

Chapter 1: Hospitals – Definition, Classification, and Organization

Course Objectives

- Define a hospital and describe its role in healthcare delivery.
- Explain the classification of hospitals based on purpose, administration, capacity, and region.
- Describe the levels of healthcare: primary, secondary, and tertiary.
- Understand the organizational structure of a hospital and its various services.
- Identify the staff involved in hospital functioning and their roles.

Hospitals are the backbone of the healthcare delivery system. They are organized institutions that provide comprehensive healthcare services — including prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation — under one roof. Hospitals also serve as centers for **education, training, and research** in medical and pharmaceutical sciences.

Definition of a Hospital

A **hospital** is an organized medical institution that:

- **Provides:** Medical, surgical, and nursing care to sick or injured persons.
- **Is Equipped, Staffed, and Built for:**
 1. **Diagnosis** of diseases
 2. **Treatment & management** of illnesses and injuries
 3. **Housing & care** of patients during recovery

Classification of Hospitals

Based on Purpose

- **General Hospitals:** Provide wide-ranging care — medicine, surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics, emergency.
- **Special Hospitals:** Dedicated to one specialty (cardiology, orthopedics, cancer).
- **Teaching/Research Hospitals:** Attached to medical/pharmacy colleges for training and research.

Based on Administration/Finance

- **Government or Semi-Government Hospitals** – funded and managed by the state/central government.
- **Private Hospitals** – owned and managed by trusts, corporate bodies, or individuals.

Based on Capacity

- **Small:** Up to 100 beds
- **Medium:** 101–300 beds

- **Large:** More than 300 beds

Based on Type of Care

- **Primary Care Hospitals:** Provide basic outpatient care and preventive services.
- **Secondary Care Hospitals:** Provide specialist consultation and hospitalization.
- **Tertiary Care Hospitals:** Provide super-specialty care with advanced technology.

Based on System of Medicine

- Allopathic, Ayurvedic, Unani, Homeopathic, Naturopathic

Based on Region

- Regional, District, Sub-district, Rural

Based on Clinical/Non-Clinical Nature

- **Clinical:** Provide direct patient care
- **Non-Clinical:** Administrative or support services

Levels of Healthcare

Primary Hospitals

- **Definition:** First level of contact between individuals and the health system.
- **Functions:**
 - Maternal and child healthcare (family planning, immunization)
 - Prevention of locally endemic diseases
 - Treatment of common illnesses/injuries
 - Health education
- **Example:** Primary Health Centres (PHCs)

Secondary Hospitals

- Provide **specialized care** to patients referred from primary centers.
- Examples: District hospitals, pediatric hospitals, surgery hospitals.

Tertiary Hospitals

- Provide **highly specialized consultative care**, usually on referral.
- **Features:**
 - Intensive Care Units (ICUs)
 - Advanced diagnostic services
 - Specialized medical personnel
- Examples: Medical colleges, research centers, cancer hospitals.

Level	Description	Examples
Primary	First point of contact with healthcare system; provides preventive, promotive, and basic curative care.	PHCs, Community Health Centres
Secondary	Specialist care provided to referred patients from primary level.	District Hospitals, Pediatric Hospitals
Tertiary	Super-specialty care, advanced investigations, intensive treatment.	Medical Colleges, Research Institutes, Cancer Hospitals

Organization Structure of a Hospital

The **organization structure** refers to the systematic arrangement of authority, responsibilities, and workflow within the hospital.

Importance:

- Clear chain of command
- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Efficient interdepartmental communication
- Smooth patient care and resource utilization

1 Administrative Structure

1. Governing Board / Board of Management

- **Role:** Highest decision-making body
- **Functions:**
 - Formulate hospital policies, mission, vision
 - Approve budget, financial decisions, recruit key staff
 - Monitor hospital performance
- **Members:** Trustees, senior administrators, government reps

2. Hospital Administrator / Director

- **Role:** Chief Executive Officer of the hospital
- **Functions:**
 - Implement board policies
 - Coordinate all hospital departments
 - Oversee staffing, budgeting, quality assurance

3. Medical Superintendent

- **Role:** Head of all clinical services
- **Functions:**
 - Ensure patient care quality
 - Supervise medical staff
 - Maintain ethical and clinical standards

2 Hospital Services

Hospital services are divided into **primary, secondary, and supportive services**, ensuring that both patient care and hospital operations are managed effectively.

A. Primary Services (Clinical Services)

These are **direct patient care services** that form the core of hospital function.

1. Emergency Services

- Provide **24/7 immediate care** for trauma, accidents, poisoning, burns, cardiac arrest, and other critical conditions.
- Equipped with **emergency room (ER)**, triage area, minor OT, resuscitation equipment, and trained emergency physicians.
- Often linked with **ambulance services** for quick patient transport.

2. Outpatient Department (OPD)

- Provides **diagnosis, consultation, and minor treatments** without hospital admission.
- Divided into specialties: Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics, Obstetrics-Gynecology, ENT, Ophthalmology, Dental, etc.
- Includes **registration counters**, waiting area, consulting rooms, and pharmacy access.

3. Inpatient Services

- Care for **admitted patients** who require observation, treatment, or surgery.
- Consist of general wards, semi-private rooms, private rooms, and isolation rooms.
- Provide nursing care, medication administration, and round-the-clock monitoring.

4. Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

- Specialized unit for **critically ill patients** requiring constant monitoring.
- Equipped with ventilators, cardiac monitors, infusion pumps, and trained ICU staff.
- Types: Medical ICU, Surgical ICU, Neonatal ICU (NICU), Cardiac ICU (CCU).

5. Operation Theatre (OT)

- Sterile area for **major and minor surgical procedures**.
- Equipped with operating tables, surgical instruments, anesthesia machines, and sterile air filtration systems.
- Usually located near ICU and recovery rooms for quick access.

B. Secondary Services (Paraclinical & Support Departments)

These services **support primary care** by providing diagnostic, therapeutic, and essential supply functions.

1. Central Sterile Supply Department (CSSD)

- Responsible for **sterilization, storage, and distribution** of surgical instruments, linen, and equipment.
- Uses autoclaves, hot air ovens, chemical sterilization.
- Maintains strict **record keeping** of sterilized items and prevents cross-infection.

2. Therapy Departments

- **Physiotherapy:** Rehabilitation of patients with musculoskeletal, neurological, or post-surgical conditions.
- **Occupational Therapy:** Restores functional independence in daily activities.
- **Speech Therapy / Rehabilitation:** For patients with speech or hearing disabilities.
- 3. **Diagnostic Services**
 - **Pathology Laboratory:** Biochemistry, hematology, microbiology tests
 - **Radiology Department:** X-ray, CT scan, MRI, ultrasound
 - **Blood Bank:** Collection, storage, and cross-matching of blood
 - Open 24/7 for emergencies and located near ICU/OT for quick accessibility.
- 4. **Nursing Services**
 - Managed by **Matron or Nursing Superintendent**
 - Ensure proper patient care, medication administration, and record maintenance
 - Work in shifts to provide round-the-clock coverage
- 5. **Diet Department**
 - Responsible for **nutritional management** of patients
 - Prepares customized diets based on medical condition (diabetic, renal, cardiac diets)
 - Maintains hygiene in food preparation and distribution
- 6. **Pharmacy Department**
 - Dispenses medicines, surgical materials, sterile solutions
 - Maintains inventory of essential drugs
 - Provides **patient counseling** about drug use and interactions

C. Supportive Services (Non-Clinical Services)

These services ensure **smooth hospital operations** and patient comfort.

1. **Laundry Services**
 - Supply clean, disinfected linen, gowns, and drapes.
 - May be in-house or outsourced.
2. **Transport Services**
 - Internal transport (wheelchairs, trolleys, stretchers)
 - Ambulance services with life-saving equipment for external transport
3. **Medical Records Department (MRD)**
 - Maintains patient case sheets, discharge summaries, and statistics
 - Ensures confidentiality and legal compliance
4. **Maintenance Department**
 - Handles upkeep of hospital infrastructure, electrical, water supply, waste management, and biomedical equipment
 - Conducts preventive and routine maintenance
5. **Education & Training Department**
 - Organizes training for doctors, nurses, paramedical staff
 - Conducts continuing medical education (CME) and workshops
 - Facilitates research projects
6. **Social Services Department**

- Patient counseling, rehabilitation, community health programs
- Organizes health camps, vaccination drives, and awareness programs
- 7. **Mortuary Services**
 - Safe and hygienic storage of deceased patients
 - Conducts autopsies (medico-legal and pathological)
- 8. **Accounts & Finance Department**
 - Maintains hospital budget, billing, and payment systems
 - Controls income and expenditure

Hospital Staff and Their Functions

A hospital's efficiency depends largely on its **staff** — their expertise, teamwork, and ability to deliver patient-centered care. The staff are divided into three main categories: **Medical, Paramedical, and Support/Administrative staff.**

Medical Staff

Medical staff are directly responsible for **diagnosis, treatment, and clinical decision-making.**

1. Doctors

- **Role:** Provide medical leadership and make decisions regarding patient care.
- **Functions:**
 - Perform **clinical examination** of patients
 - **Diagnose diseases** using history, symptoms, and investigation reports
 - Prescribe appropriate **treatment and medications**
 - Perform surgeries, procedures, or interventions
 - Monitor progress and modify therapy as required
 - Guide interns, junior doctors, and medical students

Types of Doctors:

- Physicians (Internal Medicine)
- Surgeons
- Pediatricians
- Obstetricians & Gynecologists
- Specialists (Cardiologists, Neurologists, Oncologists, etc.)

2. Nurses

- **Role:** Backbone of patient care — work in close contact with patients round the clock.
- **Functions:**
 - Provide **bedside nursing care** (hygiene, feeding, mobility assistance)
 - Administer prescribed **medications and injections**
 - Monitor vital signs (pulse, BP, temperature) and inform doctors about changes
 - Maintain **patient records** and daily charts

- Educate patients and attendants about home care and medication use
- Provide psychological support and comfort

3. Pharmacists

- **Role:** Key professionals in medication management.
- **Functions:**
 - **Dispense prescribed drugs** accurately
 - Provide **drug counseling** (dose, route, timing, side effects)
 - Monitor **drug interactions** and possible adverse effects
 - Ensure availability of essential medicines in wards/OT/ICU
 - Maintain stock, inventory control, and records of narcotic drugs

Paramedical Staff

Paramedical staff **support the doctors and nurses** in diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation.

Examples & Functions

- **X-ray Technicians / Radiographers:**
 - Operate X-ray, CT, MRI, Ultrasound equipment
 - Assist radiologists in diagnostic imaging
 - Ensure patient safety during radiological procedures
- **Physiotherapists:**
 - Help patients regain mobility and strength after injury, stroke, or surgery
 - Plan exercise therapy, electrotherapy, and rehabilitation protocols
- **Lab Technicians:**
 - Conduct biochemical, hematological, and microbiological tests
 - Maintain quality control in laboratories
- **OT Technicians / Anesthesia Technicians:**
 - Prepare operation theatre, sterilize instruments
 - Assist anesthetist during surgery

Support Staff

Support staff ensures **smooth non-clinical operations** and contribute to patient comfort and hospital cleanliness.

Examples & Functions

- **Dieticians:** Plan and supervise patient diet as per medical condition
- **Administrative Clerks:** Manage registration, billing, and patient records
- **Ward Attendants / Peons:** Assist in patient transfer, transport, and routine ward duties
- **Sweepers & Cleaners:** Maintain hygiene, infection control, and waste disposal
- **Security Personnel:** Ensure safety of patients, staff, and hospital property.