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Hospital food service key performance indicators

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ABSTRACT

The quality assessment program is an ongoing, planned and systematic process to observe and assess the quality and appropriateness of patient care. Key performance indicators are a quality assessment tool to measure the overall quality of care delivered to the patients. KPI's supports and influences food service objectives. This article briefs on the Hospital food service key performance indicators.

Keywords— KPI, Healthcare food service, Quality Assessment, KPI Dashboard

“Every problem has a solution. You just have to be creative enough to find it”

–Travis Kalanick, Co-founder of Uber

“A strategy without metrics is just a wish. And metrics that are not aligned with strategic objectives are a waste of time”

– Peter Drucker

1. INTRODUCTION

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are the performance measurement tools which can succinctly convey information as much as possible that are used to estimate, monitor, analyze, optimize in achieving the set goals in delivering quality patient nutrition care. It is an integral component of the Continuous Quality Improvement Program (CQIP). Hospital food service has come under tremendous pressure to improve the quality of service provided to the patients. KPI's for food service management is an essential component to measure the current situation, mitigate as well as to measure progress over a period of time. It is one of the essential components to effectively review the objectives and strategies regularly. Food service KPI's are also linked to the overall goals of the organization.

KPI's are quantifiable measurements that affect the critical success factors of a said practice in hospital food service department. GPS had simplified and saved travellers uncertainty on the roads, similarly, KPI's had simplified and saved uncertainties in the work outcomes. KPI's are usually long-term considerations for survival and success as it provides information on decision making and future strategic planning. KPI is a common language which provides an easy understanding of all. In simple words, KPI's provide immediate information on the standards set and what has been actually achieved. Based on the information one can make necessary adjustments on their key performance indicators. Without using a set of scales, you cannot know how well your section is performing. Performance of any food service establishment cannot improve unless it is measured. KPI's should be able to provide the answers to the most important questions on the targets set for improvement and report besides those targets.

2. SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The first and foremost crucial step is selecting KPI's. KPI's are only as valuable as the action it inspires and hence it should be kept in mind while choosing the KPI's. KPI's selected must reflect the goals of the institution at large as well as should be a key to success to measure the performance of the food service department which should be quantifiable and measurable. Relevant KPI's should be developed identifying the key areas of performance like patient food service, clinical nutrition service etc. in consultation with the Quality Management team of the institution. Irrespective of the size of the healthcare food service operation, every food service department should have its own KPIs to monitor, evaluate and improve. Performance indicators should use the SMART criteria – specific, attainable, relevant, and time-bound. KPI is a simple tool used to measure performance effectiveness. With the help of KPI, the progress can be monitored dependably, frequently and exactly. KPI's can also detect potential problems that can occur.

When developing KPI's, one should be very cautious about not creating too many KPI's. A hospital food service department should have a minimum of 5 KPI's so that it is easy to quantify and communicate with a broader group or team. Keeping too many KPI's weakens the focus on the core areas. Benchmarking has become more and more important in today's business world. KPI's are developed to provide quality care to the patients and trying to meet 100% of patients' expectations. KPI's are an effective tool to predate and prevent poor quality food service to the patients.

The KPI's used by one hospital food service may not be a right KPI for the other hospital food service and hence it is mandatory to identify the right KPI's based on the needs of the food service operation. Hospital food service department is a carefully orchestrated team effort in producing the desired results. Hospital food service department is a combination of several minor individual sections which contribute to the overall successful functioning of a food service department. Every individual section will have their own KPI's to track measure and adjust operations of their own in the hospital food service. KPI's in hospital food service is used to optimize all systematic processes to increase patient satisfaction.

3. KPI DASHBOARD

Presentation is the most important aspect of any key performance indicator. KPI's are really effective only when it provides the right information to the right people. KPI dashboard provides a synopsis of the overall performance and KPI's makes the decision process much easier. Moreover, comparing actual KPI values to the goals shows short comings immediately and also acts as a key to identify improvement potentials at the same time and facilitates restitution. It helps to focus on the facts very clearly. Moreover, there should be rationality behind monitoring the KPI.

KPI Dashboard gives information on how you were doing last week, last month, last year and combinations thereof. KPI dashboards on Excel sheets should have color coded indicators for easy reading – **Green – Doing Good**; **Yellow – Needs Attention**; **Red- Poor**. These color codes will give immediate results on the performance. During sickness you need someone to support and lift you to put you back on feet, similarly, KPI is something which supports and lifts in the performance when we are really down in our performance.

3.1 Types of quality indicators

- Quantity KPI: data which can be presented in numbers
- Quality KPI: data which cannot be presented in numbers but reflects the quality
- Process KPI: reveals the efficiency of the process
- Outcome KPI: reflects the outcome
- Leading KPI: predicting the outcome of the process
- Financial KPI: overall performance management.

3.2 Criteria for selecting Quality Indicators

- Availability of KPI
- Accessibility of KPI
- Flexibility of KPI
- Integrity of KPI
- Utilization of KPI

4. KPI CYCLE

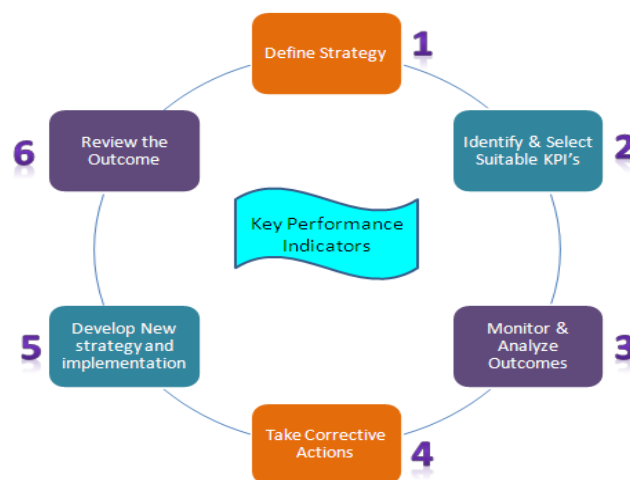


Fig. 1: KPI cycle

4.1 Suitable Key Performance Indicators in hospital food service

- (a) KPI's on Patient Satisfaction on Patient Food Services
- (b) KPI's on Number of Food Related Incidents and overall food safety
- (c) KPI's on Timely Patient Food Delivery
- (d) KPI's on Patient Plate Waste
- (e) KPI's on Number of Diets Served

4.1.1 KPI's on Patient Satisfaction on Patient Food Services: Feedback is a user-friendly interface for the patients on hospital diet to give their opinion about the quality of food and the food service received. Patients can give their reviews with reference to quality, appearance, plate presentation, temperature, palatability etc. Measuring patient satisfaction from patients' point of view is the best way to know the quality of the service provided to them. Feedback is an essential tool for continual improvement, hence should be monitored.

4.1.2 KPI's on Number of Food Related Incidents and overall food safety: Every individual has the right to receive safe food. It becomes even more important when the food is prepared and served to patients. Food service providers have to ensure that the food provided to the patient is absolutely safe for consumption and hygienic and there should not be any room for error. The ultimate goal of any food service operation should be that no foreign objects should find a place in the patient food, hence should be monitored.

4.1.3 KPI's on Timely Patient Food Delivery: Patients who are hospitalized should be served food on time as food is considered to be part of their treatment during hospitalization. Food service stewards play a vital role in delivering the food on time to the patients. The delivery process is complete only when the diet is served to the patient on time, every time and to the right patient. This is a crucial area in patient food service, hence should be monitored.

4.1.4 KPI's on Patient Plate Waste: Patient plate waste assessment should be done regularly to find out the amount of food that the patient has not eaten. This gives inkling on the menu's strength and weakness likes and dislikes etc. The ultimate goal of any clinical dietitian is to improve the nutritional status of the patient during hospitalization and plate waste audits provide data on whether the patients are meeting the nutritional requirements, hence should be monitored.

4.1.5 KPI's on Number of Diets Served: Keeping a track on the number of diets served shows the trend and acceptability of hospital food irrespective of whether hospital diets being compulsory or not. Data's on the Normal diets, therapeutic diets, texture modified diets, formula feeds served are mandatory for the food service operations for efficient and effective planning, hence should be monitored.

5. CONCLUSION

The primary responsibility of the food service department is to ensure that all patients are provided high-quality food service appropriately and on time. Key performance indicators are a quality assessment tool to measure the overall quality of care delivered to the patients. KPI's are measurable goals which are used to assess the quality and appropriateness of the quality of service rendered and also used as a tool to identify problems. KPI's translated the food service vision into goals. Finally, effective KPI's can help us raise the bar in serving our patients better.

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