

BRAND REPUTATION MANAGEMENT AND PATIENT ENGAGEMENT

Dissertation Submitted to



The IIHMR University, Jaipur

for the partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of
Master of Business Administration (MBA)
in
Hospital and Health Management

By

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Under the Supervision and Guidance of

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2024



03rd July, 2024

TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that **Ms. Neha Mishra** is working with us since **19th March 2024** in the **Marketing Department** at **Apollomedics Super Speciality Hospitals, Lucknow.**

Her performance during this period is up to the required standards.

Thanks & Warm Regards,
for Apollomedics Super Speciality Hospitals,
[a unit of Apollomedics International Lifesciences Limited & an AHEL Group Hospital]

()

Mr. Deepak Sachdeva,
Deputy General Manager,
Human Resources

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled Brand Reputation Management and Patient Engagement is the Bonafede record of my original research work. I declare that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.



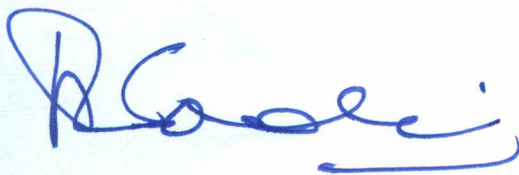
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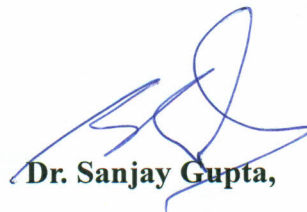
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that dissertation titled “**Brand Reputation Management and Patient Engagement**” is a record of the research work undertaken by **Neha Mishra**, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA (Hospital and Health Management) from the IIHMR University, Jaipur, under my guidance and supervision and ~~his~~/her approach to the research study has been sincere, scientific, and analytical.

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Date: 05/07/2024.

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Abstract

This research explores the pivotal role of brand reputation management at Apollomedics Super Specialty Hospital in Lucknow. In an increasingly competitive and patient-focused healthcare landscape, effectively managing a hospital's brand reputation is essential. The study aims to provide practical insights for Apollomedics to build and sustain a robust brand identity. This research points out the gaps in current practices in the hospital through an assessment of the core principles, strategies, challenges, and opportunities in healthcare branding. Rooted in changing patient expectations, competitive forces, and regulatory constraints, it sets out to enhance the strategies for reputation management in Apollomedics. The qualitative and quantitative approaches utilized in this research will consist of patient surveys and interviews with staff members, as well as an online review analysis, to find out the existing branding strategies. These results are developed to help Apollomedics enhance its brand reputation in order to develop a stronger level of trust, loyalty, and competitive edge with its patients in the healthcare sector.

Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement I am immensely elated while putting an expression of thankfulness towards my mentor President & Dean of IIHMR University for his support and encouragement towards my dissertation; in fact it is because of his consistent patronage that helped me in enriching my development as an intern. I'd also like to put on record the thanks addressed to my university's President Dr. P. R. Sodani., IIHMR University, for his support. I am grateful to them for providing important guidance throughout the examination, his recommendations, valuable suggestions, optimistic and strong demeanour, and unwavering support, without which the endeavours would not have been possible to complete I would extend my vote of thanks to the lady, Mrs. Kirti Ma'am, who guided and supported me during my internship. I hope that in the future, I should be able to draw upon my expertise and skill to make some useful contribution to industry service. The present research deals with a very critical subject of reputation management and branding in the changing context of the healthcare sector.

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This study will try to suggest some practical recommendations for healthcare organizations with an aim to facilitate them while dealing with the complexities in building and sustaining a strong Brand Identity: The various dimensions of healthcare branding, such as guiding concepts, tactics, obstacles, and possibilities, are being carefully examined.

The research problem is mainly focussed on the identification of the deficiencies and challenges in the currently applied branding and reputation management strategies of the healthcare industry. Moreover, the need for proper analysis, under instantaneous demands of patients, competitor situation, and regulatory frameworks, has also been recognized as necessary by this study.

Challenges to the brand reputation of any hospital are peculiar in this digital world. At a time when social media, review platforms, and healthcare forums are at their peak, patients have more ways than before to share their experience and views about a healthcare service provider. For this reason, hospitals have to be very proactive in managing their reputation across this digital frontier.

The paper, therefore, looks into principal strategies to manage brand reputation in hospitals in this digital age: monitoring online conversations, engaging patients, providing accurate information, emphasizing transparency and authenticity, and developing crisis management plans. It shall greatly enable a given hospital to succeed in managing its online presence, foster the kind of trust between it and patients, and bring forth a good reputation within the field of digital space

1. Review Literature

The digital age changed everything in the facets of brand reputation management of hospitals, opening great opportunities but at the same time challenges. Apart from social media and online review platforms, most of the information over hospitals became easily accessible, leading to more transparency yet also to information overload on the side of patients. This has posed a challenge to hospitals in dealing with this plethora of data while ensuring its precision. Negative online reviews and social media posts can go viral within minutes, posing a significant threat to hospital reputation. Only effective crisis management strategies will ensure prompt responses to such negative feedback and mitigate potential damage. Transparency versus protection of the patient remains critical and must be compliant with data protection regulations like HIPAA

Online reviews are what patients really believe in most—driving patient trust and ultimately driving decision-making. Positive reviews build up an image, while negative reviews discourage one. Through social media platforms, patients will be able to share their experiences with even more people. Thus, a positive patient story improves brand image; on the other hand, negative stories exert adverse influences. Peer influence and e-WOM become very strong; very often, they might be far more convincing than the advertising. Positive e-WOM gains credibility and attracts new patients.

Hospitals brand reputation management is done through several ways. Maintaining up-to-date social media profiles allows a hospital to engage well with patients, share health-related information, and responds to feedback in building their presence noted online. Online reputation monitoring tools track every share, like, tweet, or online review of a hospital and help shorten response time to any developing issues. Patient liaison programs encourage happy patients to log on and post about their good experiences through testimonial videos, patient stories, and review incentives.

It has been concluded that a timely online response by hospitals is seen as favorable by patients. Positive feedback must be acknowledged, and at the same time, negative comments need to be replied to in an initiative for recovery and improvement of reputation. Sharing useful health-related content and educational resources helps in building the brand as a center of authority, hence affecting perception positively and engendering trust and credibility. There needs to be transparency and authenticity in online communications. The hospitals that are honest and transparent in their interactions turn out to be better reputationally.

Brands can be better managed in hospitals by creating holistic programs that involve constant monitoring, proactive engagement, and a strategy for responding to issues. Enhancing patient experiences both online and offline may result in positive reviews and recommendations; hence, patient satisfaction can be turned into one of the most fundamental elements of reputation management strategies. With advanced analytics and AI-driven capabilities, there will be a better understanding of patient sentiment, risk probability to reputation, and formulation of effective responses. Training of health care staff in digital communication and engagement procedures will help to bring uniformity in experience that patients have across various online platforms. Encouraging patients to share their positive experiences in terms of testimonials and reviews will help create an online presence with incentivizing patient stories

Disable research objective

2. Research objective

1. To identify the key challenges that the hospitals face in managing their brand reputation in the digital age.
2. The effect of online conversations/patient feedback on perceptions of the hospital's brand
3. Strategies applied in the digital landscape at the moment by hospitals to manage their brand reputation.
4. Analysis of various strategies in use for building up and maintaining a positive online presence for hospitals.
5. Recommendations to the betterment of brand reputation management practices of hospitals in this digital age, based on the findings.

3. Research Methodology

Sample Selection of Data Collection:

Hospitals for this research will be selected based on criteria such as size, location, and type. Examples include academic medical centers and community hospitals. Data Sources: The information shall be sourced from various online platforms. This will include social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, review sites like Yelp and Healthgrades, and healthcare forums. Engagement Measurement: information related to engagement between the hospitals and patients on social media will be sourced, which includes likes, shares, comments, and the response rates.

NLP Techniques: sentiment analysis of the online discussions will be done using the NLP techniques. Sentiment Classification: algorithms relevant to classify the sentiments of the reviews, comments, and social media interactions from patients as positive, negative, or neutral will be sourced.

Quantitative Analysis

Statistical analyses will be conducted for the parameters that associate the level of engagement on social media from a hospital with its online reputation as a measure of sentiment analysis. Significance testing: Calculating the relevance of the identified relationships with the use of corresponding statistical tests.

Qualitative Analysis:

Key examples of patient-hospital interactions on social media will be qualitatively analyzed to further investigate the nature and consequences of engagement.

Limitations Study Limitations:

Possible limitations at this stage will involve small sample size, data availability and the subjectivity in sentiment analysis.

Biases: Any biases or confounding variables that may intervene while drawing inference from results will be debated in the research.

Validation: Peer Review: The validation for the findings of the study will be done based on the peer review to prove the credibility and reliability of the research carried-out

a) STUDY DESIGN:

In this respect, a prospective cohort design will be applied in the study. Gathering data from a heterogeneous sample of hospitals, at base-measures of engagement on social media platforms are recorded and followed up for a stipulated period to track any change in its e-reputation. This will include a statistical analysis regarding the association of engagement metrics with online reputation, while the ethical considerations that have to do with patient privacy and confidentiality are addressed throughout the research study. Sample Size and

Study Time: Assume data would be continuously collected for the whole period of study
Calculation of Sample Size: Sample size = No of hospitals × No. Information gathering points in a hospital = 100 hospitals × 12 data collection points per hospital = 1200 data points

1.SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:

Stratified Sampling: The population that has to be sampled would be segregated first on the basis of characteristic features relevant to the study. The hospitals may fall under different types, locations, sizes, and so on. This way, the representation from all segments of the population will be ensured, helping generalize the findings.

1.1 DESIGN: This will be a prospective cohort study. The relationship between hospital engagement on social media platforms and online reputation will be assessed.. Data for all these would be drawn from a heterogeneous sample of hospitals, with baseline measures recorded for engagement and followed up after a predetermined period. Statistical analysis would be done so that the relationship which may exist between engagement metrics and online reputation can be established. Online reputation checks would be carried out. Ethical considerations: The privacy and confidentiality of patients were fully guaranteed during the study.

1.2 STUDY POPULATION

Inclusion criteria: Settings: Various locations, types, and sizes of hospitals, such as academic medical centers and community hospitals. Exposure Variable: Hospitals with active use of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Availability of Data: Those for which obtainable data is available online regarding patient reviews, social media interactions, and engagement metrics. Exclusion Criteria: Those hospitals that do not have any active social media presence will be eliminated from the research study. Those hospitals with sparse and/or non-accessible information on online platforms, which makes it hard or impossible to get a view of their engagement and reputation, shall be eliminated from the research study. Those hospitals that do not meet the pre-defined criteria for inclusion based on localities, sizes, and nature shall be eliminated to enhance representativeness of the sample under study. From each such stratum, random selection of hospitals can be made for the study. Convenience Sampling: As the research is conducted on those hospitals with active participation on social media sites, convenience sampling can also be used to draw out those hospitals based on this criterion. It simply means choosing to work with those hospitals that are easily accessible and

willing to cooperate with the study, thus making it easier and possible for collecting data within a study period.

1.3 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE:

- Identify those hospitals which had actively participated in social media.
- Data from social media, review sites, and forums
- Systematic data collection through monitoring tools
- Monitoring of patient reviews and social media conversation
- Collection of the engagement metrics of social media
- Sentiment analysis for patient review and interaction
- The collected data is safely stored and managed.
- Quality control to check the accuracy of the data
- Maintaining the privacy regulations and permission
- Progress and report of the collected data are regularly updated.

1.4 DATA ANALYSIS PLAN:

- Descriptive analysis: Summarizing the characteristics of the hospitals and engagement metrics.
- Sentiment analysis: Classify sentiments of different reviews and social media posts by patients.
- Correlation analysis: Associations between the variables of engagement metrics and online reputation.
- Comparative analysis: Levels of the two variables across different hospitals.
- Regression analysis: Predictors of online reputation.
- Qualitative analysis: Patient feedback for emerging themes.
- Integration of findings: Quantitative and qualitative insights combined.
- Sensitivity analysis: Sensitivity check on results.
- Presentation of results: Key findings in a clear and concise way.

1. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Obtain informed consent from hospitals and patients. It also provides protection to the patients' privacy by ensuring that proper measures on data protection are in place, hence complying with regulations like HIPAA and GDPR. Moreover, transparency in methods of data collection

and processing protects participants' autonomy to refuse or withdraw participation. No harm will be caused to participants—accuracy of data. Data collected ethically must be used ethically without manipulations or distortion of results. All applicable regulations and institutional policies will be adhered to. The ethical approval is submitted to review boards or ethics committees. Integrity and Transparency will be upheld throughout the research process.

1.5 IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH:

- a) Optimizing brand management of hospitals in this digital age.
- b) Patient engagement and good communication
- c) Informed hospital marketing strategies
- d) Social media policy and regulation in healthcare
- e) Facilitating the informed decisions of patients in healthcare
- f) Best practices and innovations in brand management
- g) Development of trust and credibility from stakeholders
- h) Disparity in online reputation among hospitals Research Question

In this respect, a prospective cohort design will be applied in the study. Gathering data from a heterogeneous sample of hospitals, at base-measures of engagement on social media platforms are recorded and followed up for a stipulated period to track any change in its e-reputation. This will involve a statistical analysis of the association of engagement metrics with online reputation, while ethical considerations related to patient privacy and confidentiality will be addressed throughout the research stu

6. Research Question

Q1. Patient Survey Questions:

1. Perception and Trust

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your overall trust in Apollomedics Super Specialty Hospital?
- What specific factors influenced your trust in our hospital?

2. Experience and Satisfaction

- How satisfied are you with the care and services provided by Apollomedics? (Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied)
- What aspects of your experience at Apollomedics could be improved?

3. Online Presence and Reviews

- How often do you rely on online reviews when choosing a healthcare provider?
- Have you ever posted a review about your experience at Apollomedics online? If yes, what motivated you to do so?

4. Brand Image and Recommendations

- How would you describe Apollomedics' brand image in one or two words?
- Would you recommend Apollomedics to your friends and family? Why or why not?

Staff Interview Questions:

1. Brand Reputation Awareness

- How do you perceive the current brand reputation of Apollomedics Super Specialty Hospital among patients and in the community?
- What do you believe are the key strengths and weaknesses in our current reputation management practices?

2. Strategies and Challenges

- What strategies does Apollomedics currently employ to manage and enhance its brand reputation?
- What challenges do you face in maintaining a positive brand reputation, and how do you think these can be addressed?

3. Patient Interaction and Feedback

- How often do you receive feedback from patients about their experiences at Apollomedics, and how is this feedback typically handled?
- In your opinion, how can Apollomedics better utilize patient feedback to improve its brand reputation?

4. Competitor Analysis and Improvements

- How do you think Apollomedics compares to its competitors in terms of brand reputation and patient satisfaction?
- What improvements or new initiatives would you suggest to strengthen Apollomedics' brand identity and reputation?

7. Research Questions

- 1. What strategies can effectively identify and connect with the right contacts for collaboration to enhance brand reputation during corporate engagement Activities and corporate tie -ups marketing for Hospital?**
- 2. How can we effectively enhance our brand reputation and patient engagement efforts to connect with and support Patients in corporates?**
- 3. What comprehensive strategies can effectively reach retirees and geriatric patients to ensure proper healthcare, addressing challenges like limited mobility and lack of digital literacy, while strengthening our brand reputation?**
- 4. How can we maximize corporate patients from corporate and build strong, lasting relationships to ensure a steady corporate stream, thereby enhancing our brand reputation?**

8. Result

Q1 What strategies can effectively identify and connect with the right contacts for collaboration to enhance brand reputation during corporate engagement Activities and corporate tie -ups marketing for Hospital?

Identify Key Stakeholders and Influencers

a. Internal Stakeholders: -

- Executives and Senior Management: Gain support from the top to ensure alignment with corporate goals.
- Department Heads: Engage heads of relevant departments like Marketing, PR, and Medical to ensure interdisciplinary collaboration.

b. External Stakeholders:

- Medical Professionals: Doctors, nurses, and healthcare experts can act as brand ambassadors.
- Industry Influencers: Engage healthcare influencers and thought leaders.
- Corporate Partners: Identify potential corporate partners whose values align with your hospital's mission.

It has done market research. The many challenges that the hospitals face while trying to form some corporate tie-ups and pitching for collaborations are difficulty in engaging key stakeholders, limited networking opportunities, limited networking opportunity, inadequate market data, difficulty in finding complementary partners. Hospitals also struggle to make informative content, craft personalized pitches, leverage technology effectively and set success metrics clearly. The following are recommended for the hospitals: a structured stakeholder engagement plan, network enhancement, investing in comprehensive market research, new creative forms of partnerships, communication strategies, advanced technology, and monitoring and evaluation. If these gaps are filled, then the correct contact persons will be reached, and brand reputation will Get enhanced by successful corporate collaborations. Activities in corporate engagement:

We also conduct full-fledged health check-up camps, and outstation OPD services are organized periodically. Health talks are conducted with a view to educating and informing. We also have CME programmes for corporate doctors and public sector undertakings to update themselves on the latest in medicine. Community outreach programs aim at taking our healthcare services and educational initiatives to larger sections and promote community wellness in general.

Patient Engagement Activities:

Our patient engagement is centered on delivering exceptional client services through various in-house activities.

We integrate CRM systems by enhancing our interactions and services.

Branding and promotion: We write and distribute press releases, run advertisements in newspapers, and are actively updating our Google Business pages. This would be in the form of frequent updates about what we are doing, videos of our doctors, and maintenance of Google reviews for an excellent online presence. Patient Services CRM:

Top-of-the-line services are offered through the various patient care departments: OPD, IPD, Emergency, PHC, and Day Care. We give top-quality care in all our services. Our GRO works round the clock to make sure that we accord the best care to our patients, making all their experiences exhilarating.

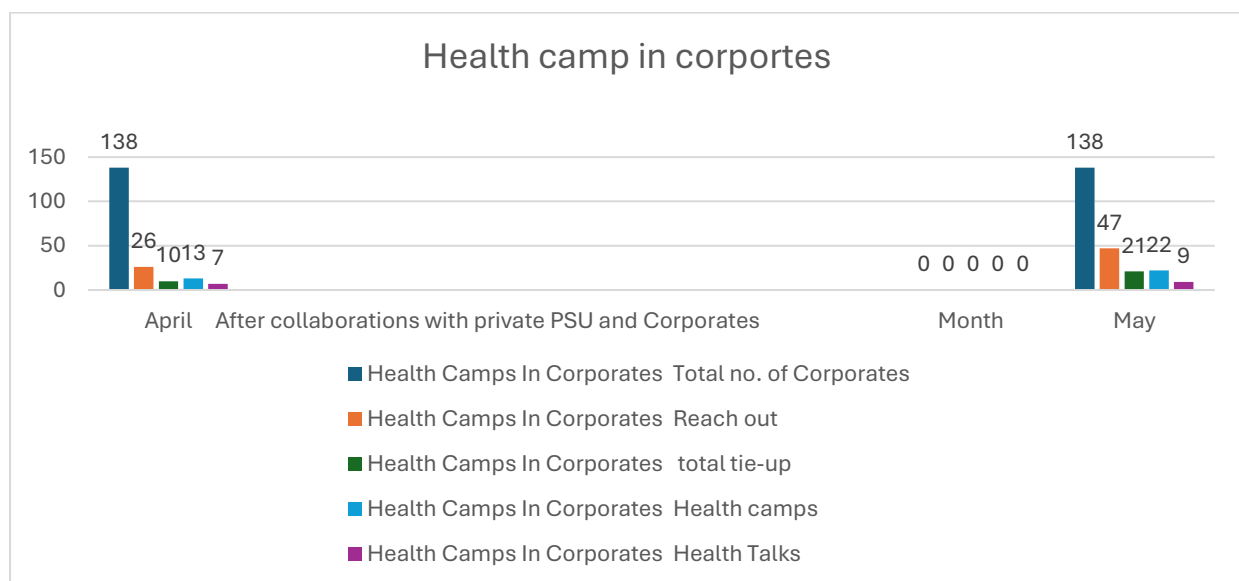


Fig: - 1.1 Total No. of corporate camp in the month of April and May

The graph illustrates:

- Total no of corporates 138
- No of reach outs 47
- Total no of health checkup camp 23
- Total no of ties-ups 10
- Total no of health talks 9

Q2 How can we effectively enhance our brand reputation and patient engagement efforts to connect with and support Patients in corporates?

Three months ago, we began conducting outstation OPD services for cancer patients in various tier 3 cities. Initially, our strategy included branding initiatives related to Health awareness and forming partnerships with local hospitals for patient referrals.

To expand our reach, we then started collaborating with Primary Health Centers (PHCs), Community Health Centers (CHCs), and Civil Hospitals, as well as conducting Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions and Round Table Meeting (RTM). We also engaged with district hospitals to enhance our network. Additionally, we launched branding campaigns in front of government hospitals in Lucknow to increase visibility.

Previously, our focus was solely on organizing free outstation OPD camps. However, we have now also initiated in-house free OPD camps for cancer patients. This strategic shift has led to a significant increase in the number of cancer patients visiting our OPD, both in Lucknow and in tier 3 cities.

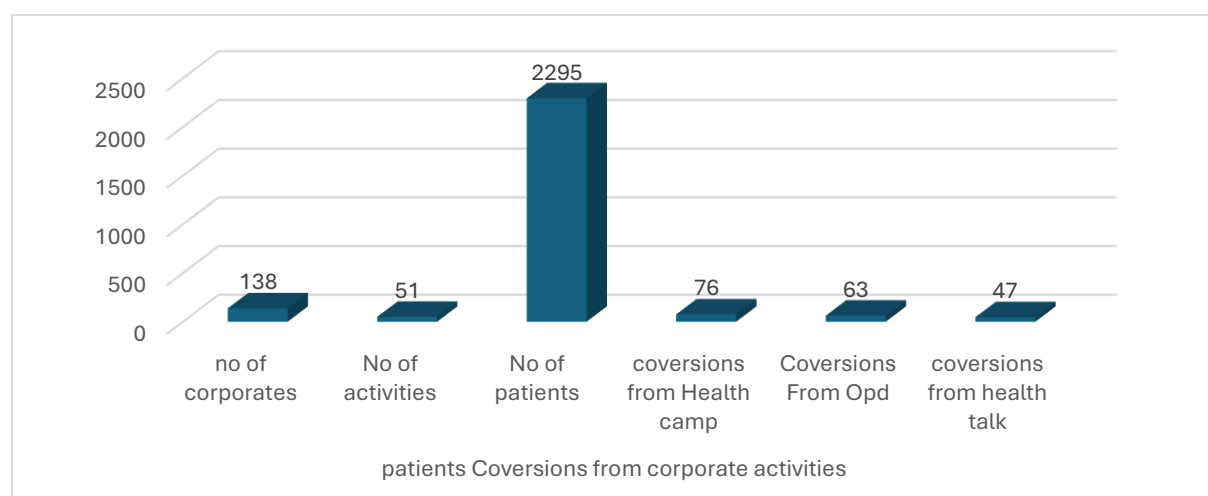


Fig2.1 patients' conversions from corporate activities

Q3. What comprehensive strategies can effectively reach retirees and geriatric patients to ensure proper healthcare, addressing challenges like limited mobility, lack of digital literacy?

Patients typically arrive at the hospital through two main channels: either as walk-in patients, who come on their own accord, or through referrals generated by our marketing efforts.

Initially, our strategy focused on organizing OPD (Outpatient Department) camps and conducting health talks at outstation hospitals and clinics. These events aimed to raise awareness about our services and attract patients from surrounding areas. However, while these initiatives were effective to a certain extent, we recognized the need for a more targeted approach to attract a specific demographic, particularly geriatric patients who often require more frequent and specialized medical care.

For that, we started networking with private retirees' organizations and corporate houses. After forming an alliance with them, we were able to service more elderly patients. Many a time, these organizations have a list of retirees who need to come for regular medical checkups and treatments, so they became a perfect target for our hospital services.

This collaboration with private retirees' organizations and corporates worked magic. Not only it increased the number of visiting geriatric patients in our hospital but also increased our revenue multifold. This demographic tends to require ongoing medical attention, leading to higher patient retention rates and increased demand for various healthcare services.

Overall, by shifting our focus from general outreach activities like OPD camps and health talks to more strategic partnerships with retirees' organizations and corporate groups, we were able to enhance our patient acquisition efforts, particularly among the geriatric population, thereby improving our financial performance and expanding our hospital's reach.

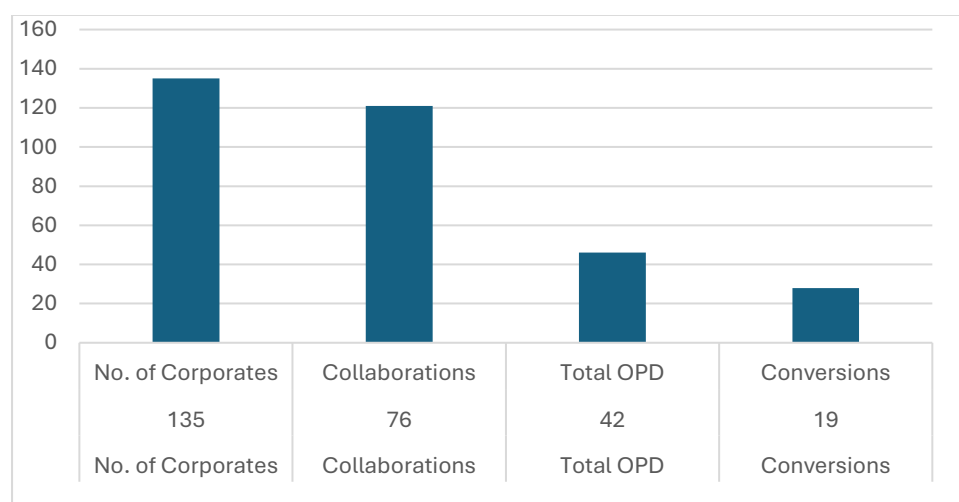


Fig 3.1 Patient's conversions from corporate opds

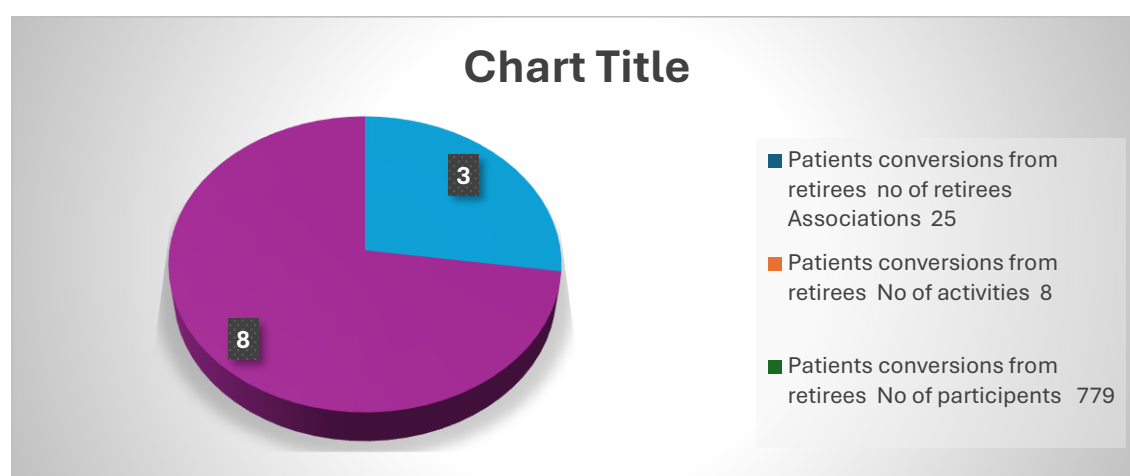


Fig 3.2 Patient's conversions from retirees

Q4. How can we maximize corporate patients from corporate and build strong, lasting relationships to ensure a steady corporate stream, thereby enhancing our brand reputation?

Previously, our hospital managed to conduct 70-80 in-house OPD (Outpatient Department) consultations per day. However, we struggled to meet our targets for surgical procedures.

To address this issue, we initiated tie-ups with corporate offices, proposing a mutually beneficial arrangement. We offer discounts on OPD, IPD (Inpatient Department), and investigation services to the corporate offices and their employees.

Specifically, we offer:

- 15% discount on OPD consultations
- 10% discount on OPD investigations
- 5% discount on IPD bed charges for cash patients

Once the corporate office agrees to these terms, we sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and then update our system to reflect the tie-up. This ensures that when employees visit the OPD and present their employee card, they receive the applicable discounts without any delay.

This strategy proved to be highly effective. As a result, we saw a significant increase in the number of surgeries performed daily, which in turn boosted our revenue. By leveraging these partnerships, we were able to meet and even exceed our surgical targets, improving both our operational efficiency and financial performance.

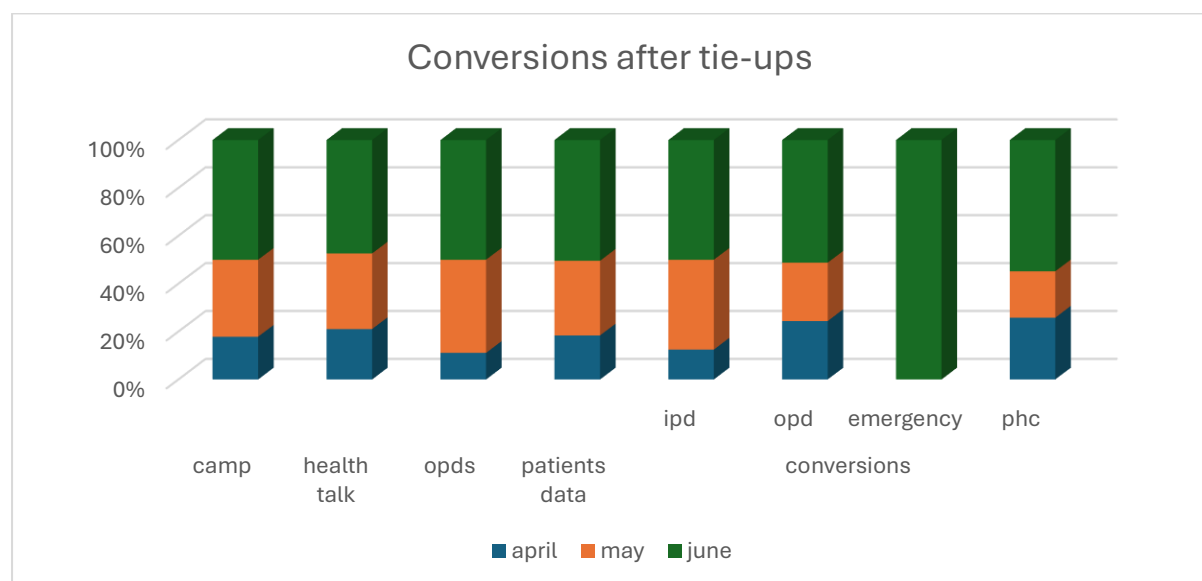


Fig 4.1 Patient's conversions from tie-ups

9. Conclusion

In summary, our proactive ways of surmounting obstacles to realization of targets in surgical procedures have innovated mutually beneficial linkages between our hospitals and corporate offices. We offer strategic discounts on OPD Consultations, OPD Investigations, and IPD Bed Charges that create a value proposition—attraction and relationship building with more patients and corporate entities.

Initially, our hospital did 70-80 in-house OPD consultations per day. Feeling the need to increase surgical cases, we searched for the reason in corporate tie-ups. The democracies in trade that were offered were 15% discounts on OPD consultations, 10% on OPD investigations, and 5% on IPD bed charges for cash-paying patients, viewed as terribly inspirational for corporate offices to engage with our health services.

Upon agreement, an MOU is signed, and the partnership is put into the system to ensure all employees of the partnered corporations get their discounts promptly upon production of the employee card. This facilitates the smooth flow of operations, improving the patient experience and showcasing our commitment to efficiency and satisfaction.

These partnerships brand us as the health experts of choice for employees of corporations. Through this loyalty, repeat visits could increase patient volume and build our brand within the corporate community, which could result in further referrals for the expanded base of patients.

Indeed, this is a strategy that serves our mission: to make quality healthcare handy and affordable. By decreasing the financial pressure off patients, more will have the benefits of our medical expertise. It shows that we are economically aware and able to adapt to the needs of patients.

Our initiative on corporate tie-up has underlined the role of innovation and adaptability in healthcare management. The quality of our adopting answers for needs expressed by corporate employees defines our ability to respond to the market.

A significant amount of knowledge is brought on healthcare needs and preferences of corporate employees, which helps tailor our services effectively through health programs. This data-driven approach would, therefore, be important in enhancing the role of personalized care in improving outcomes.

Execution of the corporate tie-up strategy is one of the big milestones in our journey toward excellence and growth. We have been able to achieve growth in OPD consultations with strategic discounts and smooth processing, thus laying the ground for achieving targets in surgical procedures. At the same time, such partnerships assure accessible, quality healthcare and strengthen our position as a trusted, innovative healthcare provider. Further down the line, we will continue to work on such initiatives, with the objective always being to strive for better care and increase our reach within the community.

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