enjoy the journey are most benefitted. As this program involves all departments and disciplines of an institution, the sense of pride which is gained by this program gives very positive vibes. But this journey never ends.

Nurses are using evidence to create clinical practice guidelines to standardize patient care. Evidence based practice is based on research findings and collective research evidence that guide approaches to patient care.

Evidence based practice is essential in attaining Magnet recognition. In assessing the readiness to apply for Magnet/NABH recognition, administrators and staff nurses examine whether evidence based practice is impregnated into health care practice or not. There is need to demonstrate that staff nurses have been provided educational and mentoring activities for integrating evidence based practice. The nurses can improve themselves if they continue their education as it helps to achieve excellence in practice and it keeps updated too.

Achieving the credential means to sustain it and more work to improve it. NABH /Magnet status is just a way station in an ongoing untiring journey of improvement step by step. For this most organizations continue their efforts without any break because this is the way to maintain the standards of excellence they have achieved. Standards are not achieved overnight and to attain excellence the individuals in the leadership positions devote their time and energy to weave the fabric of an organization. Nonetheless the hospitals that achieve standards of excellence turn into a fertile field where the healthcare providers and researchers plow and the customer, owner and workers are equally benefitted.

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