

A Study to Analyze the Follow-Up Compliance Among Retinal Patients at Sankara Eye Hospital, Coimbatore

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By

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INTRODUCTION

The internship module of the **MBA in Hospital and Health Management** course at IIHMR, Jaipur, aims to expose students to actual healthcare settings. To meet this requirement, I completed a **three-month internship with Sankara Eye Hospital, Coimbatore**, a prestigious tertiary care centre dedicated to offering quality eye care services. The internship provided an ideal platform to combine theoretical learning with practical experience in healthcare operations and research.

Throughout the internship period, I worked on a research study named "**A Study to Analyze the Follow-Up Compliance Among Retinal Patients at Sankara Eye Hospital, Coimbatore.**" The study involved identifying the behavioral, demographic, and systemic determinants of patient follow-up compliance and analysis, and the level of satisfaction with the service provided, which was done using structured tools and statistical packages. Concurrently, I also worked on the ongoing institutional project "Rainbow," which focuses on the restoration of vision among children and the distribution of glasses through early intervention strategies.

These multifaceted tasks enabled me to learn in-depth about patient care workflows, departmental integration, quality assurance practices, and strategic hospital operations within the context of an eye care institution that balances clinical excellence with community outreach.

OBJECTIVES OF INTERNSHIP

- To gain practical exposure to hospital operations and service delivery mechanisms.
- To conduct primary research on patient compliance in retinal care.
- To understand interdepartmental workflows and their integration in patient management.
- To contribute to the pediatric research project “Rainbow.”
- To enhance analytical and problem-solving capabilities through data-driven project work.
- To synthesize field experience with academic learning for professional development.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Sankara Eye Hospital is the flagship institution of the Sankara Eye Foundation India, a non-profit charitable organization with a vision to eliminate avoidable blindness. Founded in 1977 in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, it has grown into a nationally recognized center for comprehensive ophthalmic services. The hospital has become a model for high-quality, affordable eye care delivery by adopting an innovative and sustainable cross-subsidy model, providing 80% of its surgeries free of cost to underserved populations, funded by the remaining 20% who can afford to pay.

The institution operates under a structured system that blends clinical excellence with social responsibility. It houses over 500 beds and is supported by a team of highly qualified ophthalmologists, optometrists, nurses, and administrative personnel. The hospital is equipped with ultra-modern operation theatres, specialized diagnostic laboratories, high-tech imaging systems, and electronic medical records. Its patient care framework follows best practices in quality assurance and infection control.

Sankara Eye Hospital has earned accreditations and recognition from national bodies, including NABH (National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers), attesting to its adherence to clinical and operational standards.

In addition to tertiary clinical care, the hospital places a strong emphasis on education and research. It runs fellowship programs, community ophthalmology training, and collaborative studies with national and international institutions. Its outreach programmes span hundreds of villages and schools, operating through vision centers, eye screening camps, and mobile units.

The hospital also upholds sustainability through green initiatives, such as solar power integration, biomedical waste segregation, and water recycling systems.

Vision: To work towards freedom from preventable and curable blindness.

Mission: To provide unmatched eye care through a strong service-oriented team.

Core Values:

- ❖ Compassion
- ❖ Excellence
- ❖ Integrity
- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Teamwork

Major Clinical and Support Departments:

- ❖ Retina
- ❖ Cataract
- ❖ Cornea
- ❖ Glaucoma
- ❖ Pediatric Ophthalmology
- ❖ Oculoplasty
- ❖ Neuro-Ophthalmology
- ❖ Operation Theatre Complex
- ❖ Inpatient Services
- ❖ Medical Records and Billing
- ❖ Community Outreach and Mobile Units
- ❖ Research and Training

SWOT Analysis:

Strengths:

1. Strong brand reputation in ophthalmic care
2. Skilled clinical workforce and advanced infrastructure
3. Successful execution of cross-subsidy service model
4. Established research and community outreach units

Weaknesses:

1. High dependency on philanthropic funding for community programmes
2. Limited integration with newer digital health platforms
3. Workload imbalance during high-volume screening camps

Opportunities:

1. Expansion into teleophthalmology and AI-assisted diagnostics
2. Collaborations with global research organizations
3. Development of integrated preventive eye health models

Threats:

1. Rising competition from private eye hospitals
2. Evolving healthcare regulations and insurance dynamics
3. Risk of donor fatigue affecting community-based initiatives



Dr. R. V Ramani



Sankara Eye Hospital



Co-founders

Dr. Radha Ramani & Dr. R. V Ramani

SERVICES DELIVERED BY ORGANIZATION

Sankara Eye Hospital delivers a wide spectrum of services, including:

- **Outpatient and Inpatient Care:** Comprehensive consultations, diagnostics, and treatment.
- **Surgical Interventions:** Procedures across retina, cataract, cornea, pediatric, and glaucoma specialties.
- **Community Outreach:** Rural screening camps, school vision screenings, and mobile eye units.
- **Vision Restoration Programmes:** Free surgeries under the National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB).
- **Optical and Pharmacy Units:** In-house dispensing of glasses and medications.
- **Eye Banking and Transplantation Services:** Retrieval, preservation, and transplantation of donor corneas.
- **Teleophthalmology:** Remote consultations and follow-ups through digital platforms.
- **Training and Research:** Structured academic and fellowship programmes for clinical and non-clinical staff.

KEY ACTIVITIES

A. Rainbow Project: Pediatric Vision Restoration Initiative

- ❖ The Rainbow Project addresses early intervention in childhood blindness through screening and corrective procedures. My role included:
- ❖ Assisting in patient data management and follow-up records.
- ❖ Engaging with the pediatric care team for post-operative care documentation.
- ❖ Participating in awareness sessions and analysing recovery patterns.

B. Departmental Observations

- ❖ I undertook detailed observational visits to understand operational workflows:
- ❖ Outpatient Department: Registration, patient triage, and consultation flow.
- ❖ Inpatient Department: Pre-operative and post-operative protocols.
- ❖ Operation Theatre: Infection control, surgical scheduling, and staff coordination.
- ❖ Pharmacy and Optical Units: Stock handling, patient interaction, and prescription dispensing.
- ❖ Medical Records & Billing: EMR system efficiency and insurance processing.

c. Operational Process Monitoring

- ❖ Analysed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as Average Waiting Time and Patient Turnaround Time.
- ❖ Identified bottlenecks in follow-up mechanisms and suggested data-driven interventions.
- ❖ Assisted the Quality and Compliance team with internal audits.

KEY LEARNINGS

A. Research and Analytical Proficiency

- ❖ Executed a research project using structured data collection tools.
- ❖ Conducted data analysis using SPSS, including binary logistic regression.
- ❖ Interpreted findings to derive strategic insights for patient compliance improvement.

B. Operational Management Insights

- ❖ Gained knowledge of hospital workflows and their impact on patient outcomes.
- ❖ Understood Lean management principles and quality improvement strategies.

C. Patient Behaviour and Compliance

- ❖ Explored behavioural frameworks such as the Health Belief Model (HBM).
- ❖ Recognised the influence of demographics, distance, disease type, and counselling on compliance.

D. Professional Communication and Collaboration

- ❖ Developed interdepartmental communication skills.
- ❖ Practised professional etiquette in data collection and stakeholder coordination.

E. Ethical Considerations in Healthcare

- ❖ Followed protocols for informed consent and data privacy.
- ❖ Observed empathetic practices that uphold patient dignity and trust.

F. Strategic and System-Level Thinking

- ❖ Recommended improvements to follow-up systems and patient engagement tools.
- ❖ Developed operational insights to support future administrative decision-making.