DETERMINANTS OF CANCELLATION OF ELECTIVE SURGICAL OPERATIONS IN ZARIA

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ABSTRACT
Cancellation of elective surgical operations just before planned surgery is highly unwarranted and causes problems to the patient, reduces theatre efficiency and renders the operating facility redundant and unproductive. It has been a big problem to health facilities and challenges the patient financially, emotionally and socially. This study was to determine the causes of the cancellation of operations in a tertiary hospital in Zaria and to suggest ways forward. This was a prospective study to investigate the determinants of the cancellation of elective surgical operations in Zaria. All surgical operation lists were checked daily over an 18 month period to determine which scheduled patients were not operated upon and the reasons for cancellation was recorded. A total of 3,284 elective cases were scheduled during the 18 months period out of which 735 (22.4%) were cancelled. The highest incidence of cancellation 252 (34.2%) was due to lack of time. Logistics problems such as lack of sterile packs and faulty surgical equipment accounted for 186 (25.3%) of cancellations. Inadequate preparation of patients accounted for 100 (13.6%) of postponement of surgery. Patient factors such as febrile illness on the day of surgery and inability to pay or show up for surgery accounted for 94 (12.8%). Power failure accounted for 55 (7.5%). Other reasons were absence of surgeon (3.4%) and Anaesthesia related reasons in 23 (3.1%) instances. Most of the cancellations are attributable to avoidable reasons which can be easily corrected by provision of facilities.

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