Identifying the Components of Library Services to Patients in Hospital Libraries Based on IFLA: A Qualitative Study

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Objective: Hospital libraries as an important part of the hospital are effective in functions such as patient care, patient education, performance improvement and patient safety. The purpose of this study is to identify the components of library services to patients in hospital libraries based on IFLA goals. **Methods**: This qualitative study was conducted using content analysis. By purposive sampling, 17 people of librarians of hospital libraries in seven provinces of Iran were interviewed using depth and semi-structured interviews. After extracting the primary codes, they classified in 11 main categories and 24 sub-categories. **Results**: Based on data from this study, 11 main categories and 24 sub-categories of components of Library Services to Patients in Hospital Libraries were extracted. These components are: "Goal setting to improve the health of patients", "Standardization of library services to patients", "Use of hospital librarians", "Bibliotherapy services", "Information needs assessment of hospital library users", "Providing information services to health care staff", "Provision of resources suitable for hospital activities", "Remote information Services", "Assist in patient education after discharge", "Beautifying the library space" and "Providing of social and spiritual resources". **Conclusion**: Main components and sub-categories of library services to patients in hospital libraries resulted from this study can use as a model can be considered as a model for providing information services to patients and their companions in hospital libraries.

Introduction

During the first four decades of the 20th century, hospital libraries were often considered as libraries for patients, later with the expansion of these types of libraries, they were called public libraries or libraries for patients and medical staff (Panella, 1996; Pourhmaze, 1997). According to the standard of hospital libraries (Bandy et al., 2008), one of the groups that hospital libraries should provide services to is patients and their families (Bandy et al., 2008; Bigdeli, & Momenzadeh, 2011). Serving patients in the library has a long and successful history. These successes are related to a knowledge and belief, in which books, was considered a form of support and improvement in patients - through distraction, entertainment and inspiration.

Today in many medical centers and medical libraries of advanced countries, such as the United States, a section has been dedicated to provide educational, informational, recreational materials, as well as educational programs (in line with treatment programs) for patients and their families and caregivers (Panella, 2004). Hospital libraries can play an important role in providing the necessary information related to patients' health by organizing and compiling a collection of resources in plain language for patients (Gold, 1974; Ashrafi-Rizi et al. 2017) through providing this information, it creates a kind of self-awareness in patients, after which we can expect the improvement of society's health. Hospital libraries as an essential part of the hospital are effective in functions such as patient care, patient education, performance improvement and patient safety (Hassig et al. 2005; Roth, 1978).

Today, hospital libraries are considered as a unit that should play a role in improving the health literacy of people, especially patients and their families, and they are taking steps in advancing health promotion. Over time, and with technological developments, hospital libraries have evolved in terms of staffing, resources, and access, yet their mission has remained the same while they are expected to provide the best possible medical information to support patient care (Khosravi, & Ahmadzadeh, 2016). In this regard, IFLA states the following objectives for providing services to patients in hospital libraries as follows:

1. Promoting health and helping to cure illness.
2. Cooperation with different units of hospital care
3. Helping to advance the understanding of the disease for patients and their families
4. Activities for culturalization, creating a stable environment for entertainment and fun for patients and caregivers (Panella, 2004).

In order to achieve these goals, it is necessary to provide special facilities and conditions for hospital libraries. The review of the literature shows that less attention has been paid to providing services to patients in hospital libraries. Heidari (Heidari, 2007) found that only 33.3% of librarians considered providing services to patients as one of the duties of the hospital library, while a large percentage of librarians and medical staff believe in the role of using the library in the healing and

recovery of patients. Various reasons can be stated for the inadequacy of providing services to patients in Iran, such as, according to Saberi et al. (2020) the unfavorable condition of the standards in some Iranian libraries. But perhaps the most important thing is not having any protocol and component to perform this type of service.

The importance of providing library services to patients is not hidden from anyone. In this regard, several goals have been developed for providing this type of services, but how to achieve these goals is unclear for librarians and hospital managers. So, this research aims to take an effective step towards improving this type of service and reaching the goals established by IFLA by describing the components of library services to patients based on these goals.

Materials and Methods

This qualitative study was conducted with the content analysis approach. The statistical population included the librarians of hospital libraries in Iran. Regarding the purpose of this study, the participants were selected based on purposeful sampling method to be the rich source of required information. The main criterion for the selection of participants in interviews was having over 5 years of job experience in hospital library. In qualitative research, the sample size is determined during the study and sampling continues to reach data saturation and the researcher comes to the conclusion that the new information is the repetition of the previous information that does not require a new code or expansion of the existing codes. Through regular review of the data and asking questions, the researcher finally comes to the conclusion that the data has reached saturation, at which point the sampling ends (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the sample size consisted of 17 librarians of hospital libraries in seven provinces of Iran, whose features are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants.

No. of participants	Sex		Job experience X±SD	Education	
	Male	Female		Bachelor	Master
17	4	13	15.14±1.6	7	10

The main data collection method was Semi-Structured Interview. Data analysis performed using content analysis method. During the interview, the researcher tried to maintain the relevance of questions to the objectives of the interview with his command of the situation. All the interviews were recorded using Voice Recorder and were transcribed once each interview was over. Then, using inductive and deductive qualitative content analysis, the categories were organized from low to high order based on their level of abstraction, and data were classified into briefer information units. For naming the categories, three titles were chosen, namely specialized literature on the subject, word of the interviewees, concepts of the researchers.

The rigor of the study was assessed using Lincoln's and Guba criteria including credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability (Creswell, 2013). To ensure credibility of research, the researcher was long involved in data and participants and used the technique of participant data review. That is, the researcher gave a summary of the interview along with its initial codes to the participants and asked them about the authenticity of researcher's perception. The researcher's effort was to fully get involved in the research, establish a proper communication with participants and embrace profound implications that appeared in the study process. To ensure confirmability of research, peer review method was used. That is, the researcher provided his peers and teammates with the primary collected data analyses after initial encoding and classification to be evaluated and adapted if necessary. To ensure dependability of research, the researcher kept the raw data, codes and classifications for auditing and used the exact phrases and statements of the participants for quotations. To ensure transferability of research, maximum variation sampling method was used.

Results

In this research, at the end of the coding stage, a total of 358 initial codes were obtained, and after the stages of analysis, integration and overlapping, the codes were divided into 11 main categories as components of Library Services to Patients in Hospital Libraries as well as 24 sub-categories as its components (Table 2).

Table 1. This is a table. Tables should be placed in the main text near to the first time they are cited.

Objectives of IFLA	Main components of Library Services to Patients in Hospital Libraries	Sub-categories
Promoting health and helping to cure illness	1. Goal setting to improve the health of patients	1-a) Targeting of library services 1-b) Cultivation of service to patients in hospital libraries
	2. Standardization of library services to patients	2-a) Legality in services to patients 2-b) Codification of services 2-c) Standardization of services
	3. Use of hospital librarians	3-a) Using expert and capable librarians 3-b) Use of interested librarians
	4. Bibliotherapy services	4) Bibliotherapy
Cooperation with different units of hospital care	5. Information needs assessment of hospital library users	5-a) identification of information needs of users 5-b) identification of useful information resources for patients 5-c) Constant communication with the health care staff
	6. Providing information services to health care staff	6-a) Selective dissemination of information to health care staff 6-b) clinical librarian service

		6-c) Updating and recognizing the latest medical findings
Helping to improve the understanding of the disease for patients and their families	7. Provision of resources suitable for hospital activities	7-a) Providing resources according to patients' conditions
		7-b) Knowing the necessary resources to help patients recover
	8. Remote information service	8-a) Providing information services inside the rooms of hospitalized patients
		8-b) Using mobile phones to train caregivers of patients
	9. Assist in patient education after discharge	9-a) Using technology to track patient status
		9-b) Teaching the patient at home
Activities for culturalization, creating a stable environment for entertainment and fun for patients and Caregivers	10. Beautifying the library space	10-a) Favorable space for children
		10-b) pleasant conditions for patients
	11. Providing of social and spiritual resources	11-a) Providing resources to cheer up the patient
		11-b) Performing entertainment and spiritual information services

Objective 1: Promoting health and helping to cure illness

According to IFLA, one of the goals of hospital libraries is promoting health and helping to cure illness. In line with this goal, the result of the research showed that there are four components to achieve this goal: "Goal setting to improve the health of patients", "Standardization of library services to patients" "Use of hospital librarians" and "Bibliotherapy service".

1. Goal setting to improve the health of patients

Goal setting consists developing an action plan designed to motivate and guide a person or group toward a goal. Any person or any organization will succeed in an action if that action is defined as a goal. Therefore, if a hospital library does not define service to patients as part of its goals, it cannot be successful in serving patients. In this research, based on the participants' statements, two sub-categories of "Targeting of library services" and "Cultivation of service to patients in hospital libraries" are necessary to achieve the goal of "Promoting health and helping to cure illness" by hospital libraries. These two components were categorized in a main category named "Goal setting to improve the health of patients". One of the participants stated that "In the library, we should have something documented to know if serving the patient is one of our duties or not" (L. 5).

2. Standardization of library services to patients

Standardization is defined as the process of creating protocols to guide the creation of a good or service based on the consensus of all the relevant groups in an organization. The standards ensure

that goods or services produced in a specific organization or industry come with consistent quality and are equivalent to other comparable products or services in the same industry. To ensure the provision of appropriate and useful services to patients in hospital libraries, there is a need for codified standards and rules in the field of providing information services to patients. The category of "Standardization of library services to patients" consists of three sub-categories of "Legality in services to patients", "Codification of services" and "Standardization of services". One of the participants stated that "In hospital libraries, frameworks and rules should be provided to librarians based on which they can provide useful services" (L. 1).

3. Use of hospital librarians

A specialist is someone who has acquired the skills to perform a technique well through training. Specialization is one of the basic principles in today's management. A person who is an expert in a particular field has the ability to do that work in a safe and risk-free manner. Providing information services to patients who are in special conditions requires special skills that the provider must have and also be interested in. "Use of medical librarians" was derived from data as one of the main components of Library Services to Patients in Hospital Libraries. It consists of two sub-categories of ''using expert and capable librarians'' and 'Use of interested librarians''. In this regard, one of the participants stated: "Librarians who work in hospital libraries must be persistent and familiar with the philosophy of these libraries and be interested in this work" (L. 16). Another participant stated: "librarians working in hospitals will not be able to provide services to patients if they are not medical librarians" (L. 6).

4. Bibliotherapy services

Bibliotherapy is one of the useful methods in the treatment of some mental illnesses, which according to the type of use for different diseases and different groups, different definitions have been provided for it; but in general, bibliotherapy is the use of literature to help health (Bandy et al., 2008). In hospital libraries, bibliotherapy can be used as a supplement to accelerate the recovery of some diseases. Even for the first time bibliotherapy was proposed and implemented in a hospital library. Therefore, based on the results of the participants' statements, "bibliotherapy services" should be considered as a main component of hospital library services. One of the participants stated: "Librarians should help patients to feel good so that they can recover faster, that is, they should do bibliotherapy" (L. 10).

Objective 2: Cooperation with different units of hospital care

According to IFLA, the second goal of hospital libraries is "cooperating with different units of hospital care". In line with this goal, the result of the research showed that there are two components

to achieve this goal: "Information needs assessment of hospital library users" and "Providing information services to health care staff".

5. Information needs assessment of hospital library users

In order to provide information services to patients and their companions, it is necessary to assess and identify the needs of this group of users. Therefore, it is necessary for the librarians of hospital libraries to continuously communicate with the staff of different departments of the hospital and cooperate with them. According to the results of the participants' statements, three sub-categories are included in this category: "identification of information needs of users", "identification of useful information resources for patients" and "constant communication with the health care staff". In this regard, one of the participants stated: "Howevere, a patient is a patient and they should have their own library with resources that are useful for patients" (L. 6).

6. Providing information services to health care staff

Certainly, librarians alone will not be able to help patients improve their conditions. On the other hand, the main task of providing medical services is the responsibility of the medical staff of the hospital, who need new information and updating their knowledge to improve their services. Therefore, to improve the health services, the hospital library should provide up-to-date information resources for the healthcare staff. Therefore, the participants mentioned three sub-categories of "selective dissemination of information to health care staff", "clinical librarian service" and "updating and recognizing the latest medical findings" which were grouped into one main category, named "Providing information services to health care staff" as the main component of library services to patients. In this regard, one of the participants stated: "We need to organize training workshops for the use of databases for medical personnel and even provide them with the latest medical information" (L. 8).

Objective 3: Helping to improve the understanding of the disease for patients and their families

According to IFLA, another goal of hospital libraries is "helping to improve the understanding of the disease for patients and their families". In line with this goal, the result of the research showed that there are three components to achieve this goal: "provision of resources suitable for hospital activities", "remote information" and "assist in patient education after discharge".

7. Provision of resources suitable for hospital activities

"Provision of resources suitable for hospital activities" is one of the components of library services to patients, and this main category is obtained from the combination of two sub-categories of "providing resources according to patients' conditions" and "knowing the necessary resources to help patients recover" and this means that to help to improve the understanding of the disease for

patients and their families, hospital libraries should provide appropriate resources that are understandable for patients and their companions according to the patient's condition and their needs. In this regard, one of the participants stated: "Hospital libraries mostly serve doctors, but we should extend it to patients as well and provide suitable resources for all of them" (L. 2).

8. Remote information Services

This category was derived from data as one of the main components of Library Services to Patients in Hospital Libraries; it consists of two sub-categories of "providing information services inside the rooms of hospitalized patients" and "using mobile phones to train caregivers of patients". Librarians believed that hospital libraries should not only provide information services to patients in the library. Because many patients may not be able to go to the library. Therefore, information services can be provided to them through mobile services and media such as television, pamphlets and mobile phones. One of the participants stated: "We provided a series of resources only in the inpatient wards and created a condition where patients can use books in the ward itself" (L. 17). Another librarian states: "we should be able to advertise and inform through the television that is in the hospital and patients' rooms" (L. 11).

9. Assist in patient education after discharge

In addition to providing services to patients in hospitals and inpatient departments, library services to patients and even their companions can be extended after the patient's discharge. Therefore, according to data derived from participants, "assist in patient education after discharge", through "using technology to track patient status and "teaching the patient at home" is one of the main components of library services to patients in hospital libraries. Many diseases, which are permanent diseases, always require care and self-care. Self-care is successful when the patient always receives proper information about his illness and self-care methods. Hospital libraries can play this role well. In this regard, one of the participants stated: "Libraries can have and provide applications and electronic resources, and librarians can enter in the post-discharge follow-up that exists in the hospital" (L. 6).

Objective 4: Activities for culturalization, creating a stable environment for entertainment and fun for patients and Caregivers

According to IFLA, another goal of hospital libraries is "Activities for culturalization, creating a stable environment for entertainment and fun for patients and Caregivers". In line with this goal, the result of the research showed that there are two components to achieve this goal:

10. Beautifying the library space

Beauty is a tool to create pleasant feelings in human. Beautifying the library space as a main component of library services to patients in hospital libraries refers to identifying tangible tools and techniques that create a good feeling in the users as they face with them. This component derived from two sub-categories of "favorable space for children" and "pleasant conditions for patients". This component and its sub-components indicate that the environment and conditions of hospital libraries should be so attractive and pleasant that patients, especially children, have a great desire to go to the library. In this regard, one of the participants stated: "We must create a suitable environment for patients" (L. 3). Another participants said: "The rules and regulations for the library should be very detailed, even for example, how the decoration should be" (L. 9).

11. Providing of social and spiritual resources

In addition to information about their disease, patients also need other information needs, including entertaining information or spiritual information. This information can increase their ability to be happy and in a good mood. So, librarians state that "providing of social and spiritual resources" can consider as one main component of library services to patients in hospital libraries that derived from two sub-categories of "providing resources to cheer up the patient" and "performing entertainment and spiritual information services". One of librarian states: "You can prepare a series of books that you can distribute in the form of stories for relaxation and morale" (L. 2).

Discussion

Hospital library refers to a library that is established in hospitals and other medical centers with the aim of providing information to medical staff and medical students, nurses, paramedics and hospital managers. Today, based on IFLA standards, in addition to serving the aforementioned groups, these libraries are also responsible for providing information services to patients and their companions. However, many librarians of these hospitals are still not fully aware of the components of service to patients by these libraries.

The results of Heidari (2007) who found that 33.3% of librarians considered providing services to patients as one of the duties of the hospital library, confirm this issue. Therefore, this research was conducted with the aim of extracting the components based on which IFLA's goals can be achieved and serve the patients.

The results of the research indicated 11 main components as components of library services to patients in hospital libraries, and 24 sub-categories. These components are: "Goal setting to improve the health of patients", "Standardization of library services to patients", "Use of hospital librarians", "Bibliotherapy services", "Information needs assessment of hospital library users", "Providing information services to health care staff", "Provision of resources suitable for hospital

activities", "Remote information Services", "Assist in patient education after discharge", "Beautifying the library space" and "Providing of social and spiritual resources".

Conclusion

Considering the importance of hospital libraries and their goals from IFLA's point of view, the findings of the present study helped to identify the main components and sub-categories of library services to patients in hospital libraries to achieve IFLA's goals. It is suggested that hospitals try to hire librarians specialized in the field of medicine and also plan information services for patients and companions as part of the goals of the hospital library and develop standards for these services.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, M.R.A., S.S.M., and M.K.S.; methodology, M.R.A., M.K.S., and H.V.; validation M.R.A., M.K.S., and H.V.; formal analysis, M.R.A., M.K.S. and S.S.M.; investigation, M.R.A., M.K.S., S.S.M., and M.A..; resources, S.S.M., and M.A.; data curation, M.R.A., and M.K.S.; writing—original draft preparation, M.R.A., M.K.S., and H.V.; writing—review and editing, M.R.A., and M.K.S.; visualization, M.R.A., M.K.S., H.V. and M.A; supervision, M.R.A., and M.K.S.; project administration, M.R.A., and M.K.S. All authors have read and agreed to the published version.

Data Availability Statement

Data can be provided upon request.

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Ethical considerations

This study was approved by Hamadan University of Medical Sciences. Written consent was obtained from study participants (Code of Ethics: UMSHA.REC.1398.733).

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Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interests between the authors.

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