



ORGANISING A HEALTH CAMP AND ITS MANAGEMENT

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Abstract:

Medical camps are conducted by health professionals to carry out a limited health intervention amongst the underprivileged community. The poor attend these camps to get free check-up and treatment. Health camps or outreach clinics are the effective strategies adopted by both government and non-government organizations, associations, and societies with various interests and scope. A well-organized health camp with a concentration on the various principles of planning, coordination, collaboration, tools, and techniques will not only make the health camp successful but also aids in improving the health status of the unreached community who are often deprived of basic to advance health care facility due to different circumstances.

Keywords:

outreach clinic, Health Camp; medical camp, Management; Medical Camp, Rural Camp

Introduction:

Even after decades of freedom, India is struggling to provide basic health services to its people. In such a scenario a dependable mobile health care services delivery system is the most practical due to lack economic level, lack of knowledge, difficult terrains and lack of proper transport, sick population cannot visit health institution for their treatment mechanism. Then the question arises, Do the medical camps serve any useful purpose to curtail morbidity and mortality?. The healthcare condition among the poor is pathetic. These people lack in quality healthcare due to increased cost, lack of doctors and medicines. Healthcare camps are the only hope for the poor people who cannot afford to pay for expensive treatments or medicines. Health ‘camps’ (Swasthyashibir) are one of the strategies adopted by both government and non-government organizations. This literally means that a team of health professionals ‘camp’ in an area to carry out a limited health intervention. The pattern of camp is generally non-specific termed as general health camp but in recent years health camp are being organized in specific manner for screening targeted disease like screening of heart disease, screening of cervix, ophthalmology screening, epilepsy camp, psychiatric camp, dental camp, family planning camp etc. The following medical camps are being implemented:¹

General health camp

Women's Health and Cancer Screening.

Children's Health Camps.

Orthopaedic, Surgery and E.N.T. camps.

Dental Camps.

Osteoporosis Screening.

Diabetes and Hypertension.

Eye Camps.

Cardiac Camps. Etc³

Free medical camps are set up with a sacred aim to bring awareness amongst the deprived population of the country who have no access to basic healthcare services or knowledge about the diseases they are suffering from. So, medical camps provide free medical advice, medicine to the unfortunate people and refer for specialized treatment or surgery whenever it is required. These camps make sure people are getting the healthcare at the right time, and seeing the doctor early enough before a small health problem turns serious. The importance of health camp has also got high significance in areas devastated by hurricanes, floods, disasters as well as difficult geographical location. Basically the aim and scope of a health camp includes propagation of health care facility in the given locality, promotion of health care, early screening and detection of disease, reaching the unreached community population & awareness of various diseases.²

There are some basic objectives for conducting the free medical camps-these are

- 1) propagation of health care facility in given locality
- 2) promotion of healthcare
- 3) publicity in case of politically arranged camps
- 4) detection and increased surveillance of given disease say oral cancer or cervical cancer in early stages
- 5) going to the locality when the patients are in large no. But hospital is far away. For example outbreak of some communicable diseases.
- 6) sensitization of given disease amongst target populations. Example: cervix cancer in case of woman

conducting a health camp by any organizer needs to have concentration on various principles of coordination, collaboration and techniques to reach the unreached successfully as well as making the event fruitful²

Planning

Planning is the primary phase of conducting a health camp. This phase includes mapping out the overall aspect of health camp including venue, manpower planning, financial planning, resource allocation, logistic & transportation planning with proper planning monitoring and supervision in between the camp. Health camp should always be conducted during holidays or weekends so as to allow maximum number of participants in the camp. Venue should be accessible from the area where there is dense population, preferably in school, local health post, colleges where there are adequate waiting area and examination space. According to the need of public, camp venues are usually designated in the targeted place like selected rural or urban community, school, University, prison, orphanage, old age care home etc. Organisers need to collaborate with the interested stakeholder so as to ensure adequate budget for conducting the camp. Medicine and consumable supplies can be obtained from prior request to various pharmaceutical companies. Before organizing the camp there are a few things you need to consider such as the source of fund, time, the goal of the camp, approximate number of participants you are expecting to attend the camp, number of personnel you need to choose to conduct the health camp such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists etc..

Health statistic knowledge-

Adequate knowledge of recent prevalence of the disease in the targeted community will be very much helpful in planning a health camp scientifically. Before starting the camp, team members should be trained and informed well about the basics of camping. This may include a conference about the latest updates on the field that is related to the disease or health problems you want to address through the camp. It would also help in choosing the medicines and specialists for the camp. Eg. There will be no any significance of conducting an epilepsy camp in the

area where there is very less prevalence of epilepsy or no any relevant data about epilepsy is available. Availability of proper statistics of certain disease can help in conducting periodic camp in the targeted area so as to decrease the disease prevalence rate through the camp. It can be collected through the proper government or private health authority of the area where camp is going to be conducted

Permission from relevant authority

After having initial planning for the camp, the organizer should also seek permission from the relevant authority to conduct the camp in the desired area. The relevant authority may be a single body or multiple bodies and may include both government, community and private organisations. Depending upon the objectives and modalities of the camp, the permission granting authority ranges from Health Ministry, public health office, municipality, ward office, local committee & concerned authority of the camp venue like school, orphanage, old age care home etc. The main purpose of this step is to ensure that the organizer will conduct the camp in ethical manner providing a quality care without any prompt motive and self-interest.

Camp information dissemination⁴

Organizer should create hype for the camp at least few days prior to the event. The camp information can be disseminated by pamphlets with catchy headlines and short sentence mentioning free medicine if applicable, loud speaker announcement in the community, placing a camp banner in the decent visible height & broadcasting through local TV, radio and newspaper. If you have any official website of your own it will help a great deal to reach your target individuals. Having a short article or note in the newspaper or press release may help a lot in promoting the camp because most people read the newspapers. You can arrange a loudspeaker mounted on the top of a vehicle and hire a person to announce the event date and other particulars. Add innovative methods in these announcements to grab people's attention. Banners can be put at a decent height so that is visible at places like bus stand or a busy crossing.

Camp Inauguration

Organizers should always have small opening of the camp in presence of local leaders involving mayor, police personnel, social workers, local health authority personnel. This will help addressing the local authorities commitment to improve the quality of health of the community as well as improving the current health statistics. The inauguration program should not be too long and it should not overshadow the program itself

Multidisciplinary approach

Health camp should always be led by multidisciplinary manpower ranging from helper, health assistant to different categories of consultants. Even a specific camp should have multidisciplinary approach as those health camps in un-reached area tend to have a multiple disease specific service seekers.⁵

Technology Transfer

It is the most important aspect during the camp conduction. Technology transfer is the process of sharing the knowledge and technology related to the disease and its management from a competent health professional to the local health professionals residing in health camp area. This will allow the local health professional for early diagnosis of disease even after the camp and refer the case to the preferred treatment destination whenever needed. This allows the general capacity building of the local health professionals so as he/she can manage the patients who come for followup after the camp.

Community Participation

Local students, members of local clubs, societies, health-professionals should be encouraged to volunteer in the camp as well as to help in registration process and crowd management. It also provides them a bond of community participation and a learning opportunity. A multisectoral stake holder's participation is required from the individual level to any organizational level in the community. Unless the local leaders of the society take interest, medical camps will not be able to achieve its objective. The active participation of the community also makes a health camp more fruitful. The overall community participation also helps in making the camp harmonious⁶

Health promotion and awareness & Education-

Medical camps should be encouraged to provide health education to the people attending the camp. There should be volunteers in the camp who can help in health promotion of the local community and providing awareness in various types of diseases and illness prevalent in the community. This will help in sharing the

preventive, promotive part of the disease so as to make them aware before the disease process starts. to cover this run audio visual clips, highlight preventive health awareness & hospital services on the spot. Give pamphlets, brochures other reading material to the visitors and patients liberally.⁶

Behaviour and manner of health volunteers-

All the health volunteers involved in camp should communicate to the community people in local dialects as much as possible. They should also follow the local customs and traditions, rules and mannerisms. The volunteers should act courteously and also guide the patients as per the patient's requirements.⁶

Legal & Ethical Aspect

Health camp should be strictly conducted under proper ethics. Organizing a health camp is a serious work which requires sincerity. Healthcare camps are the only hope for the unprivileged community where their problems are heard and resolved with respect and dignity. The provision of unauthorized personnel treating the patient, prescribing and distributing drugs may lead to unsuccess of the health camp. There may be the lack of monitoring and supervision by competent authority in these issues but it is sole responsibility of the organizers to follow the legal and ethical aspect. The health volunteers should always be careful about the use of appropriate medicines, especially in regards to antibiotics and should refrain themselves from using third generation drugs which may cause more harm than good. Patients should be treated with proper care, love, and respect in the camps. Their problems are heard and resolved with respect and dignity. While organizing the health camp you should keep in mind that it has a noble purpose and it is solely organized to serve the unprivileged people. There should be no discrimination done at any stage of treatment. The camp program began on time, so that unnecessary long waiting is avoided. Manage the crowd in more systematic way, so that social distancing can be maintained⁶

Continuity & consistency-

While organizing health camps follow up becomes one of the important ingredient in quality health camps. Either targeted approach without quality services or an activity without follow up will not improve the health status of the patients and will not develop trust between the community and the NGOs involved in such camps. Therefore we organize camps and at the same time we cannot ignore offers to organize camps when there is quality in it. so following things should keep in mind, Repeat in same area, Similar time so that therapportwith thatarea increases.⁶

Reporting the data

Following points are important for report generation-

- . Date of camp /Location. No of Beneficiaries
- . Beneficiaries-stall wise, disease wise, referrals to higher centre

. Register- which contains, name of doctor, patients name, address, age, phone no, health complaints, medication given, any morbidity, should be maintained so one can take follow up.

Case papers should be kept promptly.

The morbidity profile recorded during the camp should be submitted to the local health authority with proper recommendation and photographs if possible. Similarly the morbidity profile of the community can be disseminated publications so as to deliver it to public health personals working in improving the health status of the people in community.

Feed back book should be kept at the camp so that visitors can give their opinions.

Future Perspective-

Health camps carried out with prior planning and in a very organized manner with collaboration between governmental and non-governmental health organization can be more effective and useful for the needy rural population of our country. A large number of medical health camps are being organized in our part of the world with involvement of various government and non-governmental stakeholders. There is a need of proper statistical analysis for their effectiveness. Every camp must be conducted with prior statistical analysis with post camp analysis of the morbidity in the targeted area. A system of mandatory electronic database should be implemented so that all the records can be analysed and the morbidity pattern can be addressed accordingly. Furthermore,

national plan on health camp should be drafted with a defined protocol from the stage of planning to reporting with a governing body established to look after its impact, monitoring and supervisions in all the camps.

Conclusions:

Organizing a health camp is a serious work which requires sincerity. Healthcare camps are the only hope for the poor people who cannot afford to pay for expensive treatments or medicines. Health camps are effective way to of delivering public the primary health care, typically in the unreach area to achieve universal health coverage, the state should incorporate health camp in its policies and program periodically making the best use of scarce resources. This will allow conducting a camp in cost effective way with high benefit intervention as these sort of activities with specialist services is a cost-effective way to bridge the major gap in achieving universal health coverage especially in rural area.

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