Chapter 5.3
How to Start or Improve a KM System in a Hospital or Healthcare Organization

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ABSTRACT

One of the key factors that distinguishes enterprises of the 21st Century is the emphasis on knowledge and information. Knowledge management is an important means by which organizations can better manage information, and more importantly, knowledge. Unlike other techniques, knowledge management is not always easy to define, because it encompasses a range of concepts, management tasks, technologies, and practices, all of which come under the umbrella of the knowledge management. This chapter deals with two aspects of knowledge management systems: (a) why KM systems are needed, and (b) how to get started on designing and rolling out a new or improved KM system. The inferences are drawn from the direct experiences the authors have had during their academic and consulting activities in many health sector organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Hospitals and other healthcare organization need bricks and mortar, human resources, medical technology, financial systems, and other infrastructure items. In addition, they need effective ways of capturing, preserving, transforming, retrieving, and applying knowledge about past experiences and subsequent “lessons learned” to current and future needs. These are commonly called knowledge management (KM) systems.

Here are some brief definitions:

1. KM is the management of intellectual capital (IC) in the interests of the enterprise.
2. IC includes knowledge, information, lessons learned, and other data held for use over time.