

The Internship Report

Introduction

This internship report provides a comprehensive overview of the professional experience gained during a full-time internship at The Nairobi West Hospital, where I worked in the capacity of Oncology Operations Executive (Trainee) within the Oncology Department / Cancer Care Services. The internship offered valuable exposure to operational workflows, patient care coordination, medication management, quality assurance, and multidisciplinary collaboration within a high-functioning tertiary care setting.

The objective of this report is to present an analytical summary of the responsibilities handled, the key learning outcomes, and the broader understanding acquired of hospital-based oncology operations.

Objectives of Internship

The internship aimed to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and clinical practice by focusing on the following objectives:

- To understand and support the day-to-day operational workflow of oncology services.
- To coordinate patient care across multiple stages of oncology treatment.
- To manage procurement, inventory, and logistics related to oncology medication.
- To contribute to revenue and billing processes.
- To participate in audits (cross-verifying patient counts and billing records, and by comparing manual documentation with data from the Hospital Information System (HIS) and uphold patient safety standards.
- To engage with patients and families, offering logistical and emotional support.

Organizational Profile

Nairobi West Hospital is a Level 6B Health Facility, acknowledged as a specialized tertiary referral hospital situated in Nairobi, Kenya. As one of the leading healthcare institutions in the region, it operates as a top-tier referral center, catering to patients requiring advanced and highly specialized medical attention. The hospital offers a broad spectrum of services that encompass diagnostic, surgical, therapeutic, and rehabilitative care.

The hospital is an accredited tertiary referral institution, known for its high standards in patient care and clinical excellence. It is equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure and cutting-edge medical technology, enabling the delivery of complex and comprehensive healthcare services. Among its super-specialized departments, the Oncology Unit stands out, offering a fully

functional Cancer Care Center that provides chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and palliative care services.

Services Provided by Organization

Nairobi West Hospital delivers a comprehensive range of healthcare services, structured to meet the needs of patients across the continuum of care. As a tertiary referral center, it provides both general and highly specialized medical services through its inpatient and outpatient departments. The hospital is equipped to handle critical and emergency cases through its intensive care units and well-structured trauma and emergency care system. In addition, it offers advanced diagnostic services, including imaging and laboratory investigations, to support accurate and timely diagnosis.

The hospital boasts a robust Oncology Department that offers outpatient consultations, daycare chemotherapy units, radiation therapy, inpatient oncology care, and oncology pharmacy services. This department also provides patient counseling and navigation services to support patients emotionally and logistically throughout their cancer journey. Palliative and supportive care is integrated into the oncology service to ensure a holistic and compassionate approach for patients with advanced illness.

Beyond oncology, Nairobi West Hospital is home to a wide range of super-specialized departments. These include Orthopaedics, Cardiology, Ear, Nose & Throat (E.N.T), Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Neonatology, General Surgery, and Psychiatry. It also offers services in Rheumatology, Ophthalmology, Nephrology, Physiotherapy, Urology, Neurology, Paediatrics, Endocrinology, and Dermatology. Dental care and Radiology services are also available, supporting both therapeutic and diagnostic functions. The Internal Medicine department provides expert management of chronic and complex medical conditions, acting as a central pillar in coordinating multidisciplinary care.

Key Activities/ Projects Undertaken Other than Dissertation.

During the internship, I was actively involved in several high-impact activities that contributed both to the operational workflow of the Oncology Department and to my personal professional development.

a. Patient Care Coordination

- Facilitated smooth coordination of patient appointments across OPD, chemotherapy cycles, diagnostic testing, and radiation sessions.
- Educated patients and families about chemotherapy protocols, schedules, and consent processes.
- Ensured timely transitions between departments, minimizing waiting times and enhancing patient satisfaction.

b. Pharmacy & Medication Management

- Monitored stock levels and coordinated with the pharmacy team for timely procurement of essential oncology drugs.
- Maintained accurate inventory records for chemotherapy medications, ensuring cold chain compliance and quality.
- Managed medication-related documentation and ensured correct dispensation based on treatment protocols.

c. Operational Efficiency

- Worked on streamlining patient flow in the Daycare Chemotherapy Units and Radiation Therapy Centers.
- Supported bed allocation strategies in oncology wards to enhance resource utilization.
- Assisted in ensuring SOP adherence in chemotherapy preparation and safe disposal of hazardous waste.

d. Revenue & Billing Oversight

- Collaborated with billing teams to ensure accurate charge capture for chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and procedures.
- Facilitated documentation for corporate and insurance pre-authorizations related to oncology treatments.
- Minimized revenue leakage by verifying clinical documentation and coding accuracy.

e. Quality & Compliance

- Participated in internal audits related to chemotherapy protocol adherence and pharmacy compliance.
- Supported the infection control team in maintaining high standards of hygiene, especially in immune-compromised oncology patients.
- Reported adverse drug reactions and maintained compliance with safety protocols.

f. Patient Support & Engagement

- Liaised with navigators, counselors, and the palliative care team to provide holistic patient care.
- Provided assistance with treatment cost estimation, financial planning, and guidance on available funding options.
- Offered emotional support and advocacy for patients and caregivers throughout their cancer treatment journey.

Key Learnings from Internship

The internship at Nairobi West Hospital was an enriching experience that significantly enhanced both my theoretical understanding and practical skills in healthcare management, particularly in oncology services. Key learnings include:

Healthcare Systems Understanding: Acquired a deep insight into how tertiary hospitals operate, especially the integration of clinical and administrative functions in cancer care.

Operational Competence: Gained proficiency in handling patient logistics, pharmacy operations, appointment scheduling, and inpatient management.

Clinical Documentation & Billing: Developed awareness of the importance of accurate documentation and its role in financial compliance and patient safety.

Quality Assurance: Understood the protocols for infection control, patient safety, and how audits contribute to maintaining high standards of care.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills: Learned to communicate effectively with multidisciplinary teams and empathize with patients undergoing emotional and physical stress.

Professional Growth: Recognized the importance of teamwork, time management, and leadership in clinical settings.