

**SUMMER TRAINING**

**In**

**Apollo Hospitals International Ltd.**

(Ahmedabad, Gujarat.)

**A REPORT**

**Submitted by:**

**Kasturi Saikia**

**MBA – HM (19<sup>th</sup> batch)**

**The IIHMR UNIVERSITY**

**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the project work titled 'A study of the Marketing Mix with regard to International Patient Services at Apollo Hospitals International Ltd, Ahmedabad' has been done entirely and submitted by Ms. Kasturi Saikia, a student of Masters of Business Administration in Hospital and Health Management-19th Batch from IIHMR University, Jaipur.

The study project was prepared during the internship period from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 – May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 at Apollo Hospitals International Ltd, Ahmedabad. This is her original work.

I wish her success for her future endeavors.



Col. (Dr) Ashok Kaushik

Dean (Academics & Student Affairs)

IIHMR University, Jaipur



Dr.J.P Singh

Assistant Professor

IIHMR University, Jaipur



## APOLLO HOSPITALS INTERNATIONAL LTD.

Dated: Ahmedabad

01.06.2015.

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that **Ms. Kasturi Saikia**, a student of MBA – Hospital and Health from the IIHMR University, Jaipur, has completed her Summer Internship under **Apollo Hospitals International Limited, Ahmedabad, Gujarat**, on the topic “**A study of the Marketing mix with regard to International patient services in Apollo Hospitals International Limited**” from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2015 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2015.

Her approach to the project has been sincere, scientific and analytical. I wish her all the success in all her future endeavours.

Dr. Piyasha Nath

Medical Superintendent

Apollo Hospitals International Limited

Ahmedabad

**Dr. PIYASHA NATH**  
**MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT**  
Apollo Hospitals International Limited  
Plot No.1, GIDC Estate, Bhat, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

**PLOT NO. 1A, BHAT GIDC ESTATE, GANDHINAGAR - 382428, GUJARAT, INDIA.**

|                     |                                                                                                                               |                |                      |               |                            |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Phone</b>        | : 91 - 79 - 66701800/01/03                                                                                                    | <b>Telefax</b> | : 91 - 79 - 66701843 | <b>E-mail</b> | : info@apolloahd.com       |
| <b>Admn. Office</b> | : III Floor, Ali Towers, 55 Greaves Road, Chennai - 600 006.                                                                  |                |                      | <b>Phone</b>  | : 044 - 28291696, 28292357 |
| <b>Regd. Office</b> | : 19, Bishop Gardens, R.A.Puram, Chennai - 600 028.                                                                           |                |                      |               |                            |
| <b>City Centre</b>  | : 1, Tulsibaug Society, Opp. Doctor House, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad-6. <b>Tel.</b> : 91-79-66305800 <b>Fax</b> : 91-79-66305803 |                |                      |               |                            |

### **Acknowledgement**

I, Kasturi Saikia, a student of MBA-HM 19 at IIHMR Jaipur, would like to sincerely express my heartfelt gratitude to:

- Mr. Abhijat Sheth, Director of Medical Services, for allowing me to undergo my internship in this esteemed organization.
- Dr. Piyasha Nath, Medical Superintendent, Apollo Hospitals International Ltd., for being my mentor and project guide for the entire period of my training, for helping me improve the quality of my work and for helping me identify areas where I lack and what characteristics I must develop in myself for a future as a hospital administrator for my project in the Admission Department.
- Mr. Ashutosh Pathak, Manager, International Patient Department, Apollo Hospitals International Ltd., for guiding me to overcome the practical challenges in my project and for his invaluable help towards the compilation of my entire report.
- Ms. Madhavi Chavada, Guest Relations Department, for her support and help towards my project.
- Mr. J.P Singh, my mentor at IIHMR Jaipur, for his support and guidance, without which this training would not have been possible.
- Mr. Dalbir Singh, Placement Officer, IIHMR Jaipur, for facilitating my training at Apollo Hospitals International Ltd..

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1. Acronyms and Abbreviations :

- a) IIHMR: Indian Institute of Health and Hospital Management and Research.
- b) HM – Hospital Management
- c) AHIL: Apollo Hospitals International Ltd.
- d) MS: Medical Superintendent
- e) MO: Medical Officer
- f) SLM: Service Line Managers.

## **2. Observation Study**

### **2a. Introduction**

Summer Internship or Summer Training is an important part of the course curriculum for students enrolled for the MBA – HM program in IIHMR, Jaipur.

The Summer Internship program is generally undertaken after the completion of the First Year and for a period of two months, by the students.

During this period, students are required to observe and acquire an in-depth knowledge of the different departments of the hospital or healthcare organization, with a view to understand the basic functionalities of these organizations so that they are able to get a grasp of the practical implications for their subsequent study tenure at IIHMR, Jaipur.

The students are also encouraged to undertake a study or a project related to a relevant area of study with a view to enable the students to build a strong base of knowledge and understanding of the concepts already taught and those that are yet to be studied.

During my stint at Apollo International Hospitals Ltd., there were a number of learning experiences which were enhanced as a result of an extremely supportive administration and equally encouraging staff members.

Following is a brief report of the two months of internship at AIHL and the subsequent tasks undertaken and knowledge gained.

## 2b. Organization Profile

Apollo Hospitals, an Indian chain of hospitals with its headquarters in Chennai, India was founded by Dr. Prathap C Reddy in 1983. From a 150-bedded Hospital in 1983, the Group has since continuously grown and excelled in medical innovation, clinical services and cutting edge research. Apart from being spread over quite a number of states in India, the group has also made its presence felt in other countries as well.

Apollo Hospitals, Ahmedabad was started on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, 2003. Spread over 10 acres of land and with a built-up area of around 44000 sq. feet, it is a flagship tertiary-care unit of the Apollo Group of Hospitals. Currently, the hospital has 296 beds with a capacity to expand to 400 beds. It promises to provide holistic healthcare that includes prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and health education for patients, their families and clients by touching their lives.

The Vision - *Apollo's vision for the next phase of development is to 'Touch a Billion Lives'.*

The Mission – *“Our mission is to bring healthcare of International standards within the reach of every individual. We are committed to the achievement and maintenance of excellence in education, research and healthcare for the benefit of humanity”*

### Salient Features of Apollo Hospitals, Ahmedabad –

- More than 35 clinical specialties under one roof
- First corporate hospital to have Liver Transplant program in the state
- More than 85 ICU beds, highest in a Private Hospital in the state
- NABH accreditation for hospitals & Blood Bank
- Dedicated intensive units for Stem Cell Transplant & solid organ transplant
- Performed more than 150 solid organ transplants
- Only private hospital in the state having in-house blood bank (NABH Accredited)
- CT Scan, MRI and other high-end diagnostic facilities
- Dedicated modular joint replacement theatres with laminar airflow
- Dedicated wing for International patients
- Only CDC authorized centre for Immigration Health Check (USA, Australia, Canada) in Gujarat

The Hospital focuses on centres of excellence like Cardiac Sciences, Neuro Sciences, Orthopaedics, Cancer, Emergency Medicine and Solid Organ Transplants besides the complete range of more than 35 allied medical disciplines under the same roof.

### Clinical Specialities offered –

- Allergy and Asthma
- Cardiothoracic Surgery
- Diabetology and Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology (Medical, Surgical)
- Gynec Surgery (Oncology)
- Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy
- Internal Medicine
- Laboratory Services

- Oncology (Radiation, Surgical and Medical)
- Neurosurgery
- Organ Transplantation
- Pain Management
- Pulmonology and Chest Medicine
- Spine Surgery
- Anaesthesiology
- Breast Surgery
- Dentistry
- Ear, Nose and Throat
- Head and Neck Surgery
- Infectious Diseases
- Interventional Radiology
- Nephrology
- Gynaecology and Obstetrics
- Orthopaedics
- Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery
- Radiology and Imaging
- Urology
- Bariatric and Weight Loss Surgery
- Cardiology
- Dermatology and Skin Care
- Emergency Medicine
- General Surgery
- Hemato-Oncology and Stem Cell Transplantation.
- Intensive and Critical care
- Knee Surgery
- Neurology
- Ophthalmology
- Paediatrics and Neonatology
- Psychiatry
- Rheumatology and Immunology
- Wellness and Rehabilitation

#### Centres of Excellence –

- **Heart Institute :**

- Interventional Cardiology: It provides advanced diagnostic tests and treatment for problems as common as a bout of chest pain (Angina), as serious as heart attack (Myocardial Infarction) and as rare as Tricuspid Atresia. The Invasive Cardiology offers treatment for Coronary Artery Disorders, using Angioplasty, Stents, Laser, Ultrasound techniques etc.
- Cardiothoracic Surgery : Following are some of the procedures performed :
  - ✓ Coronary Artery Disease
  - ✓ Elective or Emergency surgery for Aortic Aneurysm
  - ✓ Surgeries for Valve Replacement / Repair
  - ✓ Paediatric Cardiac Surgeries
  - ✓ Heart Failure

✓ Marfan's Syndrome and other less common conditions.

- **Institutes of Transplant:** All transplant patients are cared in a dedicated Transplant ICUs by a multidisciplinary team of physicians & surgeons, right from preparation, through to the transplant surgery, recovery and post-transplant care. Transplants that are offered are :
  - Liver Transplant
  - Kidney Transplant
- **Cancer Institute :** The Oncology Centre of Excellence provides the treatment in the following major specialties :
  - Medical Oncology
  - Surgical Oncology
  - Radiation Oncology

Medical Oncology: Haemato-Oncology and Stem Cell Transplantation is one of the Apollo's flagship departments. The department treats all adult and paediatric cancers. It deals with solid tumour malignancies as well as haemato-oncology.

- ✓ **Chemotherapy:** Annually, over 900 new patients are given chemotherapy, both by conventional and newer protocols of chemotherapy.
- ✓ **Stem Cell Transplant :** Type of Stem Cell Transplants :
  - A. Autologous Transplant** (Stem Cells collected from one's own body)  
Offered for following diseases:
    - Hodgkin's & Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
    - Myeloma
    - Leukaemia
  - B. Allogeneic Transplant** (Stem Cells collected from another body)  
Offered for following diseases:
    - Allogeneic Stem Cell Transplantation For Thalassemia Major
    - Several other genetic disorders, especially with single gene defects
    - Aplastic Anaemia
    - Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia
    - High Risk AML & Relapsed AML
    - Relapsed ALL (Acute Lymphocytic Leukaemia)

Surgical Oncology: This Department is supported by surgeons specializing region wise i.e. separate surgeons for cancers of head & neck region, gastrointestinal or abdominal cancers, breast cancer, gynaecological cancers, genitourinary cancers, Thoracic, etc. with good support from reconstructive plastic surgery and other allied specialties.

Radiation Oncology:

- **Rapid Arc:** Rapid Arc radiotherapy technology is a new approach to image-guided, intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IGRT/IMRT) that delivers precise treatments in shorter times than conventional IMRT. Rapid Arc delivers a highly precise treatment much faster than other technologies.

- **Brachytherapy :** It is commonly used as an effective treatment for cervical, prostate, breast, and skin cancer and can also be used to treat tumors in many other body sites
- **IGRT (Image Guided Radiation Therapy):** IGRT is used by highly trained radiation oncologists, which involves process of frequent two and three-dimensional imaging, during a course of radiation treatment, used to direct radiation therapy utilizing the imaging coordinates.
- **IMRT (Intensity Modulated Radiotherapy):** IMRT is an advanced type of high-precision radiation that improves the ability to conform the treatment volume to concave tumor shapes.

- **Institute of Neuroscience:**

The department offers a disease specific, patient focused approach in treating all neurological and neurosurgical disorders including sleep and behavioural disorders. The department is backed by a well-established imaging, electrophysiology and lab services that help in accurate diagnosis. The following procedures are offered:

- ✓ Surgery for the Acute Head Injury and Spinal Injuries
- ✓ Surgery for Stroke/Stroke Prevention
- ✓ Micro – Neurosurgery
- ✓ Surgery for Brain and Spinal Cord Tumours
- ✓ Complex spinal Surgeries & Minimal Access Spine Surgery
- ✓ Neuro-Navigation
- ✓ Functional Neurology
- ✓ Skull Base Surgery
- ✓ Neuro-Endoscopic Surgery for Pituitary Tumours and CSF Leaks
- ✓ Endovascular Coiling of Aneurysms and Vascular Malformations
- ✓ Paediatric Neurosurgery
- ✓ Vertebroplasty
- ✓ Neuro Intensive Care
- ✓ Stereotactic Biopsy /aspiration
- ✓ Neuro Radiology Services

- **Institute of Orthopaedics:** This department offers treatment for the following :

- ✓ Arthritis
- ✓ Back and spine problems
- ✓ Fractures and Trauma
- ✓ Hip and Knee Replacements
- ✓ Infections and Osteomyelitis
- ✓ Osteoporosis and other bone diseases
- ✓ Paediatric Orthopaedics
- ✓ Sports Medicine
- ✓ Rehabilitation and physiotherapy

- **Critical Care:** This department offers multiple ICUs (Medical, Surgical, Cardiac, Cardiothoracic, HDU, Neonatal and Transplant) along with a Bronchoscopy unit, a pulmonary function laboratory and Sleep Lab.

- **Institute of Gastroenterology:** This department offers prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the digestive tract, liver and pancreatobiliary system in children and adults. The following procedures are offered :

- Major surgeries for benign and malignant conditions of oesophagus, stomach, intestines, liver and pancreas are carried out routinely.
- Minimally invasive Cholecystectomy, Appendectomy, Splenectomy and Intestinal Resections are also routinely performed.
- Surgery for Hiatus Hernia and complex biliary reconstruction surgery for bile duct strictures.
- Minimally Invasive Surgeries like basic laparoscopic procedures and advanced laparoscopic procedures like laparoscopic oesophageal surgery, gastric resections, colorectal surgery, pancreatic surgery and small bowel surgery.
- Biliary disorders
  - ✓ Carcinoma of the gallbladder
  - ✓ Malignant tumours of the bile duct
  - ✓ Bile duct injuries and strictures
  - ✓ Choledochal cysts
  - ✓ Recurrent pyogenic cholangitis
- Disorders of the Pancreas
  - ✓ Pancreatitis
  - ✓ Pancreatic pseudo-cyst
  - ✓ Malignant neoplasms of the pancreas
  - ✓ Cystic neoplasms of the pancreas
  - ✓ Pancreatic islet cell tumours
- Liver disorder
  - ✓ Hepatic trauma
  - ✓ Metastatic neoplasms of the liver (Cancer originated elsewhere & spread to liver)
  - ✓ Benign (Non-cancerous) tumours and cysts of the liver
  - ✓ Portal hypertension (portasystemic shunts).

## 2c. General Findings:

The general layout of the different departments in the hospital are as follows:

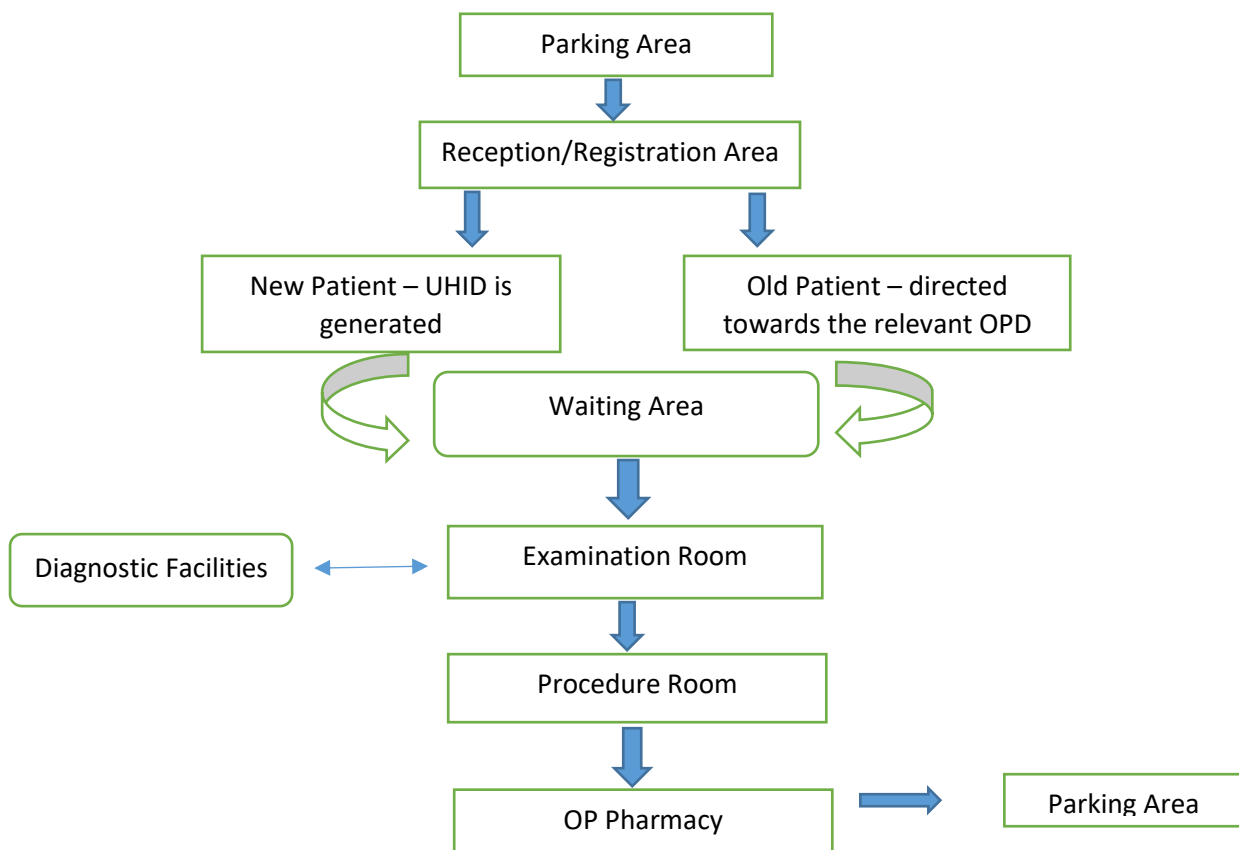
| Blocks<br>Floors | A                                                 | B                                                                  | C                                                                            | D                                                                                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ground Floor     | Blood Bank<br>Telecom                             | Emergency Unit<br>Labs                                             | Pharmacy<br>Reception Area<br>Billing<br>Sample Collection Area<br>Radiology | Dialysis<br>Nephrology & Urology Dept<br>Cardiac and Gynae<br>OPD<br>Apollo Health Centre<br>CBCC |
| 1                | Standard Ward                                     | Physiotherapy<br>Multi OPD<br>Dentistry<br>Dressing Room           | Private and Semi-Private Ward<br>Hematology Ward<br>Oncology Ward            | Medical Oncology<br>CBCC                                                                          |
| 2                | Nursing Institute                                 | Hemato-Onco Wing<br>Stem Cell Transplant Unit                      | Hemato – Onco Wing<br>Silver Wing                                            | ICU                                                                                               |
| 3                | Maternity Ward<br>Post Cath Lab<br>Endoscopy Unit | Deluxe Ward<br>Neoanatal ICU<br>Sleep Lab<br>HDU<br>Endoscopy Unit | Deluxe Ward                                                                  | Platinum Wing<br>Golden Wing                                                                      |
| 4                | Transplant ICU<br>CT – ICU,<br>Cath Lab           | Major OT                                                           | HDU<br>Urodynamics<br>Lithotripsy<br>Surgical ICU                            | Cardiac ICU<br>Medical ICU                                                                        |

- The Fifth Floor is reserved for the Administrative departments namely – Finance, Marketing and the Auditorium and the Training Room. It also has the office of the Chief Operating Officer(COO) and the Director of Medical Services(DMS)
- CBCC - To provide state of the art oncology care Apollo Hospitals, Ahmedabad has tied up with CBCC (USA). CBCC is a large cancer centre based in California, USA, with advanced cancer care facilities. It provides oncology technology and knowledge. They have established India's first and the best Radiation Oncology facility with IGRT technology, in addition to brachytherapy, stereotactic radiosurgery and related services. This unit is supported by well-trained radiation oncologists, physicists, and other skilled staff.
- The three wings viz. Silver, Golden and Platinum each have their own set of Private and Semi-Private Wards. Admission to these wings are based on the clients' willingness

to pay. The Golden Wing, however, is reserved for patients who come for Knee Replacement Surgeries.

The following are the details of the various areas of the hospital and their general findings:

- Reception Area: Location – Ground Floor.  
It consists of the following desks which provide their own set of facilities for the customer.
  - Registration Area: These desks are responsible for registering the patients - both walk-in as well as patients with prior appointments.
  - IPD/OPD Billing Area: This desk is responsible for the payment of the estimated costs for treatment for both IPD as well as OPD patients.
  - Estimation Desk: This desk is mainly responsible for estimating the approximate cost of the treatment which the IPD patients will be liable to pay if they wish to undergo treatment at the hospital.
  - Corporate Desk: It handles the payment of credit bills of the patients who are employees of the companies/establishments which the hospital has a tie-up with.
  - TPA Desk: It handles the insurance issues of the patients.
- Outpatient Department (OPD) :  
The Cardiac, Gynae and Paediatrics OPD are situated at the Ground Floor whereas the Multi OPD is situated on the Second Floor. All the different OPDs are equipped with their own reception/registration desks for the ease of the patients to navigate through. The daily volume of the OPDs are around 500 cases approximately. As appointments are fixed, the patient receives a text message confirming their appointments. A text message is also sent to consultants to notify them accordingly. The telecommunication department, which is also located on the ground floor, is responsible for entertaining calls for appointment over the telephone (also can be referred to as prior appointments). Following is a Process Flow Diagram of the OPD:



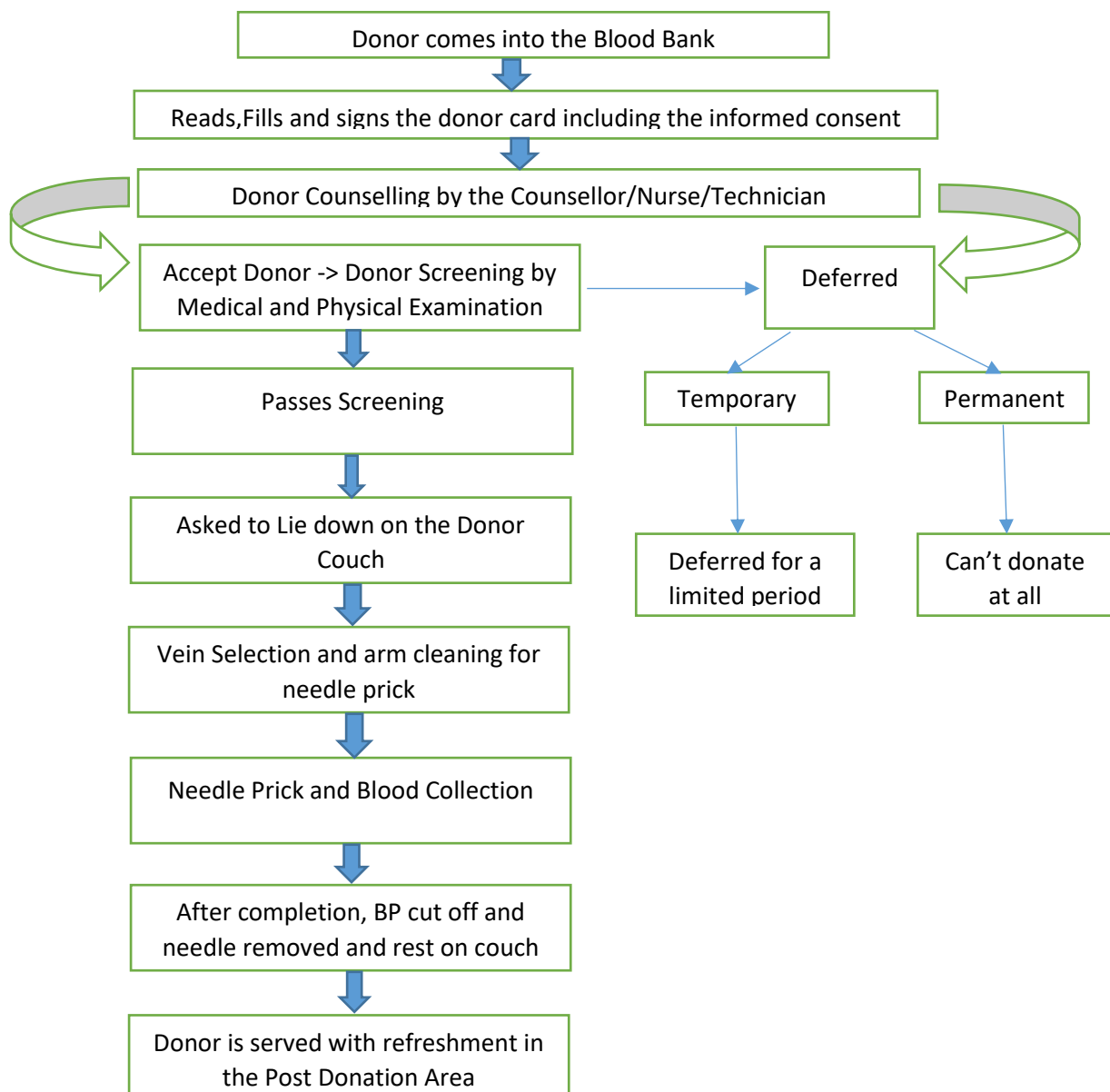
- Blood Bank: The Blood Bank is located at the ground floor and is NABH-accredited. The license has been obtained from the FDA and has the following procedures approved :

- ✓ Grouping
- ✓ Cross-Matching
- ✓ Component Preparation
- ✓ TTI Testing
- ✓ Apheresis

The code of labelling of the different types of blood is –

| Type of Blood | Colour |
|---------------|--------|
| A+ / A-       | Yellow |
| B+ / B-       | Red    |
| O+ / O-       | Blue   |
| AB+ / AB-     | White  |

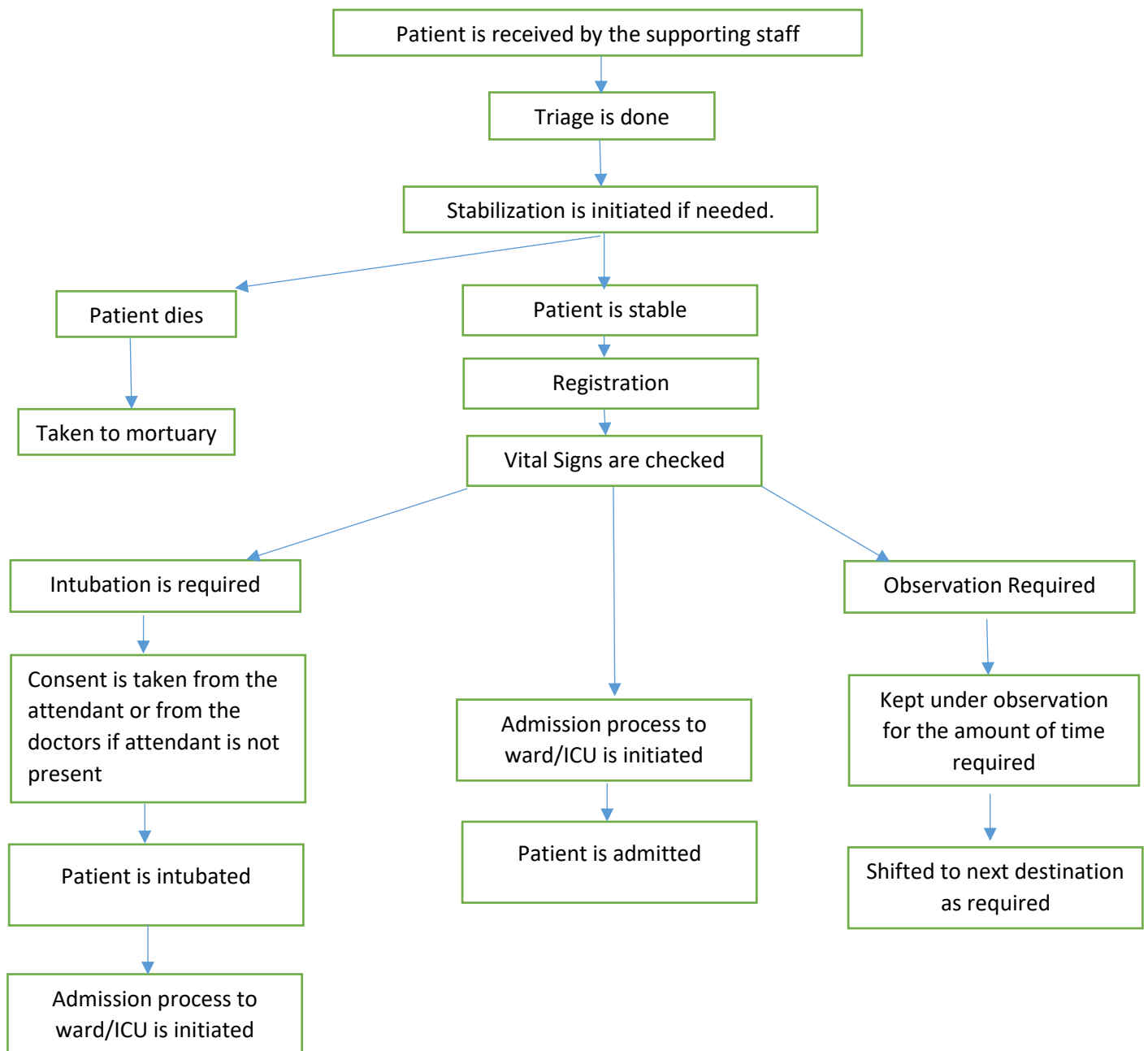
Flow Chart of the Blood Donation Procedure:



Duration of storage of the different components of blood:

| COMPONENT           | DURATION                                    |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Whole Blood         | One hour in room temperature                |
| Platelets           | 20 – 22(degree) C with agitation for 5 days |
| Fresh Frozen Plasma | -80(degree) C for one year.                 |
| RBC                 | 2- 8(degree) C for 42 days.                 |

- Emergency Department: The Emergency Department is located in the ground floor. The average number of cases dealt per day is 10. There are three ambulances on call. The process flow is depicted as follows :

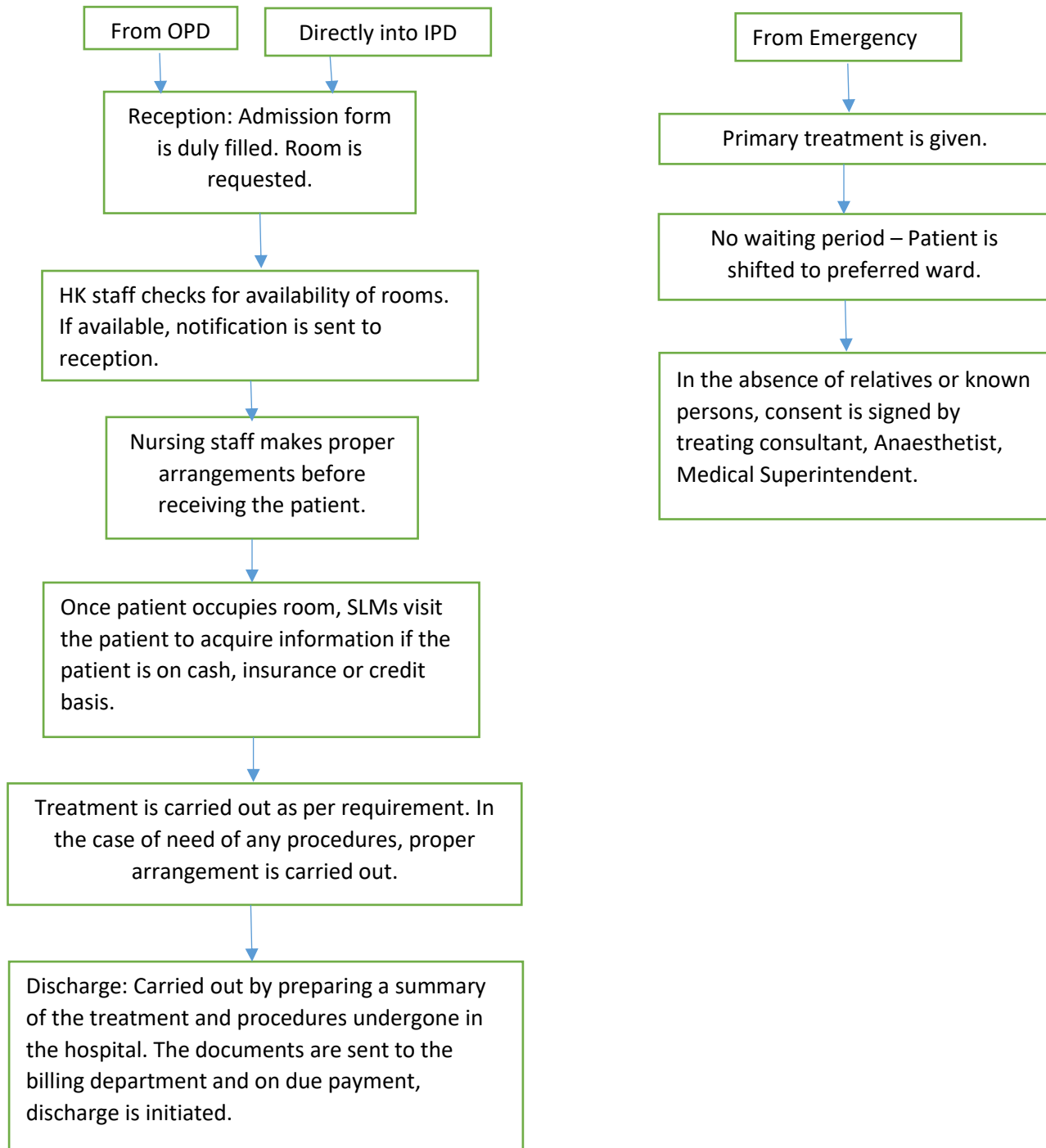


The patient is triaged by allocating differently coloured wrist bands for identification:

| COLOUR | INDICATION  |
|--------|-------------|
| Black  | Dead        |
| Red    | Urgent      |
| Yellow | Observation |

The Emergency Department is divided into the following areas:

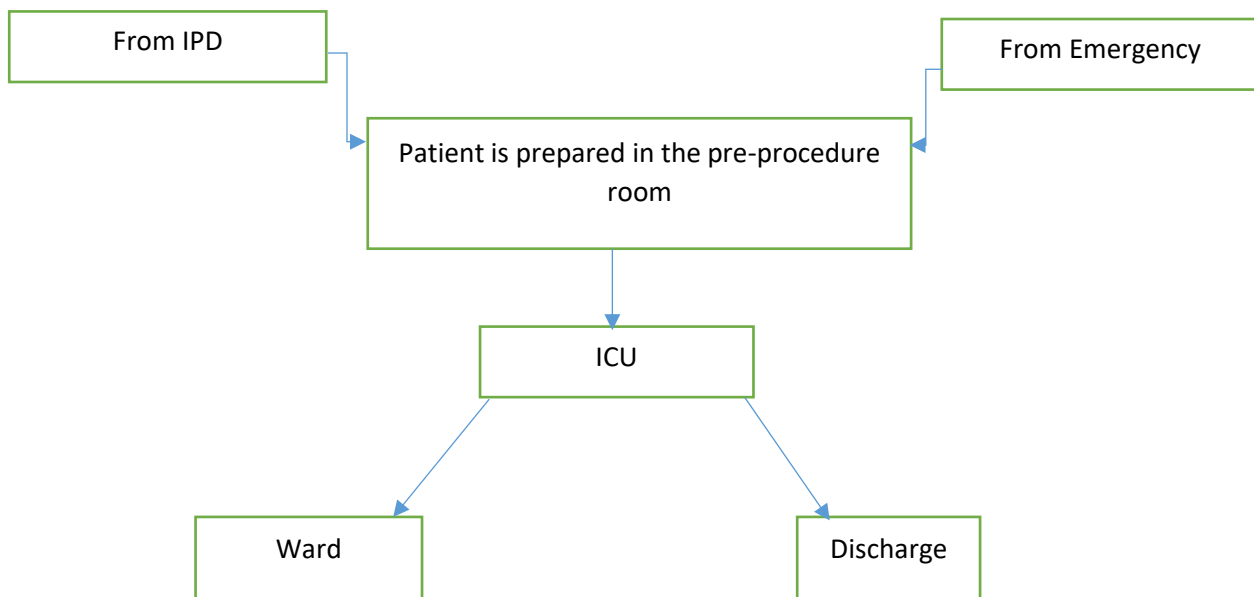
- Procedure Room – This is the area where the small procedures are carried out .It is equipped with one bed.
- Observational Room- This is the area where the patient is kept under observation for the required amount of time. It is equipped with 9 beds in total. Each unit is surrounded by walls on three sides and a curtain which allows for the entry or exit. This contains the spread of infection from one unit to the other.
- Barrier Nursing – This is the area where Barrier Nursing is carried out. It has 7 beds in total – one bed for Emergency services and the other six which are located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor in ICU.
- Registration Area – The Registration is carried out in this area.
- In-Patient Department (IPD)– Process Flow of the IPD is given as below :
  - On request by a patient for admission into IPD, an IP number is generated for the patient. This is a one – time assignment and keeps changing every time the patient requests for fresh admission into IPD.
  - Consent form is signed by the patient or relatives at the time of admission into the hospital in the preferred ward. Consent is taken from the patient at every step throughout his treatment in the hospital – before every procedure and every required subsequent treatments.
  - The patient is intimated about the updated gross bill for payment on a daily basis, so that he/she has an idea about how much has been spent and how much he/she can spend in the future.
  - In terms of billing, the patients are categorised into 3 heads:
    - ✓ Cash – The ones who want to pay by cash.
    - ✓ Insurance – The ones who are covered by their insurance schemes.
    - ✓ Corporate – The ones who are covered by the institutions they work for.



- Intensive Care Unit (ICU) – The number of beds for ICU is 78. There are six beds reserved for barrier nursing.  
The following table gives an idea about the ICUs and the number of beds in each of them:

| ICU                         | No. Of Beds |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| MICU                        | 12          |
| SICU                        | 11          |
| CCU                         | 12          |
| HDU( 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor) | 6           |
| HDU(3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor)  | 6           |
| ICU(2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor)  | 11          |
| CT – ICU (Post)             | 11          |
| OT                          | 7           |

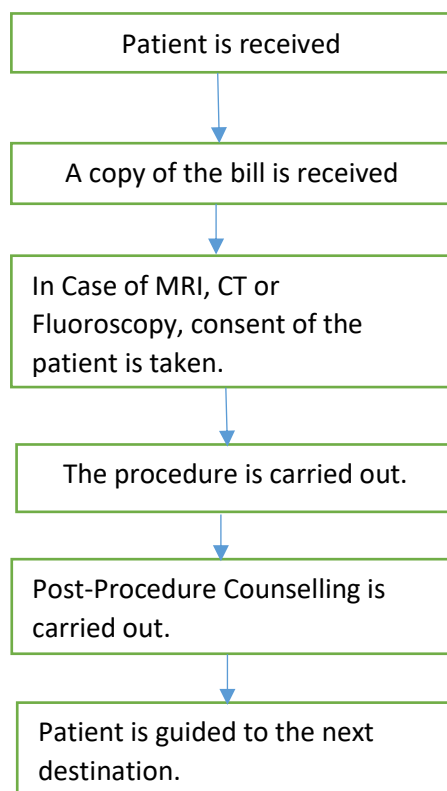
- Operation Theatre –
  - There are seven OTs in total:
    - ✓ Two reserved for Cardiac Surgeries;
    - ✓ Two reserved for Knee Surgeries;
    - ✓ Three reserved for General Surgeries.
  - The scheduling for the OTs is done on a direct entry basis.
  - There are three beds reserved for Pre-op and four reserved for Post-Op.
  - Process Flow of OT is as follows:



- Radiology :The different procedures available at AHIL are mentioned below:

| Services Offered | No. of Patients per month |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Ultrasound       | 4000                      |
| X-Ray            | 5000                      |
| MRI              | 250                       |
| CT               | 500                       |
| Mammography      | 100                       |
| Fluoroscopy      | 10 – 12                   |

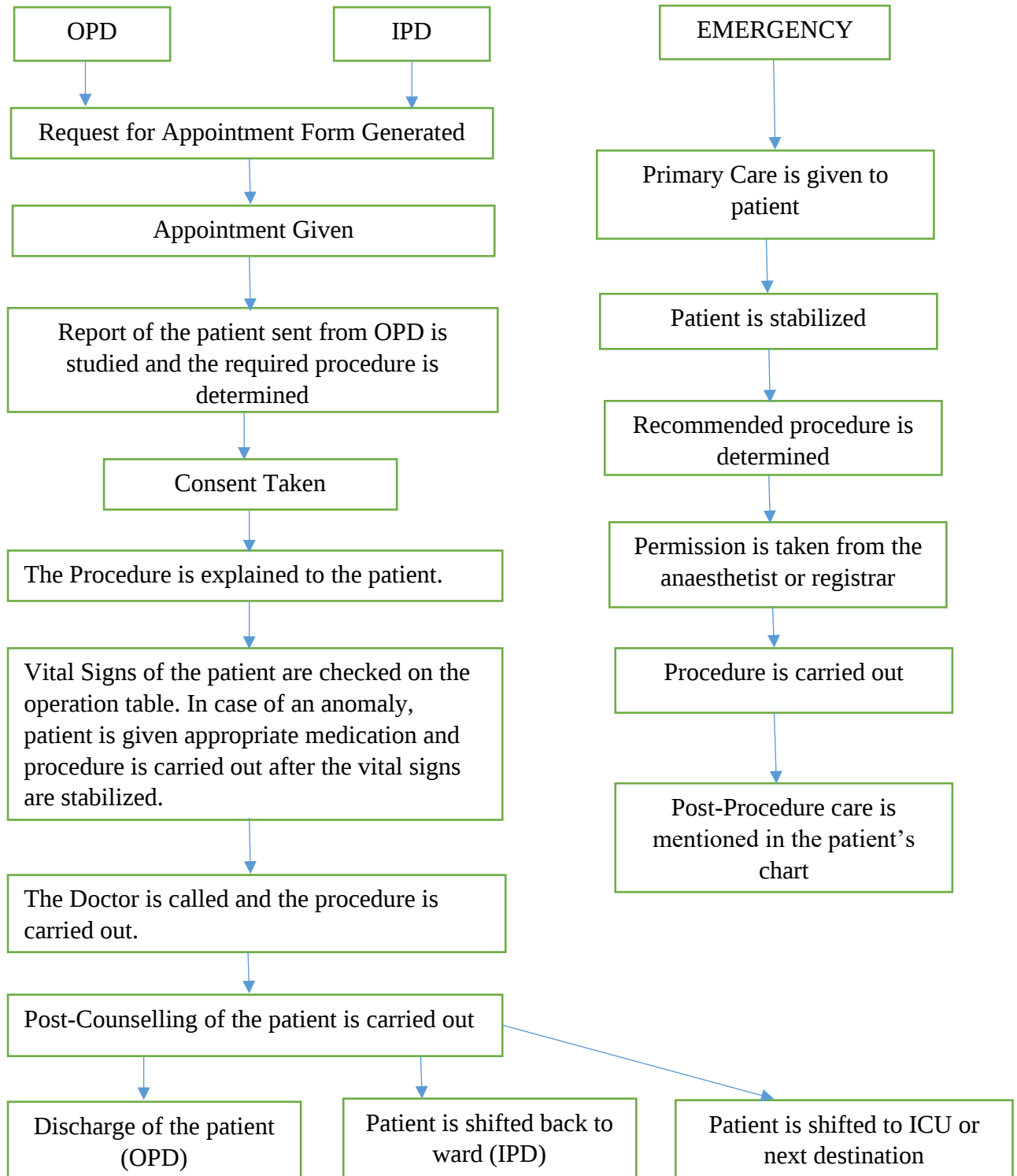
The procedures like Nuclear Medicine and Pet-CT are outsourced.  
The Process Flow is as given below:



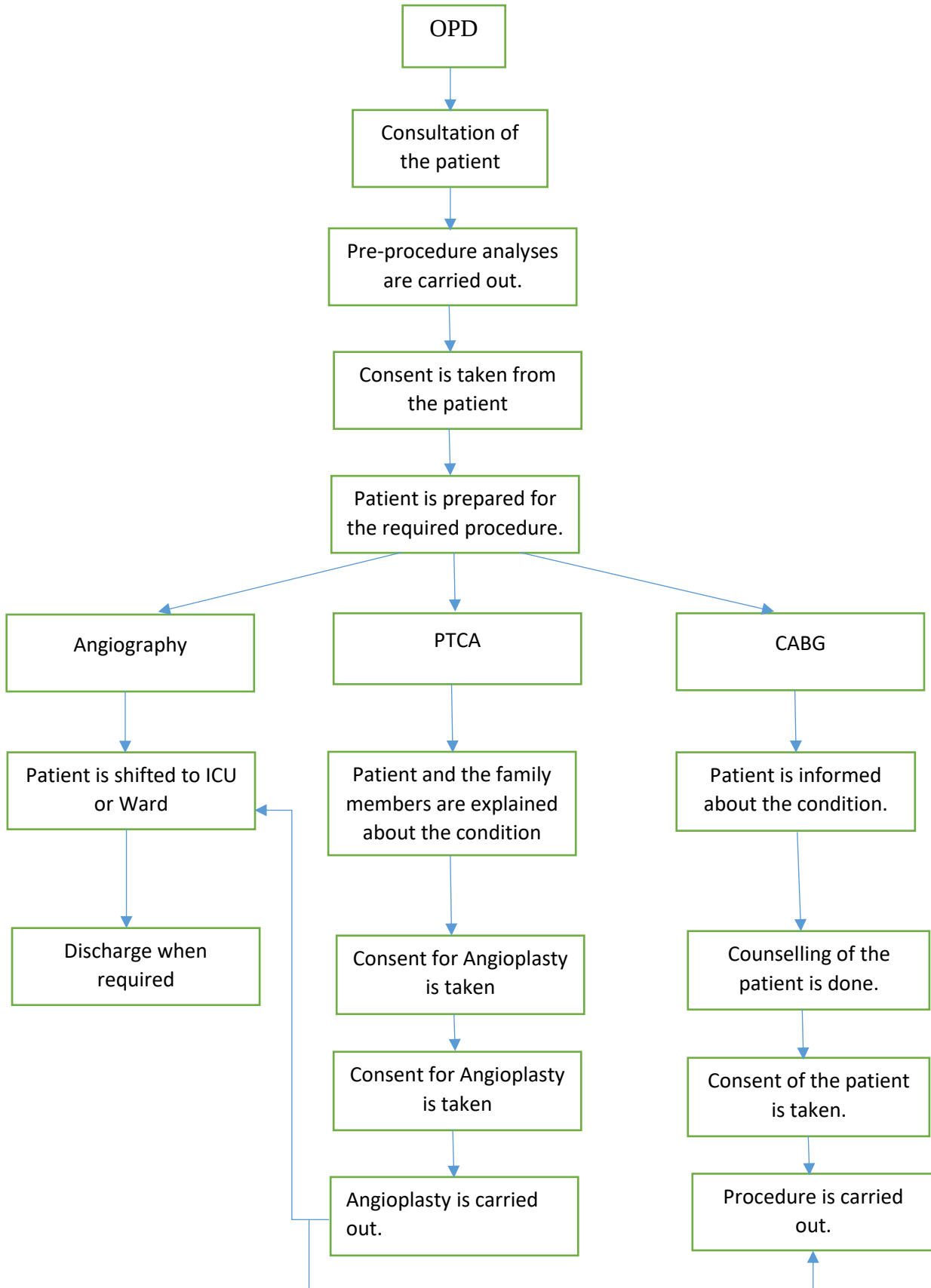
- Endoscopy Unit-

- On an average, the number of procedures carried out is 8 – 10.
- Procedure time for the different procedures are:
  - Endoscopy – 10 minutes
  - Colonoscopy – 20 minutes
  - ERCP- 45 minutes to One hour.

The Process Flow of the Endoscopy Unit is as given below-



- Cath Lab :
  - Number of Cath labs: Two.
  - Average Inflow of patients in a day: Ten.
  - Process Flow of the Cath Lab is as given below :



- Dialysis: Located on the ground floor, the number of machines available in the dialysis department is 9. The average number of OPD patients coming in per day is around 30. The inflow of the patients from IPD depends on the doctor and can vary from 2 – 5 numbers.
- Dietetics, Food and Beverages: The responsibility of food and beverages for the entire hospital (including patients) is outsourced to Apollo Sindoori, a sister establishment of Apollo Hospitals. They are responsible for providing food and maintenance of kitchenware.
- Housekeeping: The Housekeeping department is outsourced altogether. The Compass handles all matters related to housekeeping activities.
- Medical Records Department: The medical records department (MRD) handles the history of patient's treatment at the hospital. It contains all the details regarding the procedures undertaken, the doctors who treated them and their subsequent visits to the hospital, which are updated accordingly. The UHID number of the patient which is generated the first time a patient visits the hospital is used to keep a track on the record of the patients. The retention period of records for OPD patients is 3 years and that for IP patients is 5 years. At the end of these periods, a notification is given in the leading newspapers in the form of an advertisement, encouraging the patients to claim their records if the need be. The records which are not claimed are discarded.
- Marketing Department: The marketing department handles all affairs related to both domestic and international patients. They are concerned with market research – which segment of the market needs to be targeted and how. They also handle tie-ups and maintaining the brand image of the hospital. They undertake various CSR initiatives to promote the best interests of the hospital.
- Finance Department: It handles the financial aspects of the hospital. The hospital deals with patients who prefer different methods of payment – cash, credit or insurance. As such, the responsibility rests with this department that suitable protocols be maintained and followed so that there are no hassles faced by either the patient or the hospital. The billing and discharge operations are overseen by this department.
- Human Resources Department: This department handles the recruitment, training and development of all the employees at AHIL. It also handles any grievances in the part of the employees and works for the continuous education and improvement of the employees.
- Central Sterile Supply Department: It deals with the efficient dis-infection of all the instruments used in the process of treatment. The equipment are collected from the various departments and are accumulated here for sterilization. A separate lift has

been dedicated for the smooth movement of the instruments to and from the CSSD department.

**Miscellaneous – Facilities and Practices:**

- Food Court: It is situated on the ground floor of the hospital. Patients and their relatives can treat themselves to options like Café Coffee Day, Apollo Sindoori Restaurant and \_\_\_\_\_.
- TLC – The practice of “Tender Love and Care”: At AHIL, the needs of the patients come first. In this regard, AHIL practices “TLC” – an initiative to celebrate the birthdays of the patients who are admitted and are under recovery. Minute details of the patient are fished out of the databases – his/her favourite food, his/her favourite colour etc. and efforts are made towards making this day as special for the patient as possible. This makes an impact on the way the patient views the hospital and the people in it, spreading a feeling of goodwill and trust.
- The “You Made A Difference” (YMAD) Award: Every month an/number of employee/s from any department is awarded for bringing about a change in the hospital which has a positive impact on the other employees.

## 2a. Project/Study

### **A study of the Marketing Mix with regard to International Patient Services in Apollo Hospitals International Ltd.**

#### **2a. INTRODUCTION:**

##### **Medical Tourism**

“Medical Tourism” refers to the travelling of people to different countries with the motive of obtaining medical, surgical and dental care while at the same time touring, vacationing and fully experiencing the attractions of the countries that they are visiting. The advent of Medical Tourism has given way to the emergence of an industry which has a high potential attached to it. Countries such as India, Mexico, Singapore, Brazil, Argentina, Greece, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Peru, Hungary, Israel, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, South Africa, Thailand and the Philippines are taking that extra step towards promoting as well investing in this particular sector.

There are basically three types of medical tourism:

1. OUTBOUND – Patients travelling from home country to other countries to receive medical care.
2. INBOUND – Patients travelling from other countries to home country to receive medical care.
3. INTRABOUND – Patients travelling within the home country to receive medical care outside their geographic area, typically to a Centre of Excellence in another state/region.

Why do people prefer to travel all the way to these countries for treatment?

- Unavailability of highly-skilled doctors and new technologies for treatment.
- These treatments are prohibitively expensive in the patients’ home countries. The prices of the treatments offered in the countries are comparatively low.
- The waiting time for activities like operations, often ranges from six months to a couple of years or even more, which motivates people to travel to countries like India for medical treatment.

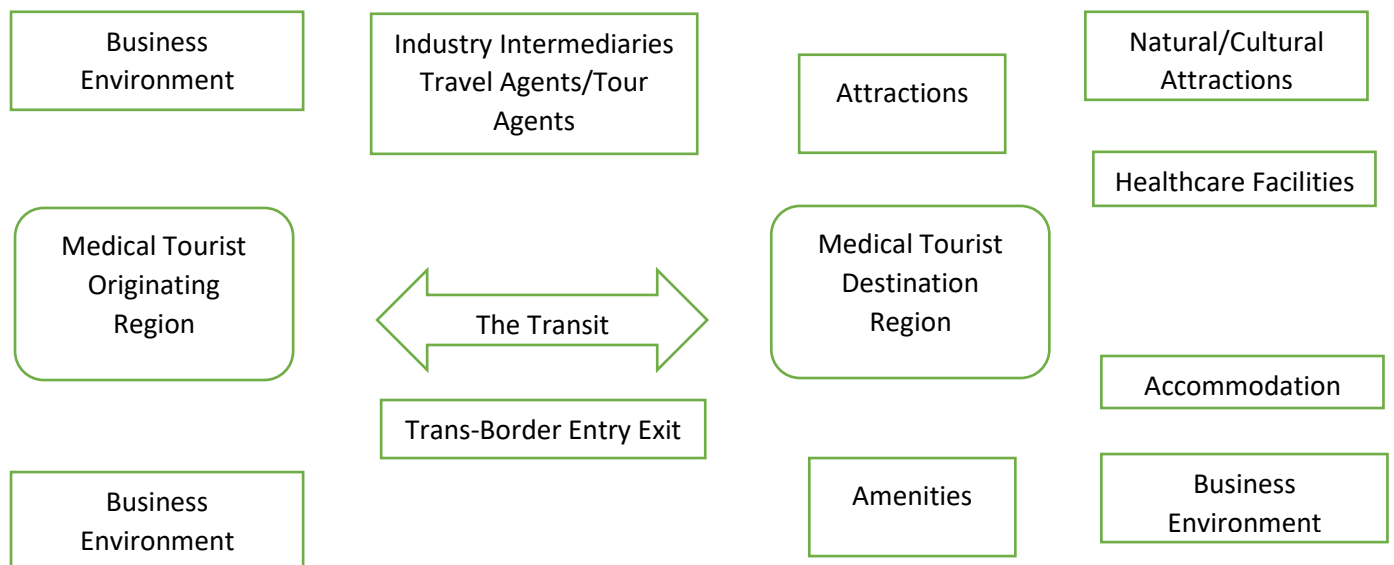
Why India?

- Clinical outcomes in India are at par with the world’s best centres, besides having internationally qualified and experienced specialists.
- The health care sector in India has witnessed an enormous growth in infrastructure in the private and voluntary sector. The private sector has now become a flourishing industry equipped with the most modern state-of-the-art technology at its disposal. It is estimated that 75-80% of health care services and investments in India are now provided by the private sector.
- India has one of the largest pharmaceutical industries in the world. It is self-sufficient in drug production and exports drugs to more than 180 countries.
- India has top-notch centres for open-heart surgery, paediatric heart surgery, hip and knee replacement, cosmetic surgery, dentistry, bone marrow transplants and cancer

therapy, and virtually all of India's clinics are equipped with the latest electronic and medical diagnostic equipment.

- Unlike many of its competitors in medical tourism, India also has the technological sophistication and infrastructure to maintain its market niche, and Indian pharmaceuticals meet the stringent requirements of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- India's quality of care is up to American standards, and some Indian medical centres even provide services that are uncommon elsewhere. For example, hip surgery patients in India can opt for a hip-resurfacing procedure, in which damaged bone is scraped away and replaced with chrome alloy--an operation that costs less and causes less post-operative trauma than the traditional replacement procedure performed in the U.S.
- Holistic medicinal services: With yoga, meditation, Ayurveda, Allopathy, and other systems of medicines, India offers a unique basket of services to an individual that is difficult to match by other countries.

#### The Medical Tourism System:



- The above diagram depicts the movement of the medical tourists from the Originating Region to the Destination Region.
- The transit refers to both the actual mode and trajectory of transportation used for this movement as well as the constraining and facilitating forces in international travel.
- The Selection of the Destination Region by the medical tourists is facilitated by the amenities available and offered as well as the attractions prevailing in that particular region. For example, India's uniqueness in providing other forms of treatment like yoga, meditation and Ayurveda plays to its advantage. Clubbed with this is India's rich cultural heritage which provides ample scope for promoting the concept of Medical Tourism.
- The Business Environment plays a crucial role in ensuring that the Medical Tourism market thrives. This can be observed from the fact that proper government laws promoting growth of healthcare services, easy visa norms and regulations etc.

## **The Marketing Mix**

“Marketing Mix is the set of controllable variables that the firm can use to influence the buyer’s response” – Philip Kotler

In services marketing, consumers are concerned with the services that the provider has to offer; in the true sense, it is about a consumer buying the provider’s skill, time, knowledge or resources. Marketing a service is like marketing something intangible – like marketing a promise.

Today, the health care market has become competitive with the increase in the number of corporate and privately-owned hospitals in the country. Hence, the marketing of a hospital has become important to maintain and to strengthen its position in an increasingly competitive market.

The controllable variables are:

**Product** - It refers to the goods and services offered by the organisation. The service offering is divided into three levels –

- I. The Core level, comprising of the basic treatments and facilities offered by the hospital like diagnostic services, ambulatory services etc.
- II. The Expected level, comprising of cleanliness and hygiene level maintained in the hospital.
- III. Augmented Level, which may comprise of the behaviour of the staff with patients, technology used in the hospital etc.

**Price** – It refers to the amount charged for the product or the service. For a hospital, the main concern is not profit maximization; rather, it is the offering of the service to the patients at a reasonable price. The price charged is usually in line with the treatment prescribed by the consultant and the facilities used by the patient. The pricing strategy adopted does not depend on the price the competitors have to offer. It is arrived at after thorough consultation with the heads of the concerned departments and taking into consideration the government rules and regulations too. The price of the various facilities are also revised every year with the advent of new technology.

**Place** – It refers to the availability of the products or services to the customer so that they are able to make a convenient purchase. It is basically the point of contact between the customer and the service provider, who gets the benefit of the services offered. There are two major issues in the determination of the place – accessibility and availability. Accessibility refers to the ease and convenience with which the service can be used or received by the customer. Availability refers to the extent to which the service can be used or received. Factors influencing the decision to choose a market may be the market size, the geographical location of the hospital, location of potentially attractive consumer segments, good access by roads and infrastructure.

**Promotion** – It refers to the process of informing, persuading and influencing a consumer to make choice of the product to be bought. Customers need to be made aware of the existence of the services offered. The various aspects of promotion are advertising, personal selling, publicity and sales promotion. Hospitals generally rely on favourable word of mouth

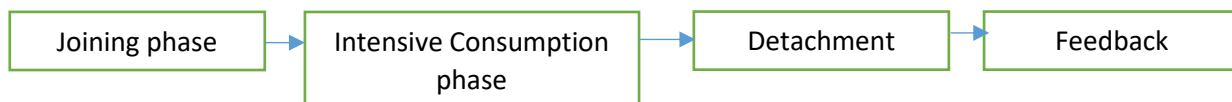
promotion by the consumers. They can invest in conducting camps in rural areas, advertising in health and fitness magazines etc.

**People** – This component refers to the importance of the people in consuming the services offered. Service personnel play an important role in an organization that offers services. In a hospital, it is of extreme importance that the staff is well-trained to provide quality care with a human touch using state of the art technology. This objective of providing quality care to the patients can be achieved by –

- ✓ Motivating employees to be efficient, dedicated and loyal to the organization.
- ✓ Offering regular on-job training to ensure continuous improvement in health care.
- ✓ Utilizing services of professional, competent medical consultants.
- ✓ Use of latest technology.

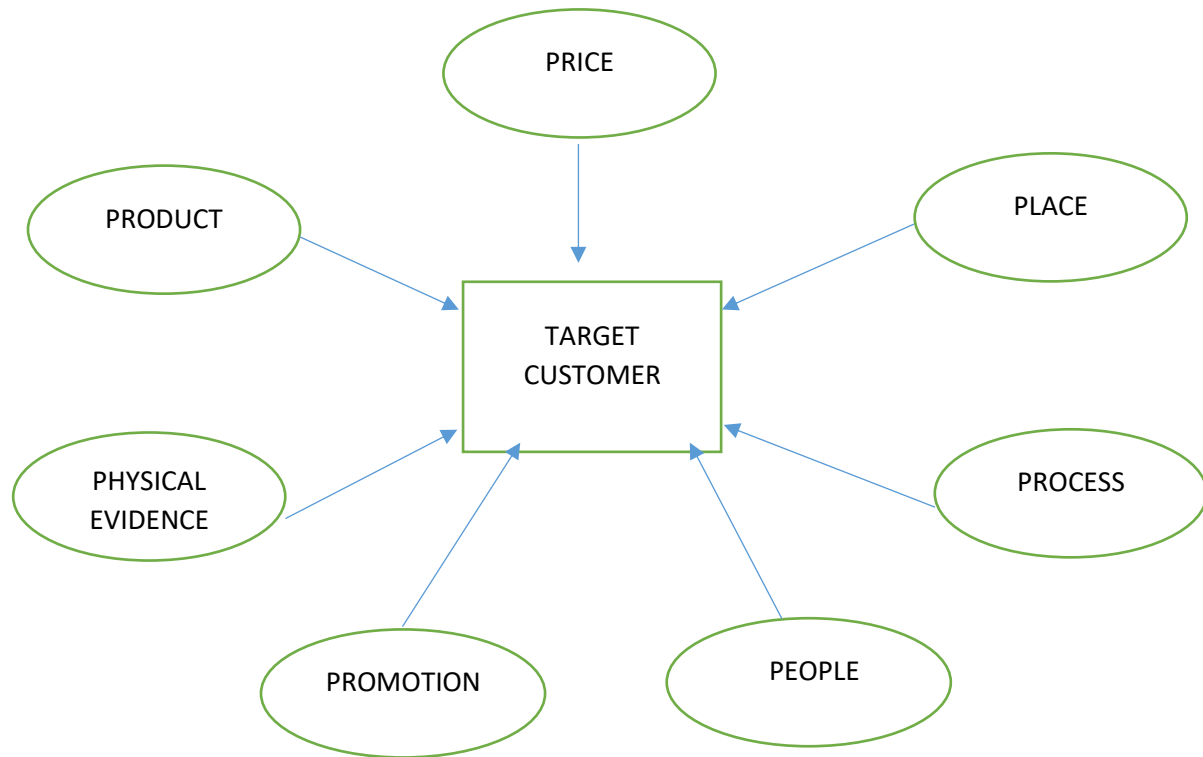
In a hospital, the staff has to cater to the needs of a sick, depressed and agitated lot. Hence, it is important that the behaviour of the staff be compassionate and helpful. Warm ambiances with efficient and helpful staff creates a good impression on the minds of the public.

**Process** – A process is a set of activities that take an input, convert it and add value to the input and finally creates an output. The process is divided into the following phases:



- ❖ Joining phase – It includes the arrival of the patient and registration
- ❖ Intensive Consumption phase – It includes the diagnosis (where the consultant diagnoses the illness by having the patient undergo various tests), treatment (where the illness is treated with the help of proper medication or surgery and so on.) and information about further actions (where the consultant will instruct the patient regarding the diet to be followed, medication to be taken, when to go to him in the future and so on).
- ❖ Detachment phase – It includes the discharge of the patient (after consultation with the doctor) and the payment.
- ❖ Feedback – The patient, at this stage, is asked to fill in an evaluation form which helps the hospital authorities to understand the level of satisfaction derived by the patients.

**Physical Evidence** - It is the environment in which the organization delivers its services and provides a platform for the service provider and the service user to interact. Physical evidence provides a means to the customer to evaluate the hospital. It is crucial for modern hospitals to create a good ambience. When a patient enters a hospital, he/she forms an opinion about the hospital. Hence, right from the reception, the patient should be greeted with a warm and cordial staff. It is also necessary for the hospital to be well-organised and segregated into different departments. Special care should also be taken to maintain cleanliness and hygiene. Physical evidence plays an important role in the hospital where patients are already depressed and traumatized and where, a good atmosphere can make all the difference.



## 2b. **OBJECTIVES:**

- To understand the marketing mix i.e the Product, Price, Place and Promotion Strategies with regard to International Patient Services in Apollo Hospitals International Ltd.
- To study the level of success of this Marketing Mix with regard to the International Patients at AHIL.

## 2c. **METHODOLOGY:**

### ***Study type-***

- Descriptive and Analytical

### ***Study area-***

- International Patients Department, Apollo Hospitals International Ltd., Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

### ***Study duration-***

- Two months

### ***Data Collection-***

- Primary Data - Collection is done through personal interviews with the international marketing team and patients.
- Secondary data – Collection is done through hospital information system.

The procedure followed is enumerated below:

- **UNDERSTANDING** the current practices and strategies
- **COLLECTION** of relevant data pertaining to these practices.
- **EVALUATION** of the data.
- **INTERPRETATION** of analysis of outcomes

## I. Understanding the current practices and strategies:

The PRODUCT:

Healthcare as a core product is an intangible good providing services to the individual customers or organisational buyers. As such it is heavily dependent on the satisfaction of the customers for its success which is directly related to the facilities provided along with the core service offered.

AHIL is known for its excellent clinical results brought on by its team of highly-qualified doctors and its state-of-the-art technology.

Services provided –

Treatments: The International Patients can avail any of the treatments that the hospital has to offer. Some of the treatments that the patients particularly seek are:

1. **Oncology Surgeries**
2. **Gynaecology**
3. **Heart Surgeries**
4. **Neurological and Spinal**
5. **Transplants**

- The hospital is well equipped with an adequate number of ICUs and OTs to handle surgeries and post-operative care.
- The hospital is backed by ancillary services like radiology, ambulatory services, and clinical lab services which contributes towards correct diagnosis of a disease.
- The hospital offers **Apollo Health Check**, a one stop centre for patients to conduct the necessary tests for pre- and post-diagnosis health check.
- A NABH- accredited blood bank is incorporated in the hospital which contributes significantly towards the functioning of the hospital.

Facilities:

- Travel Desk – This area handles affairs such as online booking or cancellation of tickets, notification to the regional police on the arrival/departure of the foreign nationals, helping out with the visa regulations etc. It also helps the International Patients with matters such as acquiring local sim cards for easy communication, decoding their electronic possessions like laptops and mobile phones so that they can be used in the country, to name a few.
- Translators – The Hospital arranges for translators as and when required, so that it becomes easier for the patient to converse with the doctors and the staff and vice versa. The employment of translators is crucial as it helps the patient to understand the various rules and regulations that one has to comply to before proceeding with complex procedures and surgeries.
- Food and Beverages – The Hospital makes arrangements and takes the utmost effort to ensure that the relatives of the patients receive the kind of food that they are used to.
- Prayer Hall – A Prayer Hall has been reserved for the patients for use whenever needed.
- Transport Services including airport pick-ups and drop: The hospital provides for the necessary transportations that the patients and his/her relatives wishes to undertake during their stay in the country.
- Accommodation for relatives and guardians: The hospital ensures adequate living arrangements for the relatives and guardians accompanying the patient, as per their requirement. In the case of an impending stay for a longer duration, the hospital makes arrangements in nearby apartments/flats for a comfortable stay.
- Postage and Couriers
- Bank ATMs
- Arrangements for sight-seeing.

#### The PRICE:

Pricing in a hospital is usually done taken into account the cost of running the hospital, the overheads, salaries of the doctors, nursing staff and administrative staff, cost of infrastructure, bed occupancy etc.

#### *The Willingness to pay -*

- Apollo Hospitals has built a brand name for itself. Since its inception in 1983, it has been a pioneer of many revolutions in the healthcare sector in India. As such, those seeking treatment are aware that the value of the healthcare services provided at Apollo Hospitals will always be worth paying for.
- AHIL boasts of exceptional achievements in the clinical services that it offers. For instance, Dr. Chirag Shah is credited with performing the first "Autologous Stem Cell

Transplant for Acute Myeloid Leukaemia" in the private sector of Gujarat. These records create a positive impact on the patients' minds and helps in winning their trust and goodwill.

- The cost of the treatment, travel expenses and accommodation expenses combined do not add up to much and the international patients find it quite lucrative and affordable to invest in the hospital. For example, recently a 7 years old Nigerian girl was treated successfully at AHIL for a tumour located in her face. The cost of the treatment and the accommodation came to four lakhs.
- Cost advantage of India: The table below gives an idea of the cost advantage that India enjoys over the other countries:

|            | Coronary artery bypass surgery | Bypass surgery, heart valve replacement | Hip replacement | Knee replacement | Face Lift      |
|------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Costa Rica | 24,100                         | 30,000                                  | 11,400          | 10,700           | 4900           |
| France     | 33,100                         | 33,137                                  | 15,000          | 17,000           | 12300          |
| India      | 7000                           | 9,500                                   | 7,200           | 4300 – 7200      | 3100 – 4800    |
| Malaysia   | 12000                          | 13,400                                  | 7500            | 12000            | 6400           |
| Panama     | 10,500                         | 13,500                                  | 5500            | 7000             | 2500           |
| Singapore  | 16,300                         | 22,000                                  | 12000           | 9600             | 6250 – 7500    |
| S. Korea   | 31,750                         | 42,000                                  | 10,600          | 11800            | 6650           |
| Taiwan     | 27500                          | 30,000                                  | 8,800           | 10000            | 8500           |
| Thailand   | 22,000                         | 25,000                                  | 12,700          | 11500            | 5000           |
| UAE        | 40,900                         | 50,600                                  | 46000           | 40200            | -              |
| UK         | 43000                          | 90,000                                  | 13000           | 52000            | 13000          |
| USA        | 70,000-1.33L                   | 75000 – 2L                              | 33000-57000     | 30000 – 53000    | 10,500 - 16000 |

- At AHIL, when the patient first contacts the hospital and expresses the willingness to seek treatment at the hospital, along with the line of treatment, the cost estimates of the treatment in its entirety is given. This makes it easy for the patient and his/her relatives to come prepared. In the event that the cost estimates exceed the actual value of the treatment, the excess amount is always refunded back to the patient.
- The total price charged is a function of the basic cost of treatment, the services and facilities availed during the diagnosis and treatment process, discounts (if and when applicable) and the patients' own choice of auxiliary facilities – the choice of rooms to stay (which can range from wards to deluxe rooms), the kind of food which one would like to consume (with proper consultations with the dietician) etc.
- AHIL also provides for insurance for its patients. The following International Insurance

Schemes are supported:

- ❖ AON Kenya Ins. Broker Ltd.
- ❖ AXA Insurance (Gulf), B.S.C, UAE
- ❖ Aetna Health
- ❖ Bupa International U.K
- ❖ Britam British – American Centre.

The PLACE:

A hospital should always be easily accessible to the general public and its services should be easily available for use. The following are the salient features with regard to the “place” dynamic:

- AHIL is strategically located on the Ahmedabad – Gandhinagar highway and is well connected with the availability of bus services at its door step. The roads are well-developed and connects the hospital to the important locations throughout the state.
- Ambulances are available for pre-hospital care and emergency services. They are fully air-conditioned, well-equipped with monitors and ventilators with qualified doctors and paramedical staff.
- A city centre of the hospital has been set-up in the city of Ahmedabad for easy access of patients, so that they are able to avail the services provided.
- Help desks have been set up in the SVBP International Airport, which ensures help to the international patients both at the time of arrival and departure.
- Website: AHIL has a dedicated website which gives the users a detailed insight into what all is offered at the hospital. It contains all the relevant information that a patient may require to establish contact with the hospital, if the need arises. It mentions the various treatments the hospital has to offer and the various consultants who carry out these treatments. It also has the provision of providing the latest updates regarding the hospital which is crucial in helping the users remaining “up-to-date”.
- Social Media: AHIL makes good use of social media to connect with the masses. It has made its presence felt through the use of the following channels –
  - ✓ Facebook: Its page in Facebook contains updates about the goings-on in the hospital. Be it the launch of new technology or making the people aware about health benefits, AHIL makes sure that the users remain well-informed and up-to-date.
  - ✓ Twitter: Through tweets and the use of different handles, Apollo Hospitals establishes communication which is interactive as well as informative.
  - ✓ YouTube: Its channel in YouTube hosts videos which gives an insight to the users regarding the different facilities available. It gives a holistic view of the hospital to the patient regarding the environment and the kind of services to be expected, which goes a long way in providing them with the assurance of receiving quality care and long-term health benefits.

This medium of information exchange is particularly beneficial as western patients rely more on the internet to gain access to information as compared to their Indian counterparts.

#### The PROMOTION:

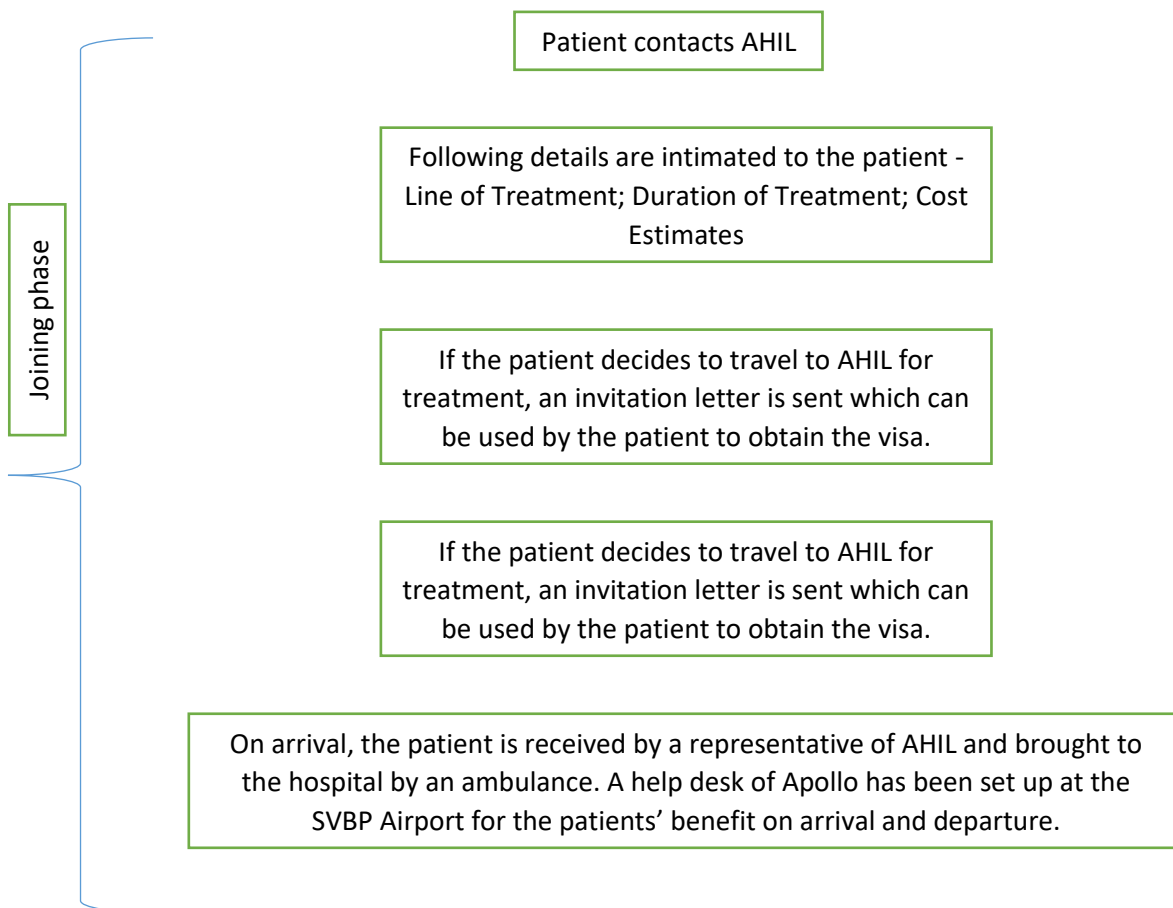
The following practices are used for the promotion of the product offerings at AHIL:

- Word of Mouth: This is perhaps the easiest and fastest way of promoting the presence of AHIL in the market. The excellent clinical results enjoyed by the hospital ensures their continuing competence and allows them to stay ahead of their counterparts.
- Publishing of Articles in Newspapers: At AHIL, any achievements in the clinical aspects of the hospital are celebrated by publishing an article in a leading newspaper. The important details about the case are highlighted and the doctors are allowed to interact with the media to help the masses understand the nitty-gritties of the procedures performed. This helps in spreading a feeling of trust and goodwill among the potential clients which contributes towards the hospital's benefit.
- Tie-ups: Apollo Hospitals has established a tie-up with the Etihad Airways as a move to cater to the patients residing in the middle-eastern countries. They also offer discounts for treatment if the patient happens to use this particular airline as a means of travel. This ensures ease of accessibility to the patients as well helps Apollo Hospitals maintain its stand in the Middle-Eastern market.
- Continuing Medical Education (CME): It refers to a specific form of continuing education (CE) that helps those in the medical field maintain competence and learn about new and developing areas of their field. These activities may take place as live events, written publications, online programs, audio, video, or other electronic media. AHIL organises live events in the target countries which serves as a platform for the doctors to interact with one another. The doctors of these nations then refer patients to AHIL for treatments which are not possible at their host countries.
- HealthCare Facilitators: This is the term used to identify those professionals involved in the healthcare services of the target nations who are aware of the clinical services offered at AHIL and refer their nationals to seek treatment at the hospital accordingly. They are instrumental in guiding the patients towards receiving quality care and being treated successfully as these services may not be available in the host country.
- Presence in events: Through its participation in major events like Vibrant Gujarat, Pravasiya Bharti Divas etc. AHIL is able to make its presence felt across a wide diaspora of potential consumers. It also helps the masses to get a preview of what is being offered at the hospital. A positive impression will ensure a steady stream of clients and also help in retaining the old ones. It also helps give leverage to the idea of "word of mouth" as a promotional strategy.
- Launch of medical tourism companies overseas: On Dec 2014, Apollo Hospitals launched the Medical Tourism Company – New Ahmedabad Healthcare LLC in

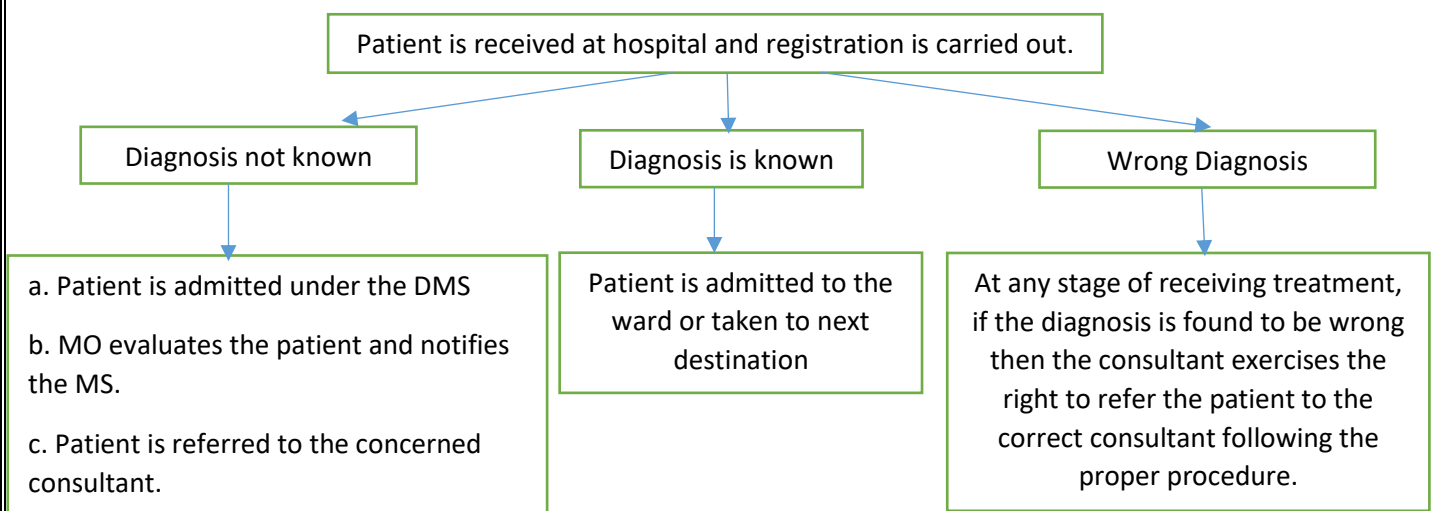
association with AHIL in Mongolia. These strategies are instrumental in informing the citizens of a particular country about the existence of a hospital and promotes the salient features of the hospital to its full extent.

#### The PROCESS:

The process flow of the patients, right from time that they contact the hospital to seek treatment to the discharge of the patient after receiving the treatment is given below:



#### The Intensive Consumption Phase:



### The Detachment Phase:

The discharge process is initiated once the doctor gives his/her approval for it. A text message is sent to the patient intimating him/her about the discharge. On receipt of the discharge message, the patient is guided to the Billing Department to complete the formalities necessary for discharge.

Patients who are required to stay in the country for follow-ups or observation purposes are further assisted by fixing apartments in the vicinity of the hospital and arrangements are made for them to have a comfortable stay for the required duration.

### The Feedback Phase:

The text message for discharge is also sent to the Guest Relations Department (GRD). The GRD maintains a record of the patients' experiences right from the admission of the patient to the discharge in a Feedback Form (Voice of Customer). The suggestion, complaints or compliments, if any, are informed to the respective Heads of Departments and taken up accordingly.

### The PEOPLE:

The following are the important features of the people mix at AHIL:

- At AHIL, there is a sufficient number of staff members, nurses, doctors and paramedics to ensure that quality healthcare is imparted to each and every patient under their care.
- The administration of the hospital is also well-equipped to handle the daily affairs of the hospital and oversee the smooth running of the hospital.
- The hospital has a dedicated human resource department which handles all matters related to the recruitment, training and development of all its employees. The recruitment process followed is generally by posting advertisements on newspapers, conducting interviews etc.
- The hospital has its own nursing institute which contributes towards the generation of qualified nurses, trained according to the needs of the hospital.
- AHIL follows a structured and systematic service culture wherein every personnel of each department are aware of his/her responsibilities and duties and are efficient in delivering to their best of abilities.
- The employees are given a free reign to use their creativity to tackle any obstacle that they may encounter in their activities. This creates a sense of belongingness and contributes towards the feeling of "centrality" among the employees.

- AHIL adopts the practice of awarding the title of “Employee of the month” to any of its staff who has done any/some amount of good work in what has been assigned to them. This helps in keeping the staff motivated and contributes towards eliciting the best out of them.

#### The PHYSICAL EVIDENCE:

The ambience of the hospital is crucial in creating an impact on the patients’ minds. A good impression will be one of the factors contributing towards the patients wanting to come back. The following has been observed of AHIL regarding this attribute of the marketing mix:

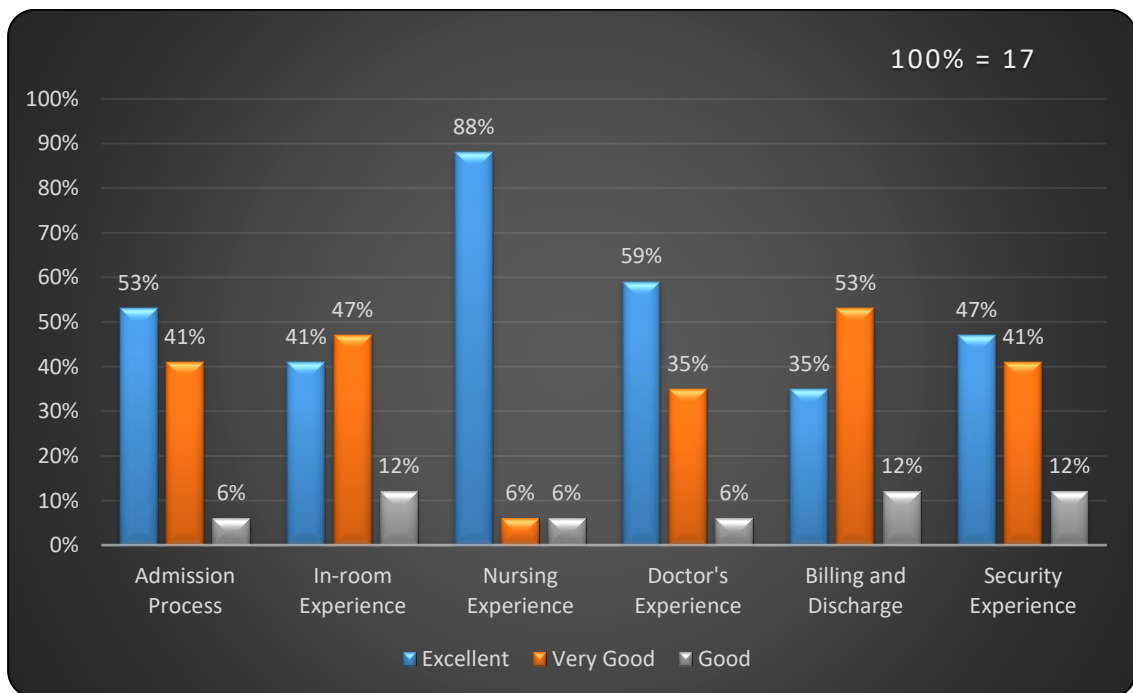
- The reception area, which is the first thing that the patients come into contact with, is wide and spacious. The desks for registration and other processes are properly segregated and labelled for the convenience of the patients. Staff members can be seen helping the patients if the need be.
- The various departments of the hospital and their locations are also depicted in the reception area for ease in traversing inside the hospital for the customers. Signs have also been put up in strategic positions in the hospital so that no confusion is created among the patients.
- The hospital is well lit and is centrally air-conditioned.
- The waiting areas in the various OPDs are well-spaced, with proper seating arrangements and provides forms of entertainment to keep the patients occupied while they wait for their turn.
- Apart from the general wards, patients are at a liberty to choose from the wards available at the Silver Wing, Platinum Wing and Golden Wing provided by the hospital. These wards are all well – maintained. The housekeeping department makes sure that the cleanliness and hygiene are maintained in the hospital.
- Food, drinking water and sewerage facilities are well – provided for by the hospital staff.

## II. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

An analysis of the following data gives an insight into the level of success enjoyed by the marketing mix that AHIL employs:

The patients’ feedback are recorded in a Feedback Form by the Guest Relations Department at the time of discharge. The following parameters which have been used to gauge the patients’ reaction to the services offered and subsequently used, covers most of the attributes of the marketing mix.

- ✓ Admission Process – It takes into account factors like speed of the process and courtesy and compassion of staff members.
- ✓ In-room Experience – It takes into account factors like cleanliness, hygiene, peace and quiet.
- ✓ Nursing Experience – It takes into account factors like promptness in reacting to calls, courtesy and compassion of the nurses.
- ✓ Doctor's Experience – It takes into account factors like explanation given by doctor regarding treatment, courtesy and compassion, regular visits and updates etc.
- ✓ Billing and Discharge Experience – It takes into account factors like speed of the discharge process and communication & handling of queries.
- ✓ Security experience – It takes into account the helpfulness of the security staff.



#### Patient's POV:

“It's very impressive that the nursing staff takes very less time in providing service to the patients”

“I enjoy the professional service when it comes to healthcare and equipment”.

“The quality of service provided is excellent”

## 2d. CONCLUSION

In a hospital, it can be seen that each department is connected to every other department as a service provider or a service user. At an abstract level, it may appear that each department is functioning independently. But a closer look, will reveal that to be not true.

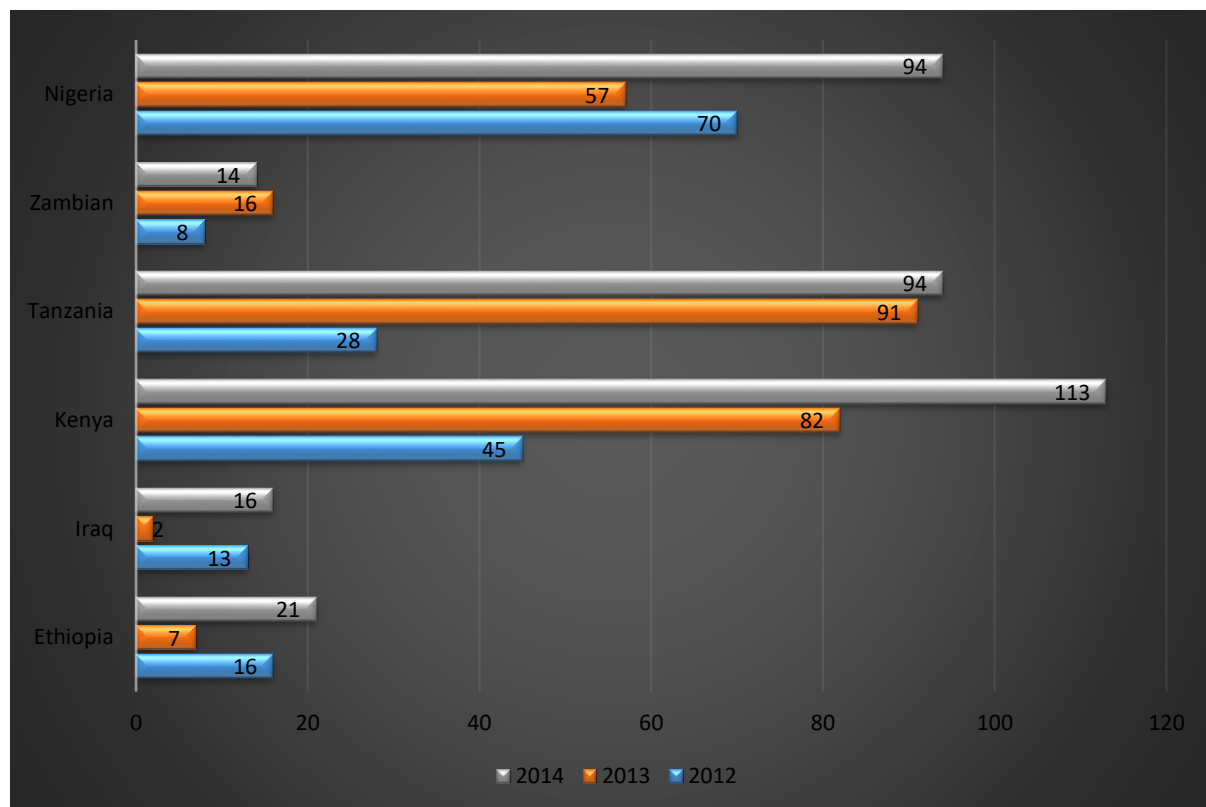
Every department has needs which can be fulfilled with the other departments – no department has the capability to function alone. For instance - the billing department serves the purpose of the finance department; in addition the billing department can also serve the purpose of the operations department in terms of gauging the customer's satisfaction regarding the billing and discharge information.

When each unit of the hospital understands who its customer is, only then will the functioning be smooth and the efficient delivery of its services will take place.

In the case of the International Patients Services at AHIL, the study of its marketing mix will confirm the above. The different aspects of the marketing mix of AHIL works in harmony for its success. Each and every attribute complements each other. For example – for the patients to have a good experience with the treatment and facilities provided ( the **Product** ), it is crucial for the nursing staff and the other staff members who the patients come in contact with to have the compassion to understand the plight of the patient and the courtesy to behave accordingly ( the **People**).

This has resulted into the exception that AHIL is, in every of its chosen field.

The following graph will give an insight into the success enjoyed at AHIL regarding its practice of medical tourism.



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✚ Spoken English classes can be introduced for staff members; those working in the house-keeping department, food and beverages section etc. so that there will be ease in communication with the international patients.
- ✚ The social media components used can be made more user-interactive. One of the main drawbacks of using a website for information dissemination is that it is “unidirectional” i. e there is flow of information only in one direction which is from the organization to the service user. In this regard, forums can be incorporated into the website which will contribute the following:
  - The topics of discussion can be segregated into different threads, which will help keep track of the ongoing activities. For example, one thread can be dedicated for complaints; another can deal with interactive quiz sessions which will promote user interest; a third can be dedicated to sharing experiences about their trust with AHIL and so on.
  - To take part in these forums of discussion, it should be made mandatory that the user has an account registered with the website. This would contribute towards the practice of data mining.
- ✚ *Gamification is the use of game thinking and game mechanics in non-game contexts to engage users in solving problems and to increase contribution of the users.*

Applying the concepts of gamification to/as:

- Increase the inflow of patients;
  - Creating a loyal customer base ( by maximisation of customer satisfaction)
  - A promotional strategy
- a. Objective: To increase the inflow of patients.
- Target Population: Patients who have received treatment at AHIL.
  - Target Behaviour: Patients recommend AHIL to their friends and families – taking “Word of mouth” form of information dissemination to another level!
  - Tools: 1 .Badges 2. Leader Board 3. Reward Points.
  - Players: International Patients.
  - Activity:
    1. Patient’s contact number or e-mail id be registered.
    2. For every recommendation, points be awarded and saved against the registered e-mail or contact number.
    3. The accumulation of a specific number of points be used to unlock stages. With every stage, the incentives given be increased accordingly and a badge be awarded to signify the stages achieved.
    4. Competition Factor: Feedback can be given to these players in the form of leader boards which will showcase at what level each of the players are. This will create competition between the players.

b. Objective: To create a loyal customer base.

- Target Population: Patients who are undergoing treatment at AHIL.
- Target Behaviour: Patients are happy and satisfied with the service provided. Also, that they recommend AHIL to friends.
- Tools: 1. Leader Boards. 2. Rewards.
- Players: The staff members of the hospital who are providing services to patients.
- Activity:
  1. The departments be segregated and tasks be assigned to all the departments accordingly.
  2. Competition factor: Departments can be motivated to compete against each other for efficient delivery of the services. This will infuse competition between the different departments; the departments will engage in trying to be better than the other; may encourage new innovations from the staff members in their attempts in providing the optimum level of satisfaction to the patients.
  3. Patients can be intimated about this process – they be asked to rate the performances by awarding the points on a designed scale.
  4. Awards or incentives be given to the department who performs the best.
  5. Leader Boards can be used to showcase the points awarded.
  6. Can be conducted on a monthly basis.

c. Objective: As a promotional strategy.

- Target Population: Potential patients who may seek treatment at AHIL in the future.
- Target Behaviour: Patients are made aware of AHIL in a fun, interactive way.
- Tools: Leader Boards, Trophies.
- Players: International Patients who have already undergone treatment; other citizens of the target country who may seek treatment in future.
- Activity:
  1. Develop a health app to increase user interactivity.
  2. Create an environment of competitiveness which would push the users towards maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Leader boards can be used to maintain a healthy level of competition.
  3. The more players to use this app, the more user interest will be generated.
  4. Players can be rewarded by trophies. An accumulation of specific numbers of trophies can be resulted into free consultations.