Critical Appraisal of Work Values of Hospital Leaders- A Case Study Conducted in Reputed Private Hospital, Bangalore

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Abstract

Trust at work comes from living values that one sermonizes on a daily basis and defines the character of an individual or group. To echo one value and act another will obviously dent the trust of all the stakeholders involved. Work values are those guiding principles that steer the behavior of individuals at work and helps create and sustain trust and become normative codes to follow when it permeates down from the top management.

This is especially true for the healthcare industry where work values are critical and sensitive. In the face of adversity that hospitals are today, with tragedies like the AMRI Hospital fire in Kolkata in Dec 2011 and scores of such incidents questioning the existence of work values, it becomes increasingly imperative to understand what work values drives such culpable behavior especially when medical tourism is in its boom phase in India. It is without a doubt that the work values of the leadership become the norms that influence the code of conduct for everybody in the organisation to follow.

In this paper, the authors made an attempt to critically evaluate the work values that are deemed to be vital for hospital leaders of a private hospital in Bangalore by administering a checklist of work values to the hospital leadership based on Capability Maturity Model framework by dividing them into ethical and operational work values. By scrutinizing the work values of the organisation, a leadership work values model was developed based on the principles of Pareto's analysis.

Keyword: Work Value, Hospital Leadership, Healthcare beneficiaries

Introduction

Values are deeply held views that act as guiding principles for individuals and organisations. They guide the society to adapt itself to the ever-dynamic environment. When they are stated and followed, they become the basis of trust which increases respect for the individual or organisation. When they are left unstated, they are inferred from observable behavior. When they are stated and not followed, the trust is obviously broken often leading to disbelief. Very simply put, values state what is important for an individual and an organisation; Schwartz (1992, p.2), defines values as —desirable states, objects, goals, or behaviors, transcending specific situations and applied as normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behavior. Values can be defined as generalized, enduring beliefs about the personal and social desirability of modes of conduct or end states of existence (Rokeach, 1979; Schwartz, 1992). According to

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this definition, these values may not restrict themselves to a particular individual but may be a collective belief of a particular community or geographical region.

Many scholars assume that work values are those general values that a person follows at work. In other words, work values guide a person to behave in a particular way at work. They help in setting standards of what is good or acceptable. Work values transcend easily in the form of management of enterprises, management literature in the form of laws and policies, training etc. It steers an individual's approach to work, for example performing organisational roles, maintaining work-life balance etc.

Collective work values shape the culture of an organisation and have a strong influence on the values held by the leadership of the organisation. Work values of the leaders permeate down to the operational level which usually becomes the norm for the employees to follow.

These values take the form of mission statements of the organisation, i.e., their purpose of existence.

Hospitals, like most organisations, have mission statements that attempt to articulate the values of their organisations and their purpose for existence within a community. Leadership acts as a binding mechanism that holds these values and mission statement together, who lead by living it on a daily basis. While it is imperative that hospital leaders possess work values like integrity, safety, care and cure and so on, there are other work values that are indispensable by the virtue of services they provide like altruism, transparency, reliability and consistency among others that need to be shared with all the health care providers.

This will remain unchanged even in the changing global scenario where on one hand the medical tourism is in its boom phase and on the other, tragedies like the AMRI Hospital fire in Kolkata in Dec 2011 and scores of such incidents questions the very existence of values at work. In a contrasting situation around the same time, swift evacuation and timely counter-measures reduced the impact of a fire in the basement of Columbia Asia hospital in Bangalore, where the hospital leadership swung into action almost immediately ensuring that the lives of 79 patients was well guarded and attended to, strengthening the belief that ultimately the direction of an organisation's action is well delineated by the leadership at all times.

Hence today's hospitals have to concentrate on technical expertise and evidence-based medicine and most importantly need to create an environment of safety while providing efficient services. This can be sustained only when the clinical staff and the non-clinical staff accept personal responsibility for creating a safe environment and provide quality care. This gets strengthened only when the leadership is consistent in its implementation of the values it sermonizes. This calls for responsible behavior advocated strongly by the hospital leadership in eliminating any unsafe practices.

Working Hypotheses

1. The hospital leadership is focusing on the most important and relevant work values leading to critical success and maintaining the same throughout the various processes.

2. The hospital leadership is emphasizing on prioritizing both ethical work values and operational work values in terms of their contribution in ensuring superior quality and patient safety.

Literature review

HaeberleK et al. in their article titled, 'How a Hospital's Work Value Influences Successful Decision Making' explain that the work orientations of employees at the lower levels in the hospitals especially in non-supervisory roles like nurses, technical workers, housekeeping staff are usually influenced to a large extent by the values shared by the hospital leaders.

Jack A Meyer et al. in their article titled, 'Hospital quality: ingredients for success—

Overview and lessons learned' mention that a culture backed by active leadership is imperative for commitment to high quality care in hospitals and this is shared by all the people in the hospitals- physicians, nurses, administrators and ancillary staff. They also mention that the top performing hospitals are marked by the depth and breadth of their commitment which was reflected in leadership that led by example, showing through action what they preached; they were willing to invest in high-quality staff, processes, and supportive tools; and institution-wide commitment to dig beneath surface measures to uncover causes of quality problems and to press relentlessly for solutions.

David Reeleder et al. in their article titled,'Leadership and priority setting: The perspective of hospital CEOs' mention that resource allocation between competing programs and persons in the healthcare systems is driven by values of transparency, Inclusivity, Trust and Honesty besides other factors. Pamela Mitchell et al. in their article titled, 'Core Principles and Values of Effective Team-Based Health Care' mention that team-based approach in healthcare systems is very important and what binds them are important values like honesty, discipline, creativity, humility and curiosity, supported by the entire team's active adoption of a clearly articulated set of shared goals for both the patient's care and the team's work in providing that care.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in a reputed private hospital, a tertiary private hospital in Bangalore providing economical healthcare to patients with a capacity of 300 beds. The information regarding work values were collected from four hospital leaders in the form of a structured questionnaire based on Capability Maturity Model framework. Further a work values model was developed prioritizing the various work values based on the principles of Perato analysis.

Data Analysis and Discussions

In this paper a holistic attempt was made by the authors to identify and list the relevant work values of hospital leadership, but what is important is how the hospital leaders transcend their actions beyond the definition and not remain static. The work values were classified into two broad categories, that is, Ethical Work Values and Operational Work Values. The work values are defined in consultation with the industry experts and each work value definition is divided into four levels of capability.

Following are the work values of hospital leadership:

Ethical Work Values

Humanity: Being benevolent and compassionate, understanding the value of human life and at the same time, having a clear understanding of the organisation's focus – making profits or serving the society. Leadership plays a crucial role in defining the balancing parameters between the two.

Impartiality: Treating all patients using the best of medical efforts and technology independent of nationality, ethnicity, religion, class, financial status or party political positions etc.

Reliability: Consistency in proving the best medical services and in turn gaining the trust of the recipients.

Transparency: Assuming the responsibility for clearly and openly explaining the hospital's actions to the recipients of benefits as well as to donors.

Ethical decision making: Focus their thinking on the changing healthcare environment and on related ethical issues like allocation of resources, the development and use of technology, quality of care and so on.

Being a Corporate Socially Responsible Citizen: By reaching the benefits of healthcare to the less privileged sections of the society who may be unaware or may not have the financial capacity to utilize medical care.

Operational Work Values

Quality care: Providing/ collaborating with other medical agencies or organisations for best medical care

Patient safety: Provide a safe environment for the patients by ensuring top class quality of services and facilities and reliable medical care.

Patient empowerment and education: Providing mechanisms to patients for grievance redress and educating them on prevention and cure of epidemic diseases and general health

Risk management: Anticipating the future challenges and minimizing the impacts of those to ensure a secured environment for both patients and care providers.

Continuous quality improvement and research: Developing cure for existing and new diseases so as to improve quality of life

Post treatment care: Care of critically ill patients who have been cured or are in the process of being cured by regularly nurturing them through humane touch and care.

Knowledge centric approach: Empowering medical staff members, doctors, specialists, Para medical staff members by knowledge sharing and learning so as to keep them updated on the latest in the medical field.

The questionnaire was designed by dividing each work value definition into four statements depicting four capability levels. For example, one of the Operational Work Values is Risk Management which plays a predominant role in ensuring patients'safetyand security. Following are the four stages of Risk Management Work Value:

Stage 4:

We are anticipating the risks and uncertainties beforehand with the expertise of a Risk Review Committee so as to mitigate and minimize the impacts of risks, to ensure safety and security of all our stakeholders.

Stage 3:

We are able to manage the risks and uncertainties in order to ensure safety and security of all our stakeholders.

Stage 2:

We are combating the risks and uncertainties in order to ensure safety and security to all our stakeholders.

Stage 1:

We are trying to assess the risks and uncertainties to assure safety and security to all our stakeholders.

It can be clearly understood from the above discussion that the capability is getting enhanced from Stage 1 to Stage 4.

It has been found during the study that the hospital leadership has already implemented some of the important work values considered in our research through their services and some which they want to work on in the near future. They have been continuously enhancing and enriching human life by acting as a vehicle of being a world class provider. It provides access to superior quality integrated health care to the society and ensure satisfaction through best quality deliverables. It has been treating all patients with the best medical efforts and technology irrespective of their background and is trying to inculcate the same value to the entire workforce. It offers the best clinical practices with maximum focus on patient safety which is strongly supported by acommitted and dedicated workforce. The organisation values the value of life and is fully accountable for clearly and openly explaining the hospital's operations to the healthcare recipients. Patient safety is the top most priority in their pursuit to promote wellness, to relieve suffering and to restore health as swiftly, safely and humanely possible while maintaining consistency. They are able to manage the risks and uncertainties in order to ensure safety and security of all the stakeholders.

While the hospital leadership understand their obligations towards the society and feel they can make a difference to the general health of the community they are trying to demonstrate their social responsibility through wellness programs aimed at the less privileged; they are planning to put a strong and reliable grievance redressal system in place and conduct public education programs conducive to the prevention of illnesses in the community and for the early recognition of need for healthcare services. They aim at being the best quality healthcare provider using their resources optimally; keeping in mind the environment issues and is adaptable to changes. They are also thinking of having in house research programs aimed at accelerating the accumulation of knowledge necessary for prevention or therapeutic management of the diseases. They believe that their role extends beyond treatment of ailments and hence they are trying to have a tracking mechanism of the critically ill patients to nurture them through humane touch and care which will extend beyond the in house services provided. They also believe in continuous learning and are striving to create a friendly team environment for patients, employees, and clinical staff through comprehensive academic and educational interactions.

Through the above case, it can be seen that work values of hospital leaders have direct bearing on quality patient care and influence the actions of all the stakeholders involved in providing quality care to healthcare beneficiaries. By scrutinizing the work values carefully, a model was developed on the principles of Pareto's analysis, on the basis of importance of different work values of hospital leadership that affect healthcare services and their impact on the different stakeholders.

Pareto Analysis

Pareto analysis is a statistical technique in decision making that is used for selection of a limited number of

tasks that produce significant overall effect. It uses the Pareto principle – the idea that by doing 20% of work, 80% of the advantage of doing the entire job can be generated.

In this paper the authors made an attempt to prioritize the work values of hospital leadership in terms of their contribution or impact on stakeholders' interest, precisely the patients'. This is elaborated in the following manner:

1. If in all the work values of hospital leadership, considering the hospital leaders have marked the maximum score i.e., 4, then the total score could have

been (4 x 13 = 52; as there are 13 considered work values).

2. Similarly, the minimum score can be considered as (1 x 13 = 13).

3. But, in this paper the authors have neglected the score 1 as they didn't get this score for a single work value, which shows that the considered work values are almost relevant and existing in this private hospital.

4. Hence, scale of impact, i.e., the dependent variable is considered from (2 x 13 = 26 to 4 x 13 = 52).

Fig.1:   Pareto Analysis
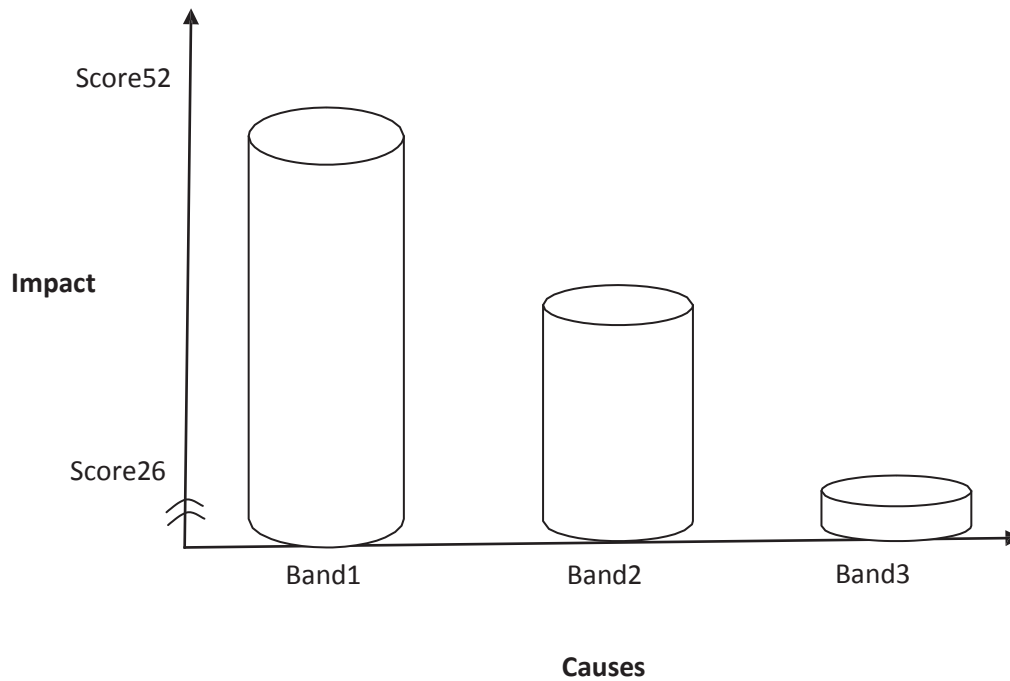
<Figure head>Fig.1:Pareto Analysis

Band 1:
Patient safety
Humanity
Ethical decision making

Band 2:
Transparency
Quality care
Risk management
Reliability

Impartiality
Post treatment care
Being a CSR citizen
Patient empowerment and
education
Continuous quality
improvement and research
Knowledge centric approach

Band 3:

Fig. 2: A Model of work values of hospital leadership and their impact (Personal interpretation of data by the Authors)

Work values of hospital leadership and their impact
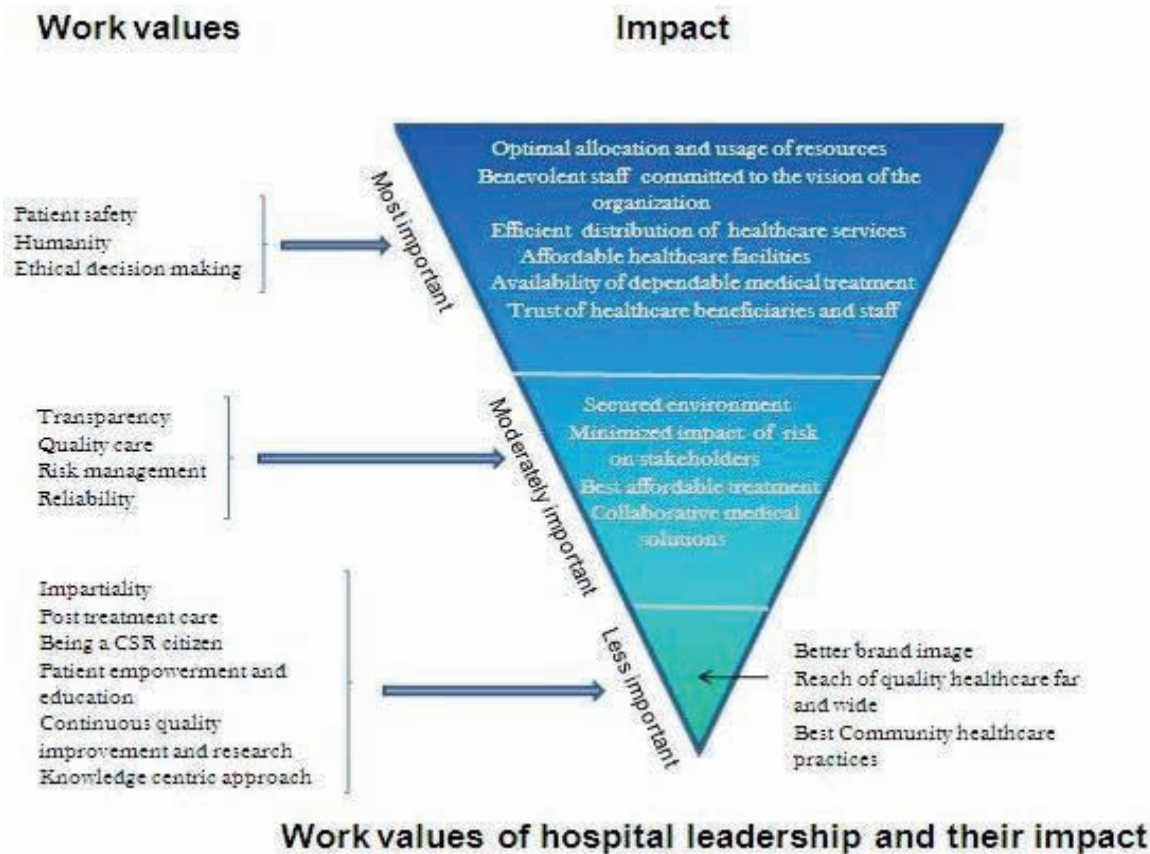
It can be observed that for any hospital which provides affordable medical services to patients, the most important work value that directs its operations is patients' safety which calls for a reliable service being provided without endangering the life of the patient at any cost backed by a strong sense of ethical behaviour on part of the stakeholders like the clinical and non-clinical staff. This is a direct outcome of observing leaders' behaviour and following orders coming from the hospital leaders.

Humanity helps win the trust of healthcare beneficiaries and commitment of the staff as they are able to articulate the vision of the hospital leaders and thus, focus on implementation of the organisation's goals by ensuring responsible behaviour. This results in efficient allocation of resources between competing needs resulting in efficient distribution of healthcare services making it affordable to the healthcare beneficiaries. These basic minimum provisions are required in all hospitals which provide

healthcare services and are highly important because the clinical and non-clinical staff will be able to better serve to the patients when they are clear of the hospital's motive towards the societal needs of healthcare.

When the trust is established with the hospital staff and healthcare beneficiaries alike, it becomes an increased responsibility of the hospital leaders to provide a secured environment to both the stakeholders in order to minimize any kind of risk involved in the environment or the services itself. This also calls for collaborative efforts by tying up with other medical agencies as the need may be for medical care. All this will obviously result in patient loyalty which will positively impact the brand image of the hospital in the society compelling the hospital to do a bit more as a part of Corporate Social Responsibility in the form of best community healthcare practice making quality affordable healthcare available far and wide.

Conclusion

The hypotheses of this article were tested to be true with the help of Pareto Analysis. The analysis reveals that most of the preconceived work values are of relevance for this private hospital which was conceptualized in consultation with the hospital leaders. Authors also attempted to prioritize both the ethical and operational work values in line with the Pareto Analysis outcome which were subsequently accepted by the hospital leadership.

It has been found that the hospital has been implementing patient safety, humanity and ethical decision making as the most important work values. It also considers transparency, quality care, reliability and risk management as moderatel important for its sustenance as a health care provider. While it is focusing efforts on post-treatment care and being an impartial healthcare service provider, a further inclusion of patient empowerment initiatives , medical research and CSR activities will help steer the hospital into becoming a sought out community healthcare provider in the city.

Limitations of the study

The study was limited to a single hospital's leadership which may not provide a complete picture of how the work values translate into action in general in the healthcare industry. Also, the hospital is run by a single family which may cause the responses to be similar.

Scope for future study

1. The study can be extended to understand from the patients (customers) if they are actually able to see the rendition of work values of the hospital leadership into action as quick responses and efficient services to customer's needs at affordable price is crucial in the healthcare industry.

2. It can also be further examined to understand the differentiating work values that differentiate superior health care service providers from average health care service providers and are actually the source of critical success factors which others are unable to duplicate for the time being. With this kind of effort, the superior service providers will be in a position to hold the competitive edge over others which will lead to sustainable competitive advantage.

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Annexure: Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

We are conducting a survey on "Work Values" and hence need your assistance in answering the below sets. Each set has four options. Please tick the statement that is most applicable or appropriate for your organisation.

Please note this information is going to be analyzed and used for academic purpose only.

Set 1

Our organisation's focus is to continuously enhance and enrich human life by acting as a vehicle of being a World class heath care provider.

Our organisation is striving to enhance and enrich human life by providing best possible healthcare services.

We are emphasizing on the quality aspects of human life by providing health care better than average healthcare providers.

We are aspiring to position ourselves as a quality health care service provider with a humane touch.

Set 2

Our organisation respects all individuals irrespective of their background and fully encourages diversity in our workforce as well as healthcare beneficiaries

Our organisation treats all patients with the best medical efforts and technology irrespective of their background and is trying to inculcate the same value to the entire workforce.

Our organisation's emphasis is to provide best medical treatment to all our patients irrespective of their class

and is trying to orient our workforce towards impartial behaviour.

Our organisation is striving to provide best medical treatment to all our patients irrespective of their financial status and is in the process of educating our workforce on impartial behaviour.

Set 3

Our organisation gives unrelenting attention to clinical excellence, patient safety being our top most priority, with a committed, vibrant and compassionate workforce to serve the patients.

Our organisation offers the best clinical practices with maximum focus on patient safety which is strongly supported by a committed and dedicated workforce.

Our strength as an organisation lies in consistently providing the best possible medical services with an emphasis on patient safety which is supplemented by a trained and dedicated workforce.

We are striving to ensure consistency in providing best medical care with a focus on patient safety with the support of a trained and skilled workforce.

Set 4

We value the value of life and are fully accountable for clearly and openly explaining the hospital's operations to the healthcare recipients

We respect the value of life and are accountable for clearly explaining our operations to the healthcare beneficiaries

We understand the importance of life and are answerable to explaining our operations to the healthcare beneficiaries

We understand the importance of life and believe in explaining the hospital's operation to the healthcare beneficiaries.

Set 5

We aim at being the best quality Health care provider using our resources optimally; keeping in mind the environment issues and we are adaptable to the changes.

We aim to be the best quality healthcare provider by emphasizing on optimal usage of resources, keeping in mind the environmental issues and are preparing ourselves to adapt to the changes.

We are striving to be the best quality healthcare provider by focusing on optimal usage of resources, keeping in mind the environmental factors and are encouraging ourselves to adapt to the changes

We are expecting to be the best quality healthcare provider by seeking optimal usage of resources, keeping in mind the environmental factors and are trying to adapt to the changes.

Set 6

We understand our obligations towards the society and believe we can make a difference to the general health of the community and demonstrate our social responsibility through wellness programs aimed at the less privileged.

We understand our obligations towards the society and feel we can make a difference to the general health of the community and are trying to demonstrate our social responsibility through wellness programs aimed at the less privileged.

We understand our obligations towards the society and feel we can make a difference to the general health of the community and are planning to demonstrate our social responsibility through wellness programs aimed at the less privileged.

We understand our obligations towards the society and are feeling we can make a difference to the general health of the community and are thinking of demonstrating our social responsibility through wellness programs aimed at the less privileged.

Set 7

We provide access to superior quality integrated healthcare to the society and ensure satisfaction through best quality deliverables.

We are striving to provide access to superior quality integrated healthcare to the society and ensure satisfaction through best quality deliverables.

We are trying to provide access to superior quality integrated healthcare to the society and ensure satisfaction through quality deliverables.

We are planning to provide access to superior quality integrated healthcare to the society and ensure satisfaction through quality deliverables.

Set 8

Patients' safety is the top most priority in our pursuit to promote wellness, to relieve suffering and to restore health as swiftly, safely and humanely possible with uttermost consistency.

Patients' safety is the top most priority in our pursuit to promote wellness, to relieve suffering and to restore health as swiftly, safely and humanely possible while maintaining consistency.

Patients' safety is the top most priority in our effort to promote wellness, to relieve suffering and to restore health as swiftly, safely and humanely possible while trying to achieve consistency.

Patients' safety is of priority to us in our effort to promote wellness, to relieve suffering and to restore health as safely and humanely possible.

Set 9

Our organisation has a strong and reliable grievance redressal system in place and conducts public education programs conducive to the prevention of illness in the community and for the early recognition of need for healthcare services on a regular basis.

Our organisation believes in a strong and reliable grievance redressal system and conducts public education programs conducive to the prevention of illnesses in the community and for the early recognition of need for health care services on an ad-hoc basis.

Our organisation is trying to put a strong and reliable grievance redressal system in place and is trying to conduct public education programs conducive to the prevention of illnesses in the community and for the early recognition of need for health care services on an ad-hoc basis.

Our organisation is planning to put a strong and reliable grievance redressal system in place and is planning to conduct public education programs conducive to the prevention of illnesses in the community and for the early recognition of need for healthcare services.

Set 10

We have in house research programs aimed at accelerating the accumulation of knowledge necessary for prevention or therapeutic management of the diseases.

We are determined to have in house research programs aimed at accelerating the accumulation of knowledge necessary for prevention or therapeutic management of the diseases.

We are planning for in house research programs aimed at accelerating the accumulation of knowledge necessary for prevention or therapeutic management of the diseases.

We are thinking of having in house research programs aimed at accelerating the accumulation of knowledge necessary for prevention or therapeutic management of the diseases.

Set 11

We are anticipating the risks and uncertainties beforehand with the expertise of a Risk Review Committee so as to mitigate and minimize the impacts of risks, to ensure safety and security of all our stakeholders.

We are able to manage the risks and uncertainties in order to ensure safety and security of all our stakeholders.

We are combating the risks and uncertainties in order to ensure safety and security to all our stakeholders.

We are trying to assess the risks and uncertainties to assure safety and security to all our stakeholders.

Set 12

We strongly believe that our role extends beyond treatment of ailments and hence we have a tracking mechanism of our critically ill patients by nurturing them through humane touch and care which extends beyond the in house services provided.

We believe that our role extends beyond treatment of ailments and hence we are trying to have a tracking mechanism of our critically ill patients to nurture them through humane touch and care which will extend beyond the in house services provided.

We feel that our role extends beyond treatment of ailments and hence we are planning to have a tracking mechanism of our critically ill patients to nurture them through humane touch and care which will extend beyond the in house services provided.

We feel that our role extends beyond treatment of ailments and hence we are thinking of having a tracking mechanism of our critically ill patients to nurture them

through humane touch and care which will extend beyond the in house services provided.

Set 13

We believe in continuous learning and create a friendly team environment for patients, employees, and clinical staff through comprehensive academic and educational interactions.

We believe in continuous learning and are striving to create a friendly team environment for patients, employees, and clinical staff through comprehensive academic and educational interactions.

We believe in continuous learning and are trying to create a friendly team environment for patients, employees, and clinical staff through comprehensive academic and educational interactions.

We are considering continuous learning and want to create a friendly team environment for patients, employees, and clinical staff through comprehensive academic and educational interactions.