

## Evaluation of interdepartmental calls in tertiary care hospitals of Pakistan

Mubashir Riaz, Muhammad Uzair Ishaq

*Dear Madam,* Efficient communication between different departments is crucial in providing quality healthcare to patients. It is essential that Critical information is shared promptly and appropriately. In Pakistan, writing medical calls is a common method of communication used by hospitals. Therefore, they should be relevant, precise, and easily understandable for better collaboration, fewer errors, and improved patient outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

Calls are written manually on a call register, which is then physically sent to the relevant doctor. However, calls written by junior doctors or House Officers, may not always include relevant history and examination findings, and may not convey a sense of urgency.

A study at Khyber Medical University found insufficient content in medical calls written by doctors in tertiary care hospitals.<sup>2</sup> Physicians may lack effective communication skills due to inadequate emphasis on them during medical education and training, despite being a critical aspect of medical practice.

It is recommended that the senior member of the team, ideally the consultant, should write the call following the American Medical Association guidelines of 2005. These guidelines propose that consultants should generate calls to prevent unnecessary calls.<sup>3</sup> However, Fewer consultants and high patient volume make it impractical to limit call writing to consultants. Still, the call to be reviewed or counter-signed by a consultant can help effective communication.

Electronic medical record (EMR) and Electronic health record (EHR) systems are popular solutions to improve patient outcomes by helping healthcare professionals access and share patient information quickly and efficiently. Researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston conducted a study to investigate how EMRs impacted the referral process. The study found that EMRs improved communication among physicians, which ultimately led to better patient outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

Department of Internal Medicine, Allama Iqbal Medical College Affiliated with University of Health Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan.

**Correspondence:** Mubashir Riaz. e-mail: mubashir.riazhussain@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0009-0001-7992-9618

**Submission completed:** 06-11-2024 **1st Revision received:** 18-12-2024

**Acceptance:** 15-01-2025

**Last Revision received:** 14-01-2025

The Aga Khan University Hospital in Pakistan has been using an EMR system for a while now. They have progressed to generating patient referrals through a mobile application which speeds up the process of attending to calls and enhances the overall awareness of the healthcare team.<sup>5</sup> Mobile phone technology can enhance healthcare communication and care management, leading to timely response and better results for patients.

Therefore, Healthcare organizations need to establish clear communication channels and conduct training courses to emphasize the significance of good interdepartmental communication. A good call can play a vital role in optimizing patient care, which in turn will have a huge impact on the healthcare system.

**Disclaimer:** None.

**Conflict of Interest:** None.

**Funding Source:** None.

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.47391/JPMA.20260>

### References

1. Arif A, Hamza A, Bhatti AM, Riaz B, Zia A, Ahmed Y. Evaluation Of Interdepartmental Calls Generated In 8 Tertiary Care Hospitals Of Northern Pakistan. *J Pak Med Assoc* 2023;73:1969-72. doi: 10.47391/JPMA.6425.
2. Khan AR, Mahboob U, Baseer N. Do you really get what you are looking for? Exploring the medical call writing trend in tertiary care hospitals. *Pak J Med Sci* 2020;36:699-704. doi: 10.12669/pjms.36.4. 1642.
3. The American Medical Association (AMA). Code of medical ethics. [Online] 2005 [Cited 2005 August 11]. Available from: URL: <https://code-medical-ethics.ama-assn.org/>
4. Gandhi TK, Keating NL, Ditmore M, Kiernan D, Johnson R, Burdick E, et al. Improving Referral Communication Using a Referral Tool Within an Electronic Medical Record. In: Henriksen K, Battles JB, Keyes MA, Grady ML, eds. *Advances in Patient Safety: New Directions and Alternative Approaches (Vol. 3: Performance and Tools)*. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (US); 2008.
5. The Aga Khan University (AKU). AKU to launch international standard health record system. News release. The AKU Media Centre. [Online] 2019 [Cited 2019 September 19]. Available from URL: [https://www.aku.edu/news/Pages/News\\_Details.aspx?nid=NEWS-001926&fbclid=IwAR36jwfdvSaJTZ2Fkp8Fm7vAdfVi-DPyZzPYwLeAQYRDPhomcU28M7-7Wo](https://www.aku.edu/news/Pages/News_Details.aspx?nid=NEWS-001926&fbclid=IwAR36jwfdvSaJTZ2Fkp8Fm7vAdfVi-DPyZzPYwLeAQYRDPhomcU28M7-7Wo)

### Author Contribution:

**MR:** Concept, design, data acquisition, analysis, interpretation, drafting, revision and agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

**MUI:** Drafting, revision, final approval and agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work.