
Hospital staff roles

Summary

- There are many people who contribute to your care while you are in hospital.
 - Doctors assess and manage your medical treatment.
 - Nurses provide ongoing care.
 - Allied health professionals provide services to help with diagnosis and treatment, and help you during the recovery process.
 - Support and administrative staff work to support the day-to-day running of the hospital.
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There are many people who contribute to your care while you are in hospital. Numerous people and services work together to provide you with successful treatment in a hospital, from medical assessments and daily treatment to medication and catering.

The key roles for staff in a hospital can be broadly categorised into four areas being:

- doctors (medical staff)
- nurses
- allied health professionals
- support staff.

All these people will play an important role in your treatment and recovery.

Doctors (medical staff)

You may be treated by a number of doctors during your hospital stay – the consultant (specialist), the registrar and the resident. Together they assess and manage your medical care. Depending on which hospital you are in, you may also be treated by interns and student doctors who work under the supervision of the senior doctors.

Doctors – roles and responsibilities

Doctors have different roles and responsibilities based on their level of experience and their medical specialty.

These roles include:

- senior consultants – specialist doctors who see patients at specific times
- registrars – senior doctors who supervise residents, interns and students
- residents – look after patients on the ward and are in training for specialisation
- interns – have completed their studies and are now finishing their final year in hospital
- student doctors – undergraduate medical students.

The resident is based on the ward and is typically the doctor you will see most often. The registrar is the ward's senior doctor and is usually contactable on site, while the senior consultant (or specialist) attends ward rounds and meetings at specific times.

Nurses

Nurses manage most of your ongoing care and treatment in hospital. They assess, plan and administer your daily treatment and manage your general health. Speak to them about your immediate needs. They can also direct you

to the right people to speak to about specific medical issues.

Nurses – roles and responsibilities

Like doctors, nurses have different roles and responsibilities based on their experience and specialties.

These roles include:

- nurse unit manager – runs the ward
- associate nurse unit manager – helps the nurse unit manager to run the ward and acts as the manager when the nurse unit manager is off site
- nurse practitioners – highly skilled nurses with an advanced level of training
- specialist nurses, such as clinical nurse specialists, clinical nurse consultants, clinical nurse educators, triage nurses, emergency department nurses
- registered nurses – provide a high level of day-to-day care and perform some minor procedures
- enrolled nurses – provide basic medical care under the supervision of more senior nurses.

Allied health professionals

Allied health professionals are university-educated practitioners who work as part of your multidisciplinary healthcare team. They assess, diagnose and treat conditions and work to prevent disease and disability.

Some examples of allied health professionals include:

- dietitians
- occupational therapists
- pharmacists
- physiotherapists
- podiatrists
- speech pathologists.

You may also meet allied health assistants, who have been trained to help some of these allied health professionals in a support role.

Other hospital staff

Keeping a hospital running requires a great deal of organisation and administration. During your hospital stay, you will see a wide range of support and administrative staff taking care of everything from laundry and meals to patient transport and maintenance.

Hospital support staff you may meet during your stay include:

- clinical assistants – take care of ward housekeeping
- patient services assistants – bring meals and drinks
- porters – take care of patient lifting and transport
- volunteers – help with fundraising and ward visits
- ward clerks – staff the ward reception desks.

Where to get help

- Your GP (doctor)
- Your nurse
- Your allied health professional
- Other hospital staff

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