

Some indicators and statistics we REALLY need to see (but never do!)

Indicators and statistics are like CSF samples, frozen sections, Donald Trump and Paris Hilton, we just can't get enough of them.

I am told by my friends in hospitals that everyday, they are inundated with statistics and indicators from their bosses – the Ministry, the CEO, clinical heads, etc. Statistics come in various forms – press releases, balanced scorecards, statistic bulletins, monthly reports, etc and etc. They have the tired effect of telling the grunts (that is, people who do real work) how inadequate they are.

Well, it's time for a change in 2007. I think it's time for the grunts to fight back and ask the people at the top to collect some real useful stuff – *statistics and indicators that need to be seen, but are never seen.*

Here are some examples. The figures given are taken from a fictional place called Middle Earth and strictly illustrative. They bear no actual semblance to the actual situation in any actual functional or dysfunctional hospital we know of.

COMMITTEE SPRAWL INDICATORS

- Average number of committees formed in one financial year by hospital X: 31
- Average number of committees dissolved in one financial year by hospital X: 14
- Change in number of committees in hospital X: +17
- Average number of subcommittees/workgroups/taskforces per committee: 17.3
- Average number of committees a Head of Department is appointed to: 19

MEANINGLESS MEETINGS INDICATORS

- Number of management committees meetings held a year in Hospital X: 22
- Number of firm decisions taken: 11
- Ratio of decisions taken to number of meetings: 0.5
- Number of decisions successfully implemented: 2
- Ratio of decisions successfully implemented to number of meetings: 0.18
- Average number of attendees falling asleep per meeting (excluding comatose states): 4
- Percentage of strategic retreat attendees falling asleep more than once: 75%

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

- Number of management consultants hired in one financial year: 9
- Ratio of cost of management consultant to medical consultant: 3
- Amount of savings promised by management consultants: \$10M
- Amount of savings realised by implementing management consultants' suggestions: \$12M
- Amount of savings reversed when problems surface with implementation after management consultants depart: \$16M
- Percentage of management consultants' suggestions that were previously ignored by top management when they were put up by internal staff: 93%

BUREAUCRACY INDICATORS

- Number of pages in employee's manual: 73
- Number of steps in budgeting process: 2,174
- Number of accreditation and benchmarking standards subscribed to: 19
- Number of forms filled before a patient refund can be made: 5
- Number of forms (electronic or hardcopy) in one hospital: 3,874
- Number of new forms deployed in past three years: 289
- Number of forms removed from use: 2
- Number of words in patient consent form: 23,125 (and counting)

IT EFFECTIVENESS INDICATOR

- Number of passwords a staff has to remember to access various services on intranet: 15
- Ratio of problems solved to number of problems presented to IT support staff: 4%
- Average number of IT systems and software vendors used by one hospital: 30
- Number of IT systems actually working in good order: 3
- Ratio of number of IT systems working well to number of systems deployed: 10%
- Number of models of printers deployed in one hospital: 32

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FINANCIAL HOPELESSNESS INDICATORS

- Percentage of Total Costs being 'Allocated Costs': 45%
- Percentage of B2 and C Class patients who are rich free-loaders: 30.4%
- Percentage of A&E patients who are there just to get a subsidised SOC appointment: 23.3%
- Percentage of inpatients who understand the financial counselling given: 5.6%
- Percentage of staff who understand the financial counselling they are giving: 1.6%
- Income per unit time for consultants for teaching as a fraction of service: 0.0001
- Percentage of inpatients who understand what their bills say: 7.7%
- Percentage of clinical heads who understand the hospital and their departmental P/L statement: 1.2%

PROFESSIONAL INDICATORS

- Percentage of senior clinicians attending department training programmes regularly: 22.9%
- Percentage of clinicians actually using electronic prescription without extra IT support: 77.6%
- Percentage of senior clinicians (above 50 years old) actually using electronic prescription without extra IT support: 18.7%
- Percentage of doctors shortlisted on the succession planning namelist who actually do not quit before their time: 3.0%
- Percentage of housemen and medical officers' whose names are actually known by the Senior Consultants: 2.4%
- Percentage of hospital administrators and directors whose names are known by any doctor: 2.3%
- Percentage of male doctors who treat female drug representatives in the same way irrespective of her looks: 29.1%

PATIENT INDICATORS

- Percentage of patients who actually know what they are consenting to when they sign a patient consent form: 3.7%
- Percentage of elderly patients (>65) who actually understand what foreign doctors and nurses are telling them: 9.4%
- Percentage of adult patients unnecessarily given Pampers: 46.3%
- Average number of smoking incidents in smoke-free hospital premises in one day: 391
- Average number of times a patient is asked for drug allergy history per admission: 16.4
- Average number of times a subsidised patient is somehow prompted (subtly or otherwise) to opt for private class in one admission episode: 7.2
- Percentage of outpatients lost in hospital premises each day: 27%

- Percentage of elderly outpatients lost in hospital premises each day: 72%

RESEARCH INDICATORS

- Percentage of research grant spent buying fancy stuff like digital cameras, expensive printers, etc: 17.9%
- Percentage of research mice needlessly killed: 32.4%
- Percentage of research that was really original: 11.3%
- Percentage of research papers submitted to local journals that honestly, truly, really haven't been submitted and rejected elsewhere: 42%
- Percentage of last authors who really know in detail what on earth is happening in a published paper: 12.8%

LEADERSHIP REALITY CHECK INDICATORS

- Number of waterfalls and associated water features constructed in Hospital X: 7
- Number of palm trees and other large non-shade providing fauna planted: 23
- Ratio of floor area of CEO office to area reserved for one C class bed: 3.7
- Amount of money spent redesigning corporate identities (for example, logos, tagline, uniforms) in last five years: \$4M
- Number of senior management going for overseas study trips per financial year: 16
- Average number of year on year increase in number of managerial and director-level posts for last five years: 4.6
- Number of persons in *gahmen* setting policies with actual hospital experience (including Minister): 1
- Number of persons in *gahmen* setting policies with actual hospital experience (excluding Minister): 0
- Average number of core values in each hospital: 7
- Average number of core values remembered by each staff: 0.7
- Average number of words in vision statement in each hospital: 31
- Average number of words in vision statement remembered by each staff: 13
- Average number of words in mission statement in each hospital: 78
- Average number of words in mission statement remembered by each staff: 0.14

And finally.....

INDICATOR INDICATOR

- Percentage of indicators promulgated by senior management and senior civil servants that is actually used by them for critical decision-making: 0.15 ■