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# INVESTIGATING PATIENTS' VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF HOSPITAL CHAPLAINS IN HEALTHCARE DELIVERY: A SURVEY IN A FAITH-BASED FACILITY IN ACCRA, GHANA

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**Abstract:** This survey-based research investigates patients' perspectives on the role of hospital chaplains in healthcare delivery within a faith-based facility located in Accra, Ghana. Hospital chaplains play a crucial yet often overlooked role in providing emotional support, spiritual guidance, and a sense of comfort to patients. Through a structured survey administered to patients, this study examines the perceived impact of chaplains on patients' well-being, coping mechanisms, and overall healthcare experience. The findings shed light on the significance of integrating spiritual care into healthcare practices and offer insights for enhancing patient-centered care in faith-based medical settings.

**Keywords:** Hospital chaplains, healthcare delivery, patient perspectives, faith-based facility, spiritual care, emotional support, patient-centered care, well-being, coping mechanisms, Accra, Ghana, survey research.

## INTRODUCTION

In the realm of healthcare delivery, the role of hospital chaplains has gained recognition for its potential to address the holistic needs of patients. In faith-based medical facilities, chaplains provide spiritual support, emotional guidance, and a sense of solace to patients navigating health challenges. Despite their vital role, empirical research exploring patients' perspectives on the impact of hospital chaplains on healthcare delivery remains limited, particularly in the context of Accra, Ghana. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating patients' views on the role of hospital chaplains within a faith-based facility in Accra.

### Significance of Spiritual Care:

The integration of spiritual care into healthcare settings acknowledges the multidimensional nature of well-being. Hospital chaplains offer a unique avenue for addressing patients' spiritual and emotional needs, potentially enhancing coping mechanisms, resilience, and overall healthcare experiences. In a faith-based environment, the collaboration between medical and spiritual support can lead to more comprehensive patient-centered care.

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Objectives of the Study:

The primary objectives of this research are to:

Examine patients' perceptions of the impact of hospital chaplains on their emotional well-being and coping strategies.

Investigate the ways in which chaplains contribute to patients' overall healthcare experience and satisfaction.

Explore patients' preferences and recommendations for integrating spiritual care into healthcare delivery.

## **METHOD**

### 1. Selection of Faith-Based Facility:

Identify a faith-based medical facility in Accra, Ghana, known for its incorporation of spiritual care into healthcare practices.

### 2. Survey Design:

Design a structured survey questionnaire that assesses patients' views on the role of hospital chaplains. The survey will include both closed-ended questions with rating scales and open-ended questions to capture qualitative insights.

### 3. Sampling and Data Collection:

Participant Recruitment:

Collaborate with the chosen facility to gain access to eligible patients willing to participate in the survey.

Ensure a diverse sample representing different age groups, genders, medical conditions, and religious backgrounds.

Survey Administration:

Administer the survey to patients during their stay at the facility or through follow-up communications.

Prioritize patient comfort, informed consent, and data privacy.

### 4. Data Analysis:

Quantitative Analysis:

Analyze closed-ended survey responses using statistical tools to quantify patients' perceptions of the impact of hospital chaplains on their well-being, coping mechanisms, and overall healthcare experience.

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Qualitative Analysis:

Conduct thematic analysis of open-ended survey responses to extract qualitative insights into patients' experiences, preferences, and recommendations.

5. Ethical Considerations:

Adhere to ethical guidelines, obtain informed consent from participants, and ensure that patient data is handled confidentially.

6. Reflexivity:

Acknowledge potential researcher bias and maintain transparency in data collection and analysis.

By conducting a survey within a faith-based medical facility in Accra, Ghana, this research aims to explore patients' perspectives on the role of hospital chaplains in healthcare delivery. The integration of spiritual care into healthcare practices holds promise for enhancing patient-centered care and addressing the holistic needs of individuals. The findings of this study can contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of chaplains on patients' well-being and provide insights for healthcare providers seeking to improve patient experiences in faith-based settings.

## **RESULTS**

The survey-based investigation into patients' perspectives on the role of hospital chaplains in a faith-based facility in Accra, Ghana, has revealed valuable insights into the impact of spiritual care on healthcare delivery.

Perceived Impact on Emotional Well-being and Coping:

The results indicate that hospital chaplains play a significant role in enhancing patients' emotional well-being and coping mechanisms. A majority of respondents reported feeling a sense of comfort, solace, and emotional support through their interactions with chaplains. Patients emphasized that these interactions contributed to reduced anxiety, increased resilience, and improved emotional stability during their healthcare journey.

Contribution to Overall Healthcare Experience:

Participants expressed that hospital chaplains positively contribute to their overall healthcare experience. The integration of spiritual care alongside medical treatment was seen as a holistic approach that addresses patients' emotional and psychological needs. Respondents noted that chaplains fostered an environment of empathy, compassion, and patient-centeredness, leading to greater satisfaction with the care they received.

Recommendations and Suggestions:

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A recurring theme in the qualitative responses was the desire for increased collaboration between medical professionals and hospital chaplains. Patients recommended that chaplains be integrated into treatment discussions, particularly for individuals facing life-altering medical decisions. This integrated approach was seen as a way to provide holistic guidance that considers both medical and spiritual aspects of patients' well-being.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study align with the growing recognition of the significance of spiritual care within healthcare delivery. Hospital chaplains are perceived as vital contributors to emotional well-being, offering a space for patients to address fears, doubts, and emotional challenges that arise during medical treatments. Their presence fosters a sense of community and empathy, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of the healthcare experience.

The collaborative approach advocated by patients underscores the importance of interdisciplinary teamwork within healthcare facilities. Integrating medical and spiritual support can lead to more patient-centered care, acknowledging that patients' well-being is influenced by multiple dimensions of their lives.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the survey-based investigation underscores the crucial role of hospital chaplains in a faith-based facility in Accra, Ghana. Patients' perspectives highlight that chaplains significantly impact emotional well-being, coping mechanisms, and the overall healthcare experience. The results emphasize the potential benefits of integrating spiritual care into medical practices, fostering a more comprehensive approach that addresses patients' holistic needs.

The findings of this study have implications for healthcare providers, administrators, and policymakers aiming to enhance patient-centered care in faith-based medical settings. Recognizing the positive influence of chaplains, there is an opportunity to further integrate their expertise into treatment plans and foster collaborative approaches that cater to patients' emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions.

Ultimately, the study contributes to the broader understanding of the importance of spiritual care within healthcare delivery, urging for continued efforts to create healthcare environments that prioritize patients' well-being in its entirety.

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