HARNESSING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TO ENHANCE HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY AT THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL, NAIROBI

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge is recognised as an organisation's most valuable and powerful resource. It is used to improve an organisation’s efficiency and effectiveness, create innovative solutions, and enhance decision-making capabilities. At the Aga Khan University Hospital, Nairobi, (AKUH,N) knowledge is needed to deliver the safest and most effective quality services possible with the available resources; hence, knowledge needs to be managed well to achieve the hospital’s goals. The aim of the study was to investigate how knowledge management could be harnessed at the AKUH, N for enhancing health service delivery and propose a best-practice knowledge management framework. The specific objectives were to: establish the types and sources of knowledge; find out the extent to which KM is harnessed in service delivery; establish how knowledge is stored, preserved and used; establish whether there is a culture of knowledge sharing; establish the ICT platforms for KM; ascertain the challenges faced in harnessing KM; and propose recommendations. The study was based on Demerest (1997), Knowledge Management Model. The study research design was qualitative, and the study population was drawn purposively from ten departments of the hospital. The study population sample of 38 included doctors, nursing managers and their deputies from the seven departments. The other three departments selected purposively were ICT, Library, and Information and Medical Records Management sections. The Medical Director was selected as an informant to represent the top management in the hospital. Data was collected through the use of face-to-face interviews supplemented by observation methods. Interview schedules with open-ended questions and observation checklist was used to guide in the data collection. Data was analysed by categorising the themes. The study established that although knowledge is managed, it is not harnessed properly for service delivery at the hospital. The study recommends that tacit knowledge needs to be tapped and codified fully; explicit knowledge to be digitised for easy sharing, access and preservation; ICT usage training; and, increasing servers for storage and quicker access of knowledge. A knowledge management framework is proposed and areas of possible further studies suggested.