

CLINICAL GOVERNANCE CONCEPT AS A COMPLIMENTARY TOOL TO CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP IN HOSPITAL BUSINESSES

By Dr R T Kamau *BPHARM, MPH, MPSK, MIOD, HSC*

Introduction

In Kenya and world over, patient safety issues have recently gained prominence, mainly due to increased media scrutiny and reporting of suspected medical malpractice and negligence cases. The public appears to be getting increasingly frustrated with processes of care and inefficiencies across systems, which may also be contributing to the increase in negative hospitalization outcomes. The incidences have mainly affected larger hospitals, partly because they serve larger numbers of patients (usually beyond their capacities), and partly because they are typically complex systems with multiple interconnected units, meaning they face an increased risk of medical errors.



*DR RT Kamau,
Editor*

Problem Statement

Key to the achievement of quality healthcare delivery anywhere, is how public and private healthcare institutions are governed and managed. While great effort has been placed to ensure that the top leadership, that is, board of directors and senior clinical leadership of public and private hospitals embrace good corporate governance practices, and whilst healthcare providers practice clinical governance within the ambits of their official governance protocols, in many instances there is pretty little evidence of integration between corporate governance practices and clinical governance practice of these institutions.

Corporate Governance vs Clinical Governance Defined

Corporate governance is defined as the system of rules, practices and processes by which an organization is directed and controlled. Clinical

governance is defined as a framework through which a health system is accountable to the quality of its services and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which excellence in clinical outcomes flourishes. (Sally and Donaldson, 1998)

Integrated Governance Defined

Integrated governance is that position where corporate governance and clinical governance intersect.



The concept has emerged to refer jointly to the corporate governance and clinical governance duties and responsibilities of healthcare leadership. This is because, traditionally, while the corporate governance component carries the responsibilities of clinical governance in a healthcare business environment, clinical governance component does not carry the responsibilities of corporate governance.

It is this disjointed governance model between the board of directors and the senior clinical leadership that has led to loss of synergy and sometime outright corporate failure in many public and private hospitals. A rapid survey has shown that this governance model is least appreciated in Kenya by the majority of people in healthcare business leadership. It is therefore least practiced in governance of public and private healthcare delivery.

Objectives

This disjointed governance process can, and do contribute to poor healthcare system outcomes due to discordance between clinical governance and corporate governance processes. An integrated governance approach erodes the traditional boundaries between corporate governance and clinical governance that exist within the complex healthcare governance and management of a hospital. This allows for greater shared understanding of healthcare strategies and organizational objectives between boards of directors on one hand, and the senior clinical leaderships on the other.

It further enhances deeper understanding within the clinical leadership the role of the board of directors. Likewise, it provides deeper and better understanding by the members of the board of directors, the roles and duties of clinical teams.

Integrated governance acknowledges the contribution of all stakeholders: The board, the clinical leadership, the non-clinical management team and the consumer. It embodies three key attributes:

- Recognizably high standards of care,

- Transparent responsibility and accountability for those standards, and
 - Continuous never-ending improvement.
(<https://dawaline.co.ke/consultancy/>)
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In our next issue of this journal, we shall be looking at the four-fold objectives of clinical governance application to a financially sustainable hospital governance system.