

## SWOT Analysis of The Department of General Surgery in A Government Medical College in Kerala

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**Abstract:** A SWOT analysis helps to bring forth the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of the department. The increasing demand for medical profession to deliver high quality health care services in the state and the stagnating level of performance of the MBBS Students prompted the need for SWOT analysis of the Department of General Surgery of a prestigious institution in Kerala, the Government Medical College Kozhikode. The Department of General Surgery is a small department with 31 doctors and 2 auxiliary staff. From this study we found out various problems and solutions to improve their performance through training and non-training interventions. There is a need for the Government to introduce creative incentives like career advancement promotion, higher training, cash incentives for research and flexible working environment.

**Keywords:** SWOT, health care, medical education, faculty training, students perception, surgery department.

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### I. Introduction

SWOT analysis is the analysis of the current status of an institution or department. The SWOT analysis helps to bring forth the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of the department. The increasing demand for medical profession to deliver high quality health care services and the stagnating level of performance of the MBBS students prompted the need for SWOT analysis of the Department of General Surgery of a prestigious institution in Kerala, the Government Medical College Kozhikode. The Government Medical College Kozhikode was founded in 1952 with the aim of promotion of Health Care and Medical Education in the Northern part of Kerala State. The Department of General Surgery is one of the 18 Departments that function in the Government Medical College Kozhikode. The Key Functions of The Department of General Surgery are: Care of the Surgical Patient providing Emergency, Outpatient and Inpatient Care, Conduct of Emergency and Elective Surgeries, Training of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Medical, Dental and Nursing Students, Research in the field of General Surgery and Administration of The Department. The general policies regarding the patient care and health care delivery is decided by the Government of Kerala. The Academic curriculum and the Qualifications of the Staff are decided by the Indian Medical Council. These two institutions govern the functioning of the Medical Colleges of the State. The Department of General Surgery is hence guided by the directions of the said two institutions. The objective of this study is to identify according to a defined set of criteria, the Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and threats of the Department of General Surgery, Government Medical College Kozhikode.

### II. Materials And Methods

A cross sectional study was conducted in the Department of General Surgery of the Government Medical College Kozhikode from April 2009 to March 2011. Quantitative data regarding the Clinical and Academic activities of the Department was collected from the Annual Administrative Reports of the said two years. Qualitative data was collected by interview with the Head of the Department, Unit Chief, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor of the Department. One faculty from each category was selected at random. The confidentiality of the data was assured to the participants.

### III. Results

The Department of General Surgery is headed by the Head of the Department who is the senior most Professor. There are three more Professors followed by Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers. The Postgraduate Residents and House Surgeons complete the team. The work of the Department is carried out through Units.

**Teaching Staff**

Sl. No	Posts	Number Sanctioned
1	Professor	4
2	Associate Professor	5
3	Assistant Professor	10
4	Lecturer / Senior Residents	12

**Non Teaching Staff**

Sl. No	Posts	Number Sanctioned
1	Confidential Assistant	1
2	Junior Lab Assistant	1

There are six Units in the Department of General Surgery which conduct the OP and Casualty on the six days of the week and on Sunday the Casualty is conducted by each Unit in turn. Thus the S 1 Unit conducts its OP on Mondays and S 6 Unit on Saturdays. Each Unit has a Major Surgical Day and a Minor Surgical Day in each week.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government institution serving a large population from five northern districts of Kerala</li> <li>Well qualified manpower</li> <li>Experienced senior staff</li> <li>multi level discussions possible regarding diagnosis, management</li> <li>Collective responsibility</li> <li>Service of postgraduate residents and house surgeons</li> <li>Salary in UGC pattern</li> <li>Sufficient fund</li> <li>Good infrastructure</li> <li>Opportunities for collaborative research</li> <li>Collective research data</li> <li>Data from the large number of patients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disproportionate patient load due to lack of referral protocol or guidelines, weak peripheral system, lack of faith in peripheral hospitals, mis concepts of people regarding medico legal cases.</li> <li>Recruitment not done regularly</li> <li>Poor disciplinary control of the staff due to political and trade union influence</li> <li>Under utilisation of existing facilities in the Department and hospital</li> <li>No consensus, guidelines or protocols in patient management.</li> <li>Procurement through annual intents</li> <li>lack of coordination between Units within the Department</li> <li>lack of interdepartmental coordination</li> <li>accountability is less due to lack of individual charge of patients and lack of audit</li> <li>Lack of managerial skills of the administrative officers</li> <li>lack of improvement, maintenance and update of knowledge by staff members</li> <li>Lack of proper guidance to junior staff members</li> <li>Inadequate opportunities for improvement and training for junior staff members</li> <li>Lack of continuity of research</li> <li>improper implementation of residency system</li> <li>Limited number of journals at Department library</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The political and social environment of Kerala favouring health consciousness</li> <li>Opportunity to do research and publication in national and international journals</li> <li>RSBY</li> <li>Research output beneficial to layman</li> <li>Kerala University of Health Sciences providing chances of interdisciplinary research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brain drain to private hospitals</li> <li>More focus on private practice</li> <li>Political changes in government changing policies regarding Health care</li> <li>Inappropriate Health Policy for the State</li> </ul>

**IV. Discussion**

SWOT Analysis is a tool that is used to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of a System. It serves as a basic foundation for further improvements to the System using the findings. The strengths were used and weaknesses overcome. Opportunities can be explored and threats averted. The

Government of Kerala and the Indian Medical Council govern the functioning of the Medical Colleges of the State. The teaching faculty of any Medical college should have a higher level of skills and efficiency for the delivery of high quality health care system and teaching medical students. The Department of General Surgery is a small department with 31 doctors and 2 auxiliary staff. So the strength, weaknesses, Opportunities and threats analysis was near complete. But similar analysis of other departments which closely associate with Department of General Surgery like the Departments of Anaesthesiology, Radiology, Transfusion Medicine, Anatomy, Pathology, Microbiology and Biochemistry is essential for effective implementation of the programmes and to improve the performance of the Department.

The pass percentage in university exams and the number of research publications in reputed indexed journals reflects the academic excellence of a department. Moreover a feedback from the students regarding their perception of the present teaching method provided useful information for a review in the present system of teaching<sup>1</sup>. Establishing a culture of respect and professionalism in today's teaching environment is one of the most important legacies that surgical educators can leave for the coming generation<sup>2</sup>. One major limitation of this study is that academic teaching reports were not analyzed.

Hospitals that operate at or over capacity may experience heightened rates of patient safety events<sup>3</sup>. To improve the safety and quality of care that patients receive from health professionals sustain the confidence to work effectively for different health care needs and approaches, and is able to adapt to future changes<sup>4</sup>. Evaluation measures the progress in achieving the goal by purposefully improving training programs and measuring their worth<sup>5</sup>.

Highly educated, trained and dedicated persons form the foundation of emergency services. Training Need Analysis programme led by Maria et al resulted in the design and delivery of a thriving continuing professional development programme for health care professionals<sup>6</sup>.

A survey conducted to improve the performance of the health care professionals at Saint Lucia, offered perspectives on how to conduct training need assessments planning and continuing professional education<sup>7</sup>. The major weaknesses like lack of coordination between Units, interdepartmental coordination should be minimized and acute care surgical system should be given priority. To improve patient care an acute care surgery system should be considered as procedure-related complications and unsatisfactory treatment results constitutes the major causes of medical disputes as reported by Hu YH et al<sup>8</sup>. The conflicts at workplace, with perhaps the most devastating career consequences, are those that take place between employees and their superiors. Training an employee to get along well with authority and with people who entertain diverse points of view is one of the best guarantees of long term success<sup>9</sup>.

Health care system should have a strong Medical records filing and regular monitoring and supervision, so that it minimises issuance of incomplete data entry and misfiling. Health facilities must first assess the situation of the medical records by carrying out a situation analysis to obtain the direct and indirect factors leading to issuance of misfiling<sup>10</sup>.

## **V. Conclusion**

From this study it is found that various problems and solutions to improve their performance through training and non-training interventions. There is a need for the Government to introduce creative incentives like career advancement promotion, higher training, cash incentives for research and flexible working environment.

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