Report

Expert Consultation on Opportunities For Improving Quality of Healthcare in India

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Contact

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This report titled 'Expert Consultation on Opportunities for Improving Quality of Healthcare in India' has been developed by Health Systems Transformation Platform (HSTP) and the partner(s) to share the summary of proceedings of this consultation.

Disclaimer

Objectives

Health Systems Transformation Platform is incubated in the Tata Trusts family. HSTP is an enabler of systems change in Indian healthcare. India's progress towards Universal Health Coverage depends on re-design of health system's architecture & function based on systems assessment, policy relevant research/evidence synthesis and conducting experiments that focus on health outcomes to re-engineer health interventions. HSTP's objectives:

- Develop and articulate medium & long-term health systems strategies for India and states, learning from Indian and global experiences, best practices, innovations.
- Nurture talent and enhance capability in India on health systems research, leadership, policy & strategy formulation.
- Collaborate with governments, research/ academic institutions, experts and practitioners to create a platform for health systems thinking and attempt to solve health systems challenges.
- Foster a safe space for health systems stakeholders for policy dialogue, knowledge sharing & learning.

HSTP is conducting an exploratory landscape analysis on Indian health systems components, one of which is quality of healthcare, that informs our work on health systems transformation in the states and our engagement with the National Health Authority on expanding PMJAY coverage to the missing middle and establishing primary healthcare linkages. This exercise allows us to identify gaps, opportunities and collaborators in this space and enable HSTP to ascertain course of action on intervening in improving quality of healthcare in India.

This expert consultation convened key stakeholders in the healthcare quality space in India in collaboration with **the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)** a leading global organization focused on improving health and healthcare worldwide, using quality improvement tools and methods. The consultation aimed to understand the gaps and opportunities in quality of healthcare in India and develop strategies to allow sharing of methods, tools, and experiences for quality improvement among health personnel. IHI and HSTP experts led the discussion with a spirit of learning, collaboration, and co-creation.

Twenty-three (23) quality experts from across India drawn from provider accreditation bodies, professional associations, healthcare providers, domestic and international technical support organizations, government etc. participated in the discussion.

The discussion was facilitated by Rajeev Sadanandan - CEO HSTP, Dr. Azhar Ali - lead IHI portfolio Middle East & Asia Pacific, Dr. Abha Mehndiratta - Director IHI supporting Bihar & Bangladesh quality initiative and Kush Badshah, Director IHI.

We duly acknowledge guidance and contribution of HSTP Board, HSTP & IHI Management, all the experts who participated and shared their insights, Rahul Reddy, Vivek Panwar & Peter Parekattil (HSTP).

Learnings

1. Healthcare sector in India is dominated by private providers with varied spectrum of quality. On one end, large networks create structures and processes for JCI and NABH certifications and at the other end, nursing homes, registered as hospitals, do not have distinct value proposition in terms of quality. The markets where they operate are **fragmented and unregulated** leading to questionable quality of care with suboptimal outcomes due to failures of communication, inadequate sharing of clinical information, poor reconciliation of medicines, duplication of investigations and avoidable hospital admissions or readmissions. In addition, there is an absence of **comprehensive monitoring mechanism** to compare quality parameters which makes it difficult to measure ineffective care and undercounts adverse events due to it.

2. At the provider level, **common manifestations of poor quality of healthcare** in both private and public sector are misdiagnosis, surgical errors, unsafe injections, high rates of antibiotic prescription and increased use of counterfeit & substandard medicines leading to ineffective and unsafe medical care etc. However, the main drivers of these poor outcomes are inadequate governance, lack of resources and absence of quality culture at the systems level. Both public and private sector are crippled with overburdened staff, low levels of provider knowledge, know-do gaps, lack of appropriate equipment and poor supply chain management.

3. Developing quality culture in healthcare would not be possible **healthcare professionals and managers trained** on principles and application of quality tools. Various organizations like IHI, QCI, NABH have tailored programs/ courses on quality improvement for various levels of healthcare providers and managers. National Health Authority has collaborated with Quality Council of India to build a network of healthcare providers delivering quality clinical and support services while following the healthcare protocols. A team-based approach to care in the practice and support processes with quality improvement at its core is necessary to promote a learning environment and knowledge translation to accelerate the progress.

4. In the last decade emergence of **provider accreditation system** like NABH, NQAS, JCI is driving business process and hospitality aspects of quality improvement in India. However, less than 5% of the private hospitals are accredited and the focus is gradually shifting from structural measures to process oriented measures of quality. Initiatives like NQAS & LaQshya have recently defined standards of care for specific healthcare services but this mandates an evaluation of interventions to measure impact. Now with the Ayushman Bharat reform and PMJAY structured as an umbrella program for purchasing of healthcare, there is an opportunity to use quality as a lever for provider payments to drive quality assurance and improvement for better health outcomes.

5. The key direction for India's journey on quality improvement is **institutionalization of standardized processes** at all levels in both the public and private sector starting from community health workers - health facilities to how governments and purchasers' function. This needs to be structured around a framework to support and ensure sustainable implementation of the core quality improvement and assurance activities over time. The essential elements of the framework should be an internal enabling environment (leadership, policy, core values, and resources), organizational structure, and support functions (capacity building, communication, and information, and rewarding quality).

6. Health systems around the world are **designing payment methods** to encourage innovative and cost-effective treatment and to hold providers accountable for the clinical outcomes. This could be used as a tool to ensure continuum of care, enhance patient experience, and treatment delivery through a collaborative chain of activities with measurable outcomes.

Next Steps

Robust scientific research and evidence synthesis is fundamental to evidence-based policy making in India. At the core of this are the Indian researchers and policy makers. We value their contribution to current understanding of the Indian health systems. To enable transformation and lead the system on the path towards universal health coverage and achieving Sustainable Development Goals India needs enhanced research capabilities especially in quality improvement. HSTP's program on enhancing capabilities is committed to continue conducting activities in this direction.

This workshop provided the opportunity to develop a collaborative network of policy makers, program managers, providers, accreditation agencies, provider associations and researchers to identify evidence-based solutions to quality improvement interventions. In addition to collaboration and networking, we strive to develop a knowledge platform to provide evidence and experience for designing tools and strategies to promote quality culture in the Indian health system.

Agenda

Venue – The Grand Hotel, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi.

18 November 2019	
9.00 - 9.15	Welcome and context setting Rajeev Sadanandan, CEO – HSTP Dr. Azhar Ali, Lead Asia-Pacific, IHI
9.15 - 9.30	Introduction of participating experts
9.30 – 11.15	Insights from participating experts on Quality Initiatives in India Facilitated by Dr. Abha Mehndiratta
11.15 - 11.30	**Tea Break**
11.30 - 12.00	Sharing global experiences on quality initiatives – case studies
12.00 - 1.00	Focused discussion on specific themes (Breakout Session)
1.00 – 1.30	Conclusion & next steps
1.30 – 2.30	**Lunch**

Participants & Observers

S. No	Name	Organization
1	Gayatri Mahendroo	National Accreditation Board for Hospitals, Quality Council of India
2	Parijat Chandra	All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi
3	Chandrakant Lahariya	WHO Country Office for India
4	Neelam Kler	Sir Gangaram Hospital
5	Priyanka Singh	LaQshya Program, MoHFW
6	Arati Verma	Max Healthcare
7	Krishna Reddy	ACCESS Health International
8	Vijay Agarwal	CAHO (Consortium of Accredited Healthcare Organizations)
9	Anuradha Pichumani	CAHO (Consortium of Accredited Healthcare Organizations)
10	Sangeeta Sharma	Institute of Human Behavior & Allied Sciences
11	Abhishek Bhartia	Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science & Research
12	Oomen John	The George Institute for Global Health
13	Prashant Mishra	British Medical Journal - India & South Asia
14	Sanjeev Singh	Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences
15	Gaurav Loria	Apollo Hospitals
16	Vikram Datta	Kalawati Saran Hospital, Lady Hardinge Medical College
17	Pritindira Sachdeva	Apollo Quality Program, Apollo Hospitals
18	Sudha Chandrasekhar	Health Systems Transformation Platform
19	Bhupendra Prabhakar	Health Systems Transformation Platform
20	J L Meena	National Health Authority
21	Ajay Dogra	Fortis Healthcare
22	Aakash Sood	Fortis Healthcare
23	Sunil Babu	CARE India
	Facilitators	
24	Rajeev Sadanandan	Health Systems Transformation Platform
25	Azhar Ali	Institute of Healthcare Improvement
26	Kush Badshah	Institute of Healthcare Improvement
27	Abha Mehndiratta	Institute of Healthcare Improvement
28	Rahul Reddy	Health Systems Transformation Platform
	Operations	
29	Peter Parekattil	Health Systems Transformation Platform