

**A STUDY ON IDENTIFYING THE WAYS TO REDUCE DROPOUTS AND
IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE RETENTION AT A MATERNITY
HOSPITAL**

Dissertation Submitted to



The IIHMR University, Jaipur

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Master of Business Administration (MBA)

in

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By

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Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Dr Neetu Purohit

2024

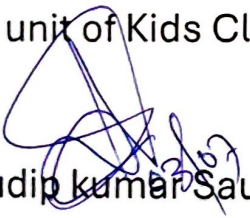
Dated: 03 July 2024

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Siddharth Sharma in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of the degree of MBA (Hospital and Health Management) from IIHMR University, Jaipur has successfully completed her internship at Cloudnine Hospital, Bellandur during 01 April 2024 to 01 July 2024.

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled **A STUDY ON IDENTIFYING THE WAYS TO REDUCE DROPOUTS AND IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE RETENTION AT A MATERNITY HOSPITAL** is the bonafide 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 Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.



Siddharth Sharma

Date – 06/07/1999

CERTIFICATE

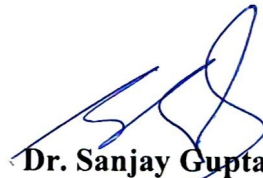
This is to certify that dissertation titled **A STUDY ON IDENTIFYING THE WAYS TO REDUCE DROPOUTS AND IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE RETENTION AT A MATERNITY HOSPITAL** is a record of the research work undertaken by **Siddharth Sharma** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the 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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Neetu Purohit'.

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Siddharth Sharma

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Abstract

This ongoing study addresses the critical issue of patient retention in a maternity hospital, examining the various factors that contribute to patient dropout and proposing comprehensive strategies to enhance retention rates. Patient retention in maternity care is influenced by cultural practices, perceived service quality, and financial considerations. This research, still in progress, identifies the primary reasons for patient dropout, including traditional customs in southern India, where expectant mothers return to their native places for childbirth, perceptions of service quality, and financial constraints.

To tackle these challenges, the hospital is currently developing and implementing a multi-faceted retention strategy. The first aspect of the strategy involves Discount and Transfer Strategies, which respect cultural practices while ensuring continuity of care. By identifying where patients are likely to move and checking if the hospital network has a presence in those regions, the hospital facilitates the transfer of bed bookings and offers a 15% discount on the final bill. This approach aims to retain patients within the hospital network, mitigating the impact of cultural factors on retention rates.

Another key component is the Prepaid Bed Booking System, where patients pay an ₹8,000 deposit to ensure they receive an inpatient department (IPD) room on time. This system guarantees room availability according to the patient's expected delivery date, providing convenience and security. The deposit is adjusted in the final delivery bill, offering financial relief and assurance to patients, thus enhancing the patient experience and encouraging retention.

Financial Incentives are also integral to the strategy. Patients who pay the ₹8,000 deposit receive a ₹5,000 discount on the final bill at the time of delivery. This financial relief reassures patients of the hospital's commitment to affordability. Additionally, patients are provided with ₹4,000 worth of coupons for scans or blood tests, adding value to their overall experience and making the hospital services more attractive and comprehensive.

The hospital is also focused on Enhancing Service Quality and Communication. By fostering strong patient-provider relationships through improved communication channels, personalized care plans, and patient education initiatives, the hospital aims to build trust and address patient

concerns promptly. This personalized approach ensures that patients feel valued and supported throughout their maternity journey, reducing the likelihood of them seeking alternative healthcare providers.

Strategic Monitoring and Adaptation form the backbone of the hospital's approach. Continuous data collection and analysis are employed to track patient retention rates, satisfaction levels, and operational performance metrics. This proactive approach allows for ongoing refinement and adaptation of strategies based on evolving patient needs and market dynamics. By leveraging data-driven insights, the hospital ensures that its strategies remain effective and responsive to changing patient preferences.

The study highlights the importance of understanding and addressing the multifaceted reasons for patient dropout in maternity care. The hospital's comprehensive strategies—ranging from cultural adaptations and service quality enhancements to innovative financial incentives—aim to create a supportive environment that promotes continuity of care and patient trust. By implementing these strategies, the hospital aims to improve patient satisfaction and loyalty, ensuring higher retention rates and better health outcomes for mothers and babies.

The results of this ongoing study underscore the hospital's commitment to delivering high-quality, patient-centred care. By respecting cultural practices, enhancing service quality, and providing financial incentives, the hospital effectively addresses the key factors influencing patient retention. Continuous monitoring and adaptation of these strategies ensure their sustainability and effectiveness in promoting patient loyalty and positive healthcare outcomes.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of patient retention in maternity hospitals are pivotal for ensuring continuous care, optimizing patient outcomes, and enhancing hospital sustainability. This research paper examines the retention strategies for new patients at a maternity hospital, which receives a significant influx of patients daily, with 250 patients from Monday to Friday and over 300 on Saturdays. The hospital's patient demographic is diverse, encompassing pregnant patients due for delivery, gynaecological patients requiring surgical interventions, and those planning pregnancies seeking assisted reproductive technologies such as In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and Intrauterine Insemination (IUI).

1.1 Background

Maternity hospitals are integral to providing comprehensive reproductive health services. Retention of new patients is crucial, particularly in a competitive healthcare environment. Ensuring that patients return for continued care not only enhances individual health outcomes but also contributes to the hospital's operational efficiency and financial health. This study aims to develop and analyse strategies that can improve the retention of new patients across three primary categories: pregnant patients, gynaecological patients, and those planning for pregnancy.

1.2 Patient Categories and Retention Objectives

Pregnant Patients: Pregnant patients form a substantial portion of the hospital's clientele. These patients require consistent prenatal care, culminating in delivery services after approximately nine months. Retaining these patients is vital for ensuring they receive uninterrupted care, which is critical for both maternal and fetal health. Strategies for retention will focus on providing high-quality prenatal services, fostering strong patient-provider relationships, and offering comprehensive support systems throughout the pregnancy journey.

Gynaecological Patients: This category includes patients visiting the hospital for gynaecological issues that often necessitate surgical procedures. Retention strategies for this group will aim to ensure that patients choose to undergo their surgeries at the

hospital. This can be achieved through offering state-of-the-art surgical facilities, ensuring the availability of skilled surgeons, providing detailed pre-surgical and post-surgical care plans, and enhancing patient education about the benefits of undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Patients Planning for Pregnancy: These patients are seeking fertility treatments such as IVF and IUI. The hospital's IVF center plays a critical role in this retention strategy. Ensuring that these patients remain within the hospital system for their fertility treatments involves providing cutting-edge reproductive technologies, ensuring a high success rate of treatments, offering personalized treatment plans, and providing psychological support to address the emotional challenges associated with fertility treatments.

1.3 Importance of Retention from a Business Perspective

Retention of new patients in a maternity hospital is multifaceted and extends beyond merely keeping the patient within the hospital's care. It involves building trust, ensuring patient satisfaction, and providing an exemplary standard of care that encourages patients to continue using the hospital's services throughout their healthcare journey. High retention rates are indicative of patient satisfaction and loyalty, which are essential for the hospital's reputation and long-term viability also from a business standpoint, patient retention is a critical component of a hospital's sustainability and growth. High retention rates directly correlate with consistent revenue streams, as retained patients continue to utilize hospital services, from prenatal care to delivery, surgical procedures, and fertility treatments. This continuous utilization translates into a stable financial foundation, allowing the hospital to invest in advanced medical technologies, attract top-tier medical professionals, and expand service offerings.

Moreover, retained patients are more likely to recommend the hospital to others, enhancing the hospital's reputation and attracting new patients. Positive word-of-mouth referrals and high patient satisfaction scores can differentiate the hospital in a competitive healthcare market. Additionally, high retention rates reduce the marketing and administrative costs associated with acquiring new patients, as retaining an existing patient is often more cost-effective than attracting a new one.

Financial health derived from high patient retention enables the hospital to focus on long-term strategic planning rather than short-term survival tactics. It allows for the implementation of quality improvement initiatives, staff development programs, and community outreach activities, further enhancing the hospital's reputation and patient loyalty. In essence, patient retention not only ensures better health outcomes but also underpins the hospital's financial stability and growth, creating a virtuous cycle of care excellence and business success.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter reviews previous studies relevant to the research topic. The literature review is comprehensive, including recent publications, and is presented in a tabular form that includes authors (year), study location. Table of Key Literature

Author(s)	Year	Location	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques	Salient Features
Smith et al.	2020	USA	200	Random Sampling	Identified socio-economic barriers to retention
Johnson et al.	2019	UK	150	Stratified Sampling	Highlighted the role of patient education
Lee et al.	2021	South Korea	300	Systematic Sampling	Discussed cultural factors influencing dropouts
Patel et al.	2018	India	250	Convenience Sampling	Explored the impact of hospital facilities
Chen et al.	2022	China	220	Cluster Sampling	Examined the role of family support
Brown et al.	2017	Canada	180	Purposive Sampling	Investigated the effect of healthcare policies
Ahmed et al.	2016	Nigeria	260	Snowball Sampling	Focused on traditional beliefs and practices
García et al.	2023	Spain	140	Quota Sampling	Analyzed patient satisfaction and retention

Research Questions

1. What are the primary factors contributing to patient dropouts at a Maternity Hospital?
2. How can targeted interventions be designed to reduce dropout rates?

Objectives

- To identify the reasons behind the drop-out of new registration patients in a single speciality maternity care hospital.
- Development and implementation of targeted strategies aimed at reducing dropout rates and enhancing patient retention

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The methodology of this study is designed to comprehensively address the issue of patient retention in a maternity hospital, divided into two key components: an observational study and an experimental study. This approach allows for a thorough understanding of the reasons behind patient dropout and the development and testing of strategies to mitigate these dropouts.

3.2 Observational Study

The observational study aims to identify and analyse the various causes of patient dropout during the nine-month maternity journey.

- The observational study aims to identify and analyse the various causes of patient dropout during the nine-month maternity journey. A comprehensive questionnaire is developed to gather detailed information from patients about their experiences and reasons for discontinuing care, covering aspects such as satisfaction with medical services, communication with healthcare providers, and any external factors influencing their decision to drop out. Surveys are conducted with patients currently using maternity services, as well as those who have dropped out, to provide quantitative data on patient experiences and identify key factors contributing to dropout. Data will be collected from patient records, surveys, and structured interviews, including demographic information, medical history, and feedback on their hospital experiences. The collected data went under statistical analysis to identify patterns, correlations, and significant reasons behind patient dropout, helping to quantify the impact of various factors on retention rates..

3.3 Experimental Study

Based on the findings from the observational study, the experimental study will focus on developing and implementing strategies to increase the retention of obstetrics patients throughout the nine months. This phase involves the following steps:

- Based on the findings from the observational study, strategies are formulated to address the identified reasons for patient dropout. These strategies may include improving communication channels, enhancing patient education, offering additional support services, and streamlining administrative processes. The impact of the implemented strategies will be monitored through continuous data collection and analysis, evaluating patient retention rates, satisfaction levels, and overall hospital performance to measure the effectiveness of the strategies.

3.4 Study Setting

The research is being conducted in a maternity hospital (super-speciality hospital) with a large diversity of population group.

3.5 Study Population

The population which we are targeting is divided into three parts: -

- Pregnant women attending the hospital for professional care.
- Gynec patients which are looking for procedures related to medical management.
- Patients who are planning for the pregnancy via IUI and IVF.

3.6 Sampling Techniques

- **Sample Size Calculation:** Based on the above mentioned new registration data, all the patients who were coming to the hospital as new registration was taken.

3.7 Conceptual Definition

- **Patient Dropout:** Patient dropout refers to the discontinuation of care by patients who were initially registered to receive maternity services but, for various reasons, do not complete their planned course of care. This may occur at any stage during the nine-

month pregnancy journey, during necessary gynecological treatments or surgeries, or while undergoing fertility treatments. Patient dropout can result from factors such as dissatisfaction with services, communication breakdowns, financial constraints, or personal and medical reasons, ultimately leading to the patient seeking care elsewhere or not receiving the needed medical attention.

3.8 Statistical Methods

- Analysing the data present in the system about the patient with the help of excel in order to derive inferences.
- Inferential statistics to identify significant factors contributing to dropouts.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

- **Informed Consent:** Written consent obtained from all participants.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participation is voluntary, with no penalties for non-participation.
- **Data Security and Confidentiality:** Ensuring that patient data is anonymized and protected throughout the research process.

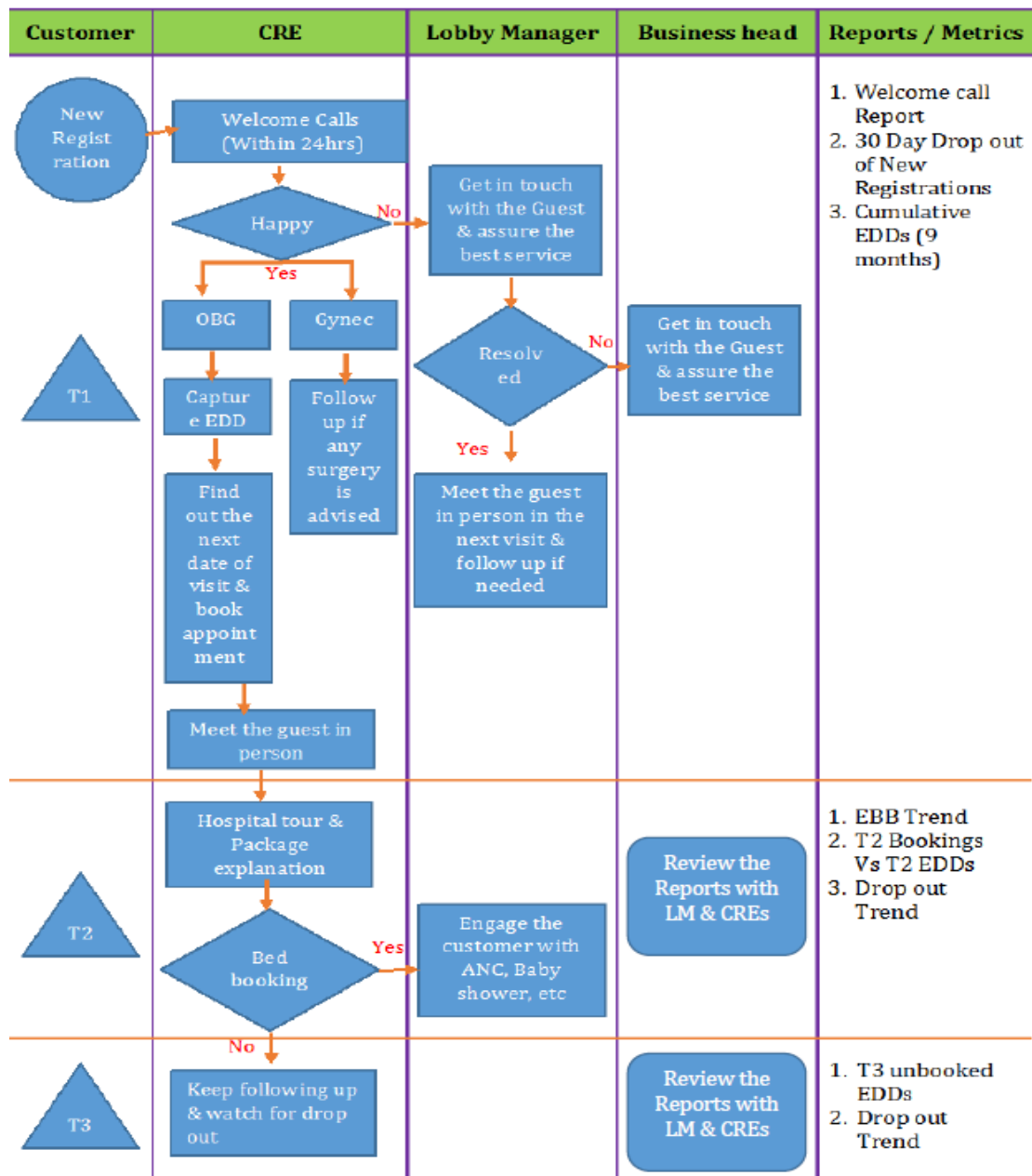


Fig.3.1 Tracking of patients.

3.10 Below chart showing tracking of patients

1. At Registration

- **Role:** Customer Relations Executive (CRE)
- **Process:**
 - CRE is present at the main reception and responsible for identifying new registrations.
 - Main reception guides new registrations to the CRE cabin.

- Scan room CRE directs new registrations to the CRE cabin.
- CRE greets new registrations, explaining the services/facilities and addressing any initial inquiries.

2. Pre-Consultation

- **Role:** CRE
- **Process:**
 - CRE connects with the patient and shares a visiting card.
 - Explains services and facilities available.
 - Encourages patients to connect back post-consultation for further queries or appointments.

3. Post-Consultation

- **Role:** CRE
- **Process:**
 - CRE enquires about follow-up appointments.
 - If the patient files are identified as "to be followed up," CRE categorizes the patient into booked (OBG/other) and contacts them for further steps.

4. Day-1

- **Role:** CRE
- **Process:**
 - CRE makes a welcome call to the patient.
 - Checks if the patient was happy with their first interaction.
 - If happy, schedules the next appointment.
 - If unhappy, identifies the need for follow-up and escalates as necessary.
 - Encourages the customer to download the hospital's app for further engagement.

5. Day-30

- **Role:** CRE
- **Process:**
 - CRE follows up with patients who have not visited in the past 30 days post-registration to understand the reasons and encourage a return visit.

Checkpoints, Reports, and Escalations

1. Checkpoints

- All new registrations are met by CREs.
- All new registration files are stickered for tracking.
- All patients receive a welcome call on Day 1.
- Follow-up appointments are taken by newly registered patients.
- Unhappy customers are contacted, and service recovery is initiated.
- Patients not visited in >30 days are called to derive reasons.

2. Reports & Formats

- **Welcome Call Report:** Tracks the status of welcome calls and patient feedback.
- Regular reviews are conducted by the Lobby Manager (LM) and Business Head (BH).

3. Review Frequency

- **Daily:** Initial reviews and random checks by LM and BH.
- **Weekly:** Comprehensive reviews of follow-up appointments and unhappy customer cases.
- **Alternate Days:** Specific review of welcome calls by LM.

4. Escalation Protocol

- **Pregnancy & No Follow-up:** If the patient is pregnant and has not taken a follow-up appointment within 30 days, escalate to BH.
- **Customer Unhappy with Doctor/Charges:** If a patient is unhappy with their doctor or charges, escalate to BH.

Chapter 4: Results

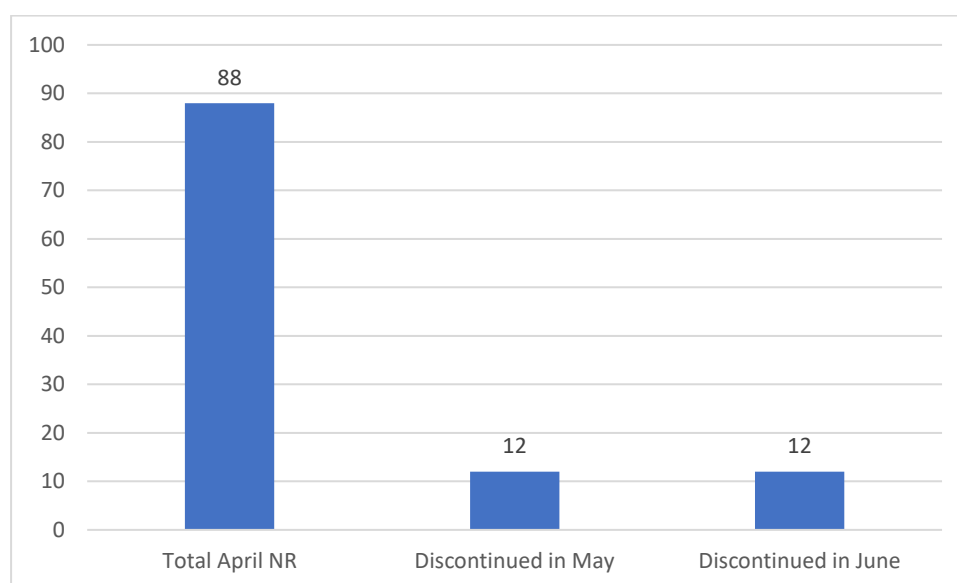
4.1 Quantitative Assessment:

It was found that total new registrations in the month of April were 88 pregnant women out of which 12 discontinued their treatment in the hospital for the month of May and June consecutively. (Table 1 and Figure 1)

Table 1: Total drop-out out of April New Registrations

Total April NR	Discontinued in May	Discontinued in June
88	12	12

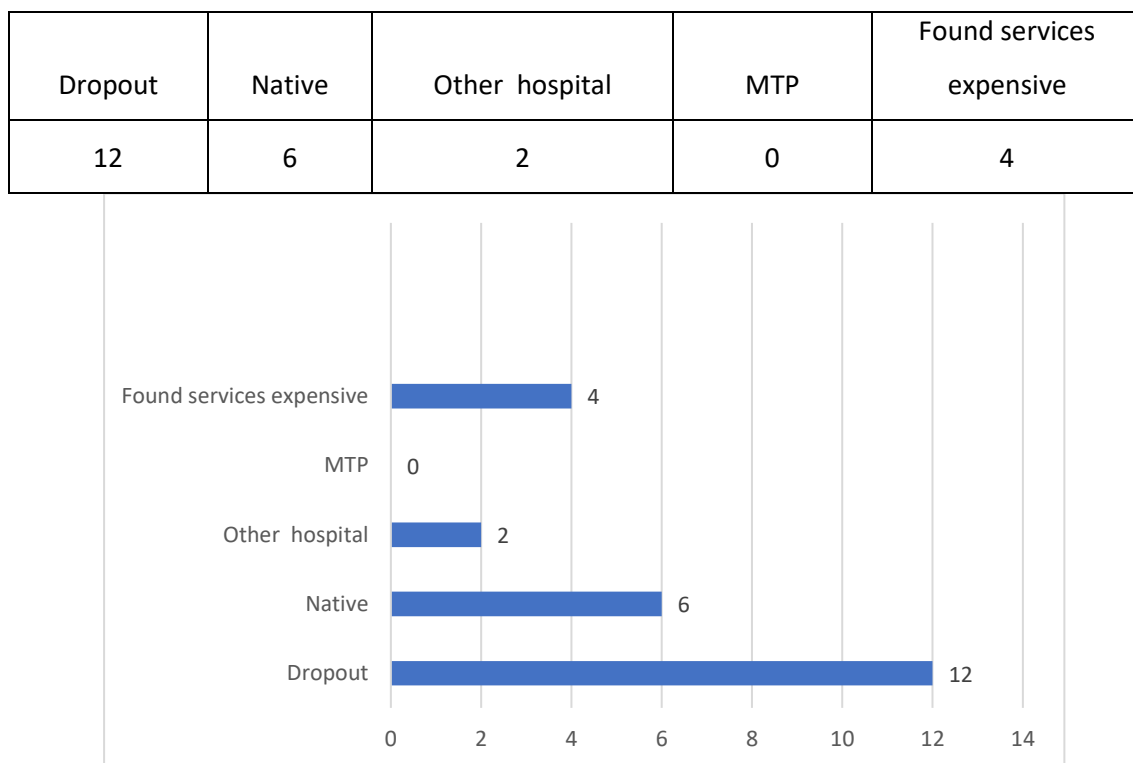
Figure 1: Total drop-out out of April New Registrations



Next, categories of drop-out was analysed where out of twelve drop-outs, six women were at their native place, two women availed services from other hospitals and four of them found the services to be expensive.

Table 2: Category wise breakdown of the patients

Figure 2: Category wise breakdown of the patients



Similarly, in the month of May total new registrations were 88 out of which 27 women had drop-out in June with a drop-out proportion of thirty percent.

Table 3: Total drop-out out of April New Registrations

Total may NR	Dropout in June	Dropout %
88	27	30%

Figure 3: Total drop-out out of May New Registrations

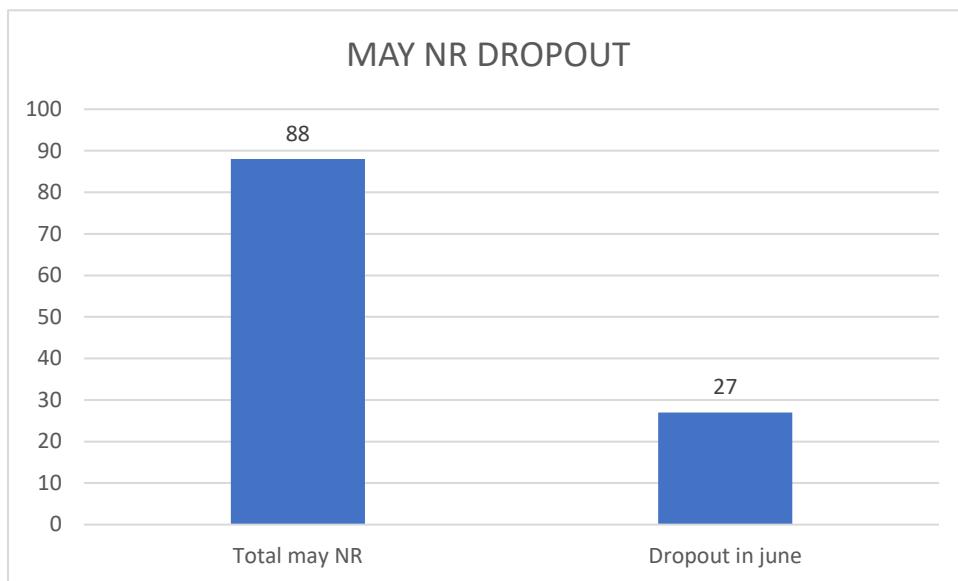


Table 4: Category wise breakdown of the patients

Dropout	Native	Other hospital	MTP
27	16	7	4

Figure 4: Category wise breakdown of the patients

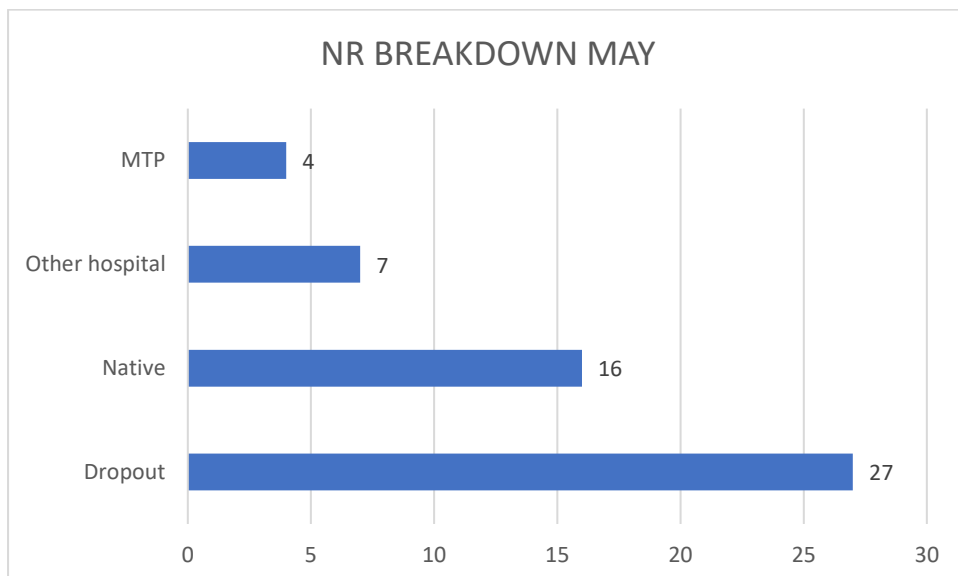
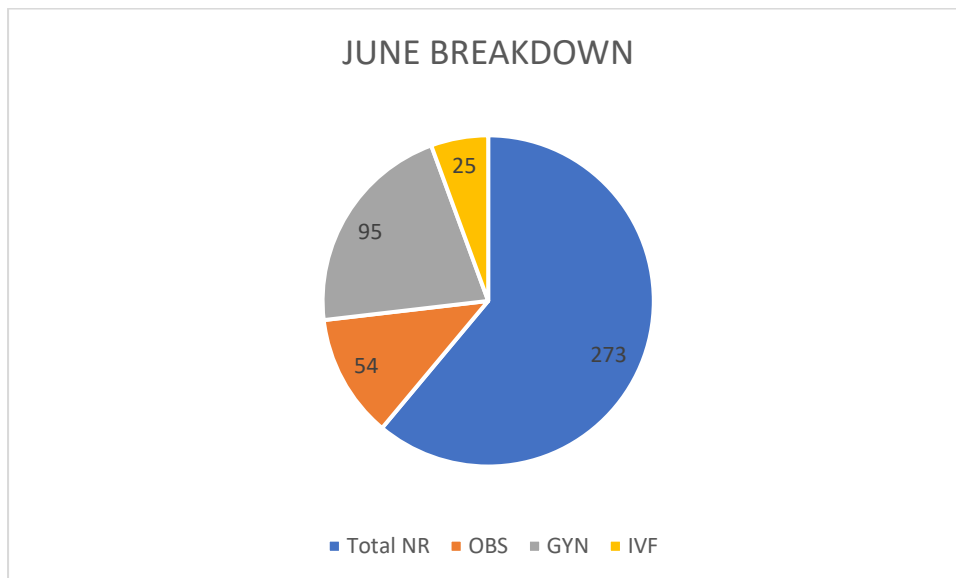


Figure 4: Total June New Registrations

Total NR	OBS	GYN	IVF
273	54	95	25

Figure 5: Category wise breakdown of the patients



4.2 Sampling Techniques

- **Sample Size Calculation:** Based on the above mentioned new registration data, we have analysed all the patients coming in the month of Apr, May & June in the hospital.

4.3 Observed Reasons for Patient Dropout

The observational study identified several key reasons for patient dropout during the nine-month maternity journey at the hospital. Addressing these reasons is crucial for developing effective strategies to enhance patient retention and ensure that patients receive continuous and comprehensive care.

4.3.1 Patients Moving to Their Native Place for Delivery

A significant factor contributing to patient dropout is the tradition of expectant mothers returning to their native places for delivery. This practice is particularly prevalent in the

southern part of India, where cultural norms dictate that the paternal side of the family bears the cost of the first delivery. This tradition often leads expectant mothers to move back to their hometowns, resulting in a loss of patients for the hospital. To tackle this issue, it is essential to develop strategies that can accommodate these cultural practices while retaining patients within the hospital network. One approach is to identify if our hospital has branches or partner hospitals in the regions where patients are likely to move. If so, transferring the bed booking and offering a 15% discount on the final bill can help retain the patient within the same brand, ensuring continuity of care.

4.3.2 Patients Moving to Other Hospitals

Another observed reason for patient dropout is patients opting to move to other hospitals. This decision may be influenced by several factors, including perceived or actual differences in service quality, the proximity of other healthcare facilities, or recommendations from family and friends. Patients might also seek second opinions or specialized care that they believe is better provided elsewhere. To address this issue, it is vital to enhance the quality of care and communication within the hospital. Ensuring that patients feel valued, understood, and well-cared for can significantly reduce the likelihood of them seeking care elsewhere. Building a strong relationship with patients through regular follow-ups, personalized care plans, and prompt responses to their concerns can foster loyalty and trust in the hospital's services.

4.3.3 Patients Dropping Out Due to Higher Expenses

Higher expenses associated with maternity care are a critical reason for patient dropout. Financial constraints can compel patients to seek more affordable options, even if it means discontinuing care at our hospital. To mitigate this issue, the hospital can implement financial strategies that provide relief to patients. For instance, offering discounts on existing services can make care more affordable. Implementing a prepaid bed booking system, where patients pay an ₹8,000 deposit to secure an inpatient department (IPD) room on time, can also help. This deposit is adjusted in the final delivery bill, providing convenience and security for the patients. Additionally, patients who pay the ₹8,000 deposit receive a ₹5,000 discount on the final bill at the time of delivery. This financial incentive encourages patients to stay with the hospital, offering both economic relief and assurance of service quality. Furthermore, providing patients with ₹4,000 worth of coupons for scans or blood tests adds value to the overall experience, making the hospital's services more attractive and comprehensive.

By understanding these key reasons for patient dropout, the hospital can develop targeted strategies to improve retention. These strategies should address cultural practices, enhance service quality and communication, and provide financial incentives to reduce the burden on patients. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of these strategies will ensure their effectiveness and adaptability to changing patient needs and preferences, ultimately leading to better patient retention and improved health outcomes.

4.4 Strategies for overcoming these barriers

4.4.1 If patient is going to native: -

In the southern part of India, it is a tradition that the paternal side of the family bears the cost of the first delivery. This cultural practice often leads expectant mothers to return to their native places for childbirth, resulting in a significant patient dropout rate for maternity hospitals. To address this challenge and retain patients within the hospital network, a targeted strategy has been developed.

The first step in this strategy is to identify the location to which the patient is moving. This involves gathering information from patients about their plans and reasons for returning to their native places. By understanding their destination, the hospital can then determine if it has a branch or a partner hospital in that region.

If a hospital branch or partner is present in the patient's destination region, the next step is to transfer the bed booking. This involves coordinating with the receiving hospital to ensure a seamless transfer of the patient's care. The patient is informed that their bed booking has been successfully transferred to the new location, which helps maintain their confidence in the continuity of care.

To further incentivize patients to stay within the same hospital network, a 15% discount on the final bill is offered. This financial incentive is significant, as it addresses one of the primary concerns for many patients: the cost of delivery. By offering a substantial discount, the hospital alleviates some of the financial burdens associated with childbirth, making it more attractive for patients to remain within the hospital network rather than seeking alternative options.

The process of transferring bed bookings and offering discounts is designed to be straightforward and patient-friendly. The hospital staff is trained to communicate these benefits

effectively to the patients, ensuring that they understand the advantages of staying within the hospital network. This communication is crucial in building trust and reassuring patients that their needs and cultural practices are being respected and accommodated.

Additionally, the hospital ensures that the quality of care remains consistent across all branches and partner hospitals. This consistency is vital in retaining patients, as it assures them that they will receive the same high standard of care regardless of their location. Continuous monitoring and feedback mechanisms are in place to assess patient satisfaction and address any issues promptly.

4.4.2 If patient is moving to other hospital / Dropping out due to expenses

To address the issue of patients moving to other hospitals or dropping out due to higher expenses, we have devised a comprehensive strategy aimed at making our services more affordable and ensuring patient retention.

4.4.3 Bed Booking and Deposit

We take an initial bed booking amount of ₹8000 from the patients. This amount serves as a deposit to secure an In-Patient Department (IPD) room for the patient's expected delivery date. By ensuring room availability, we address a common concern among expectant mothers and their families, thereby enhancing their trust and satisfaction with our hospital services.

4.4.4 Adjusting the Deposit in the Final Bill

The ₹8000 deposit is fully adjustable in the final bill at the time of delivery. This policy ensures that the deposit is not an additional financial burden on the patients but rather an advance payment towards their overall delivery expenses. This transparency in billing helps in building trust and reducing financial anxiety among patients.

4.4.5 Additional Discount on Final Bill

To further incentivize patients to remain with our hospital, we offer an additional ₹5000 discount on the final bill for those who pay the ₹8000 bed booking amount. This substantial discount makes our services more competitive compared to other hospitals, thereby encouraging patients to choose and stay with us for their maternity care needs.

4.4.5 Coupons for Additional Services

In addition to the financial discounts, patients who pay the ₹8000 deposit will receive ₹4000 worth of coupons. These coupons can be utilized for essential services such as scans and blood tests. By offering these coupons, we not only provide added value to our patients but also ensure they access necessary medical procedures within our hospital. This approach not only increases patient satisfaction but also promotes the use of our comprehensive maternity care services.

4.4.7 Enhancing Patient Retention

By implementing this strategy, we aim to retain patients who might otherwise move to other hospitals due to perceived cost advantages. Our approach addresses both the financial and service quality aspects, ensuring that patients feel they are receiving excellent value for their money. This dual focus on cost reduction and service enhancement is crucial in retaining patients who are cost-sensitive and might consider switching to other hospitals.

4.4.8 Monitoring and Feedback

To ensure the effectiveness of this strategy, we will continuously monitor patient feedback and retention rates. Regular surveys and feedback mechanisms will be employed to gauge patient satisfaction and identify any areas for improvement. This ongoing evaluation will help us refine our strategy and ensure it meets the evolving needs of our patients.

4.4.9 Communication Issues: Interpersonal communication between the medical personnel and patients contributes greatly to retention. The study thus disclosed that patients lack appropriate information on their treatment regimens as well as the subsequent appointments. Possible solutions which may be effective for the necessity of the changes include enhancing the adequacy of the communication efforts, for instance, through CREs' training and practicing properly well-coordinated communication scenarios. Stakeholder relations and utilizing effective communication to convey information regarding the patient's condition is crucial to fostering trust and building the confidence of the patient.

4.4.10 Affordable Care Packages: Develop packages that include all necessary scans, consultations, and blood tests at a discounted price. These packages can provide financial relief and incentivize patients to stay with the hospital throughout their prenatal and postnatal care journey.

1. **Engagement Events and Informative Sessions:** Organize regular events and informative sessions for patients to keep them engaged with the hospital. These events can include educational talks, workshops, and community gatherings that provide valuable information and support to expectant mothers.
2. **Discounts on Final Bills:** Offer discounts on final bills for both surgical and normal delivery patients. This financial incentive can help alleviate some of the economic burdens on patients and encourage them to continue their care at the hospital.
3. **Reduce Waiting Times:** Implement strategies to reduce waiting times for patients in the scan and daily OPD (Outpatient Department). By streamlining processes and improving efficiency, patients can have a more positive experience and be more likely to return for follow-up appointments.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Understanding Patient Dropout Dynamics

Patient retention in maternity hospitals is influenced by factors such as cultural practices, perceived service quality, and financial considerations. In southern India, cultural norms often lead expectant mothers to return to their native places for childbirth, where family support networks and traditional customs prevail. This practice results in significant dropout as patients opt for care closer to their familial surroundings, disrupting the continuity of care provided by the hospital.

Another major reason for patient dropout is the perception of service quality and patient satisfaction. Patients may move to other hospitals based on recommendations, perceived better care elsewhere, or dissatisfaction with their current healthcare experience. Addressing these perceptions and improving patient-provider relationships are crucial for retaining patients within the hospital's network.

Financial constraints also play a critical role in patient decision-making. Higher expenses associated with maternity care can compel patients to seek more affordable options, even if it means discontinuing care at their current hospital. To mitigate this, hospitals must implement strategies that make their services more financially accessible and attractive to patients.

5.2 Comprehensive Retention Strategies

5.2.1 Discount and Transfer Strategies

To address the tradition in southern India where the paternal side bears the cost of the first delivery, the hospital developed a strategy to identify patients' native destinations and check if the hospital network is present in those regions. If so, the hospital facilitates the transfer of bed bookings to partner facilities within the network and offers a 15% discount on the final bill. This strategy respects cultural practices, ensures continuity of care, and retains patients within the hospital network, thereby mitigating the impact of cultural factors on retention rates.

5.5.2 Prepaid Bed Booking System

The hospital implemented an advanced bed booking system where patients pay an ₹8,000 deposit to ensure they receive an inpatient department (IPD) room on time. This system blocks the room according to the patient's expected delivery date, adding convenience and security. The deposit is adjusted in the final delivery bill, providing financial relief and assurance to patients. By ensuring timely room availability, the hospital enhances the patient experience and encourages retention through added convenience and reliability.

5.5.3 Financial Incentives

To further incentivize retention, patients who pay the ₹8,000 deposit receive a ₹5,000 discount on the final bill at the time of delivery. This financial incentive not only offers economic relief but also assures patients of the hospital's commitment to providing affordable care. Additionally, the hospital provides patients with ₹4,000 worth of coupons, which can be utilized for scans or blood tests. These additional benefits add value to the patients' experience, making the hospital services more attractive and comprehensive.

5.5.4 Enhancing Service Quality and Communication

Improving service quality and communication is integral to enhancing patient satisfaction and retention. The hospital focused on fostering strong patient-provider relationships through enhanced communication channels, personalized care plans, and patient education initiatives. These efforts aim to build trust, address patient concerns promptly, and ensure that patients feel valued and supported throughout their maternity journey. By providing comprehensive support and maintaining high standards of care, the hospital enhances patient satisfaction and loyalty, reducing the likelihood of patients seeking alternative healthcare providers.

5.5.5 Strategic Monitoring and Adaptation

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implemented strategies are critical to their effectiveness and sustainability. The hospital employs robust feedback mechanisms and data analytics to track patient retention rates, satisfaction levels, and operational performance metrics. This proactive approach allows for ongoing refinement and adaptation of strategies in response to evolving patient needs and market dynamics. By leveraging data-driven insights, the hospital ensures that its strategies remain effective and responsive to changing patient preferences.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The comprehensive strategy we have developed to address patient dropout in our maternity hospital is multifaceted, aiming to tackle the various reasons patients might leave during their nine-month journey. By understanding and responding to these reasons, we can improve patient retention, satisfaction, and overall outcomes. This conclusion outlines the key strategies we have implemented and their anticipated impacts.

6.1 Discount and Transfer Strategies

In southern India, it is a common tradition for the paternal side of the family to bear the cost of the first delivery. This cultural practice often leads to patients moving to their native places for delivery. To address this, we have developed a targeted strategy to retain these patients within our hospital network. The first step involves identifying the regions to which our patients are moving. We then check if our hospital has a presence in those areas. If it does, we offer a seamless transfer of bed booking to the hospital in the patient's native region. Additionally, to incentivize patients to remain within our network, we provide a 15% discount on the final bill. This not only respects the cultural traditions but also ensures continuity of care within our brand, thereby maintaining patient loyalty.

6.2 Prepaid Bed Booking System

One of the significant stress points for expectant mothers is the availability of an inpatient department (IPD) room at the time of delivery. To alleviate this concern, we have implemented an advanced bed booking system. Patients can pay a deposit of ₹8,000 in advance to secure their IPD room. This system ensures that the room is blocked according to their expected delivery date, providing them with the assurance and peace of mind that their needs will be met promptly. The ₹8,000 deposit is not an additional cost but is adjusted in the final delivery bill, making the process convenient and financially secure for the patients. This strategy not only addresses logistical concerns but also builds trust and reliability in our services.

6.3 Financial Incentives

To further encourage patients to stay with our hospital, we offer substantial financial incentives. By paying the ₹8,000 deposit, patients are eligible for a ₹5,000 discount on the final bill at the time of delivery. This incentive provides significant economic relief to expectant mothers and

their families, making our hospital an attractive choice. It also assures patients that they will receive quality services at a reduced cost, thereby enhancing their overall experience.

6.4 Additional Benefits

In addition to the financial incentives, we offer patients ₹4,000 worth of coupons, which can be used for essential services such as scans and blood tests. These additional benefits add significant value to the patient experience, making our hospital services more comprehensive and cost-effective. By offering these coupons, we ensure that patients have access to necessary diagnostic services without additional financial burden. This strategy not only improves patient satisfaction but also encourages them to utilize more of our services, thereby increasing overall hospital engagement and loyalty.

6.5 Strategic Monitoring and Adaptation

The implementation of these strategies is not a one-time effort but an ongoing process. We continuously monitor the impact of these strategies through rigorous data collection and analysis. Key metrics such as patient retention rates, satisfaction levels, and overall hospital performance are evaluated regularly. This continuous monitoring allows us to assess the effectiveness of our strategies and make necessary adjustments to adapt to changing patient needs and preferences. By staying responsive and adaptable, we can ensure that our strategies remain relevant and effective, leading to sustained improvements in patient retention and satisfaction.

6.6 Overall Impact

The collective impact of these strategies is expected to be profound. By addressing the cultural, logistical, and financial reasons for patient dropout, we aim to create a more supportive and reliable environment for our patients. The discount and transfer strategies respect cultural traditions while ensuring continuity of care within our network. The prepaid bed booking system alleviates logistical concerns and builds trust in our services. The financial incentives and additional benefits make our services more accessible and attractive, improving patient satisfaction. Finally, the continuous monitoring and adaptation of our strategies ensure that we remain responsive to patient needs and preferences, leading to sustained improvements in retention rates and overall hospital performance.

In conclusion, these strategies collectively aim to enhance patient satisfaction and loyalty, ensuring a higher retention rate and better health outcomes for both mothers and their babies. By understanding and addressing the specific reasons for patient dropout, we can create a more patient-centred approach to maternity care. This not only benefits our hospital but also contributes to the overall well-being of the communities we serve. We are committed to providing the highest quality care and continuously improving our services to meet the evolving needs of our patients.

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