

Medical Negligence in Military Hospitals

Dear Editor,

I have the following observations to make about the article titled "Medical Negligence in Military Hospitals" authored by Brig K Chauhan et al published in April 2007 issue of MJAFI. There appears to be a mismatch between the title and the contents. This is due to fact that the authors have not defined the term "Medical Negligence" and have used it synonymously with "Neglecting the patient" or "Not giving an ear to the problems of the patient". Medical negligence is a specific legal entity and the patient will have to prove existence of Duty, Dereliction and Damage for the

Reply

Dear Editor,

We appreciate the frank opinion of the reader in stating there is a mismatch between the title and its content. However any single line definition of the term "Medical Negligence" cannot explain the same. Hence an entire paragraph was written on the term "Medical Negligence" with court rulings/examples under the title 'Duties of a Doctor', which needs to be read carefully. There is no confusion on this issue.

The article was meant for the medical professionals of the armed forces, in that context, all complaints and court cases against medical

court to accept the situation as one of medical negligence.

If it was the intention of the authors to bring out the usual complaints received by the hospital administration in military hospitals, they should have titled the article as "Complaints in Military Hospitals" rather than the term "Medical Negligence", thus avoiding the confusion amongst the readers.

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officers, nursing and paramedicals were analysed to bring out certain lessons. The authors feel that this aim has been achieved.

The title suggested by the learned reader 'Complaints against Military Hospitals' would have a very wide spectrum and would include complaints against quality of food, hygiene/sanitation and other infrastructure facilities of the hospital, so it was not considered appropriate.

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Book Review



The Toyota Way by Jeffrey K Liker. Publishers, Tata McGraw Hill, Paperback and Hardbound, Pages-318, Price Rs 350/- ISBN Number-0-07-058747-7.

This book on a very contemporary subject, i.e the Japanese style of management has garnered a lot of interest over the years. Dr Liker explains the unique style of management as practiced by the Toyota group of companies, titled the "Toyota Way". This book explains the management systems, thinking and philosophy that forms the foundation of Toyota's success, providing the reader with valuable insights that can be applied to any business or situation. The book goes in detail while describing the unique tools and methods and broader principles at work in the "Toyota Production System" (TPS).

The Toyota Way can be briefly summarized through the two pillars that support it: "Continuous Improvement" and "Respect for People". Continuous Improvement, often called "Kaizen", defines Toyota's basic approach towards doing business – challenge everything. More important than the actual improvements that individuals contribute, the true value of continuous improvement is in creating an atmosphere of continuous learning and an environment that not only accepts, but actually embraces change. Such an environment can only be created where there is respect for people – hence the second pillar of the Toyota Way.

Toyota demonstrates this respect by providing employment security and seeking to engage team members through active participation in improving their jobs. As managers, we must take the responsibility for developing and nurturing mutual trust and understanding among all team members.

The book provides great insights into fourteen management principles which include a long term philosophy, creating continuous process flow to bring problems to surface, avoiding over production, level out the workload (Heijunka) – work like the tortoise, not the hare. The Toyota way lays great emphasis on building a culture of stopping to fix problems to get the quality right the first time. It says that standardized tasks are the foundation for continuous improvement and employee empowerment. The "Toyota Way" also lays stress on using only reliable and thoroughly tested technology that serves your people and processes. It also emphasizes adding value to the organisation by developing people and partners by cultivating leadership qualities amongst employees who understand the work, live the philosophy and also teach it to others. Lastly the "Toyota Way" lays stress on "Continuously Solving Root Problems Drives" wherein the importance of going and seeing for yourself to understand the situation, making decisions slowly by consensus, thoroughly considering all options but implementing decisions rapidly all leading to becoming a Learning Organisation through relentless reflection (Hansei) and continuous improvement (Kaizen).

The book is a must not only for administrators but also for people from all walks of life who can utilize the concepts of building quality into workplace systems, eliminating the huge costs of hidden waste and turning every employee into a quality control inspector.

Contributed by

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