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978-1-108-79005-5 — The Changing Role of the Hospital in European Health Systems

Edited by Martin McKee, Sherry Merkur, Nigel Edwards, Ellen Nolte, Assisted by Jonathan North

Frontmatter

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The Changing Role of the Hospital in European Health Systems

Hospitals today face a huge number of challenges, including new patterns of disease, rapidly evolving medical technologies, ageing populations and continuing budget constraints. This book is written by clinicians for clinicians and hospital managers, as well as those who design and operate hospitals. It sets out why hospitals need to change as the patients they treat and the technology to treat them change. In a series of chapters by leading authorities in their field, it challenges existing models, reviews best practice from many countries and presents clear policy recommendations for policy-makers and hospital administrators. It covers the main patient groups and conditions as well as those departments that make modern effective care possible, in imaging and laboratory medicine. Each chapter looks at patient pathways, aspects of workforce, required levels of specialization and technology, and the opportunities and challenges for optimizing the delivery of services in the hospital of the future.

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The volumes in this series focus on topical issues around the transformation of health systems in Europe, a process being driven by a changing environment, increasing pressures and evolving needs.

Drawing on available evidence, existing experience and conceptual thinking, these studies aim to provide both practical and policy-relevant information and lessons on how to implement change to make health systems more equitable, effective and efficient. They are designed to promote and support evidence-informed policy-making in the health sector and will be a valuable resource for all those involved in developing, assessing or analysing health systems and policies.

In addition to policy-makers, stakeholders and researchers in the field of health policy, key audiences outside the health sector will also find this series invaluable for understanding the complex choices and challenges that health systems face today.

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The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies supports and promotes evidence-based health policy-making through comprehensive and rigorous analysis of health systems in Europe. It brings together a wide range of policy-makers, academics and practitioners to analyse trends in health reform, drawing on experience from across Europe to illuminate policy issues.

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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page viii</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>List of Boxes</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>xvii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xix</i>
 Part I: Advances in the management of patients with the main problems seen in hospitals	
1 Introduction – The changing nature of care provided in the hospital	3
2 The challenges of adapting hospital care for children	22
3 Patients with stroke	53
4 Meeting the needs of frail older patients	85
5 Oncological hospital care	120
6 COPD as an exemplar of a chronic health condition	145
7 Emergency medicine	181
 Part II: Cross-cutting topics and technology	
8 Advances in perioperative medicine	203
9 Advances in imaging	233
10 Advances in laboratory medicine	258
11 Conclusions – Challenges for hospitals of the future	288
<i>Index</i>	<i>298</i>

Figures

2.1	The position of hospital care for children within the health system	<i>page</i> 37
2.2	Appropriate co-location of paediatric subspecialties	42
3.1	Number needed to treat for the main evidence-based interventions in acute ischaemic stroke	56
3.2	An example of a typical stroke care pathway in high income settings	59
3.3	Geographical variation in admission to a stroke unit within four hours of admission in England and Wales	70
3.4	Specialist resources for a stroke service	71
4.1	Vulnerability of frail older people to a sudden change in health status following a minor illness	86
5.1	The cancer journey	125
5.2	Breast cancer patient pathway, the Netherlands	126
5.3	Breast cancer pathway for staff, the Netherlands	128
6.1	Age standardized death rate from COPD per 100 000, both sexes, 2016	150
6.2	Example of a care pathway to improve outcomes in COPD	153
6.3	The pyramid of value for COPD interventions	170
8.1	Patient pathway for elective surgery	204
8.2	Components of enhanced recovery after surgery (ERAS) pathway	216
8.3	Individual perioperative care pathway	223
9.1	Total number of imaging and radiodiagnostic examinations or tests, by imaging modality, England, 1995–96 to 2013–14	234
9.2	Multidisciplinary team meeting (MDTM) participants	241

<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
9.3 Interventional radiology interactions with hospital departments	242
9.4 MRI and CT exams per 1000 population, 2015 (or nearest year)	246
9.5 Number of inhabitants per radiologist, 2011 (including residents in training)	247
9.6 Scanner equipment per million people in selected OECD countries, 2015 (or nearest year)	249
10.1 Gartner Hype Cycle	260
10.2 Pathology touch points	268
10.3 Quadrant highlighting pathology trajectories	278
10.4 The tree of medicine	284

Tables

2.1	Selected examples of indications for admission of children to hospitals	<i>page 35</i>
2.2	Paediatric subspecialties in child health and the number of European countries in which each is recognized	41
2.3	Future trends influencing the delivery of integrated care to children on five different levels	47
4.1	Adjusted 1, 3 and 5 year hazard ratios for outcomes of mortality, unplanned hospitalization and nursing home admission for older people with mild, moderate and severe frailty	88
5.1	Summary indicators of cancer burden in selected high income regions, 2012	122
6.1	Selected characteristics of hospital centres participating in the 2010–11 European COPD Audit Variation	160
6.2	Quality of COPD care across European hospitals against recommendations of the GOLD strategy document	161
8.1	A proposed enhanced recovery protocol for elective total hip and knee arthroplasty	217
9.1	Compound annual growth rates (CAGR) for radiology modalities in England	235
9.2	Common pathways and presentations relying on imaging	239

Boxes

2.1	Extract from the terms of reference of the Council of Europe on child-friendly health care	<i>page</i> 25
2.2	Environmental and building standards for NICUs	31
2.3	Charter of the European Association for Children in Hospital (EACH)	38
2.4	Ten rules for the care of children in hospitals	48
3.1	What is stroke?	54
4.1	Common presentations of frail older people	87
4.2	Gerontopole frailty clinic	91
4.3	“virtual ward hub” services for older patients in Bradford, England	104
5.1	The emergence of cancer networks in the Netherlands	136
5.2	The emergence of cancer networks in Italy	137
6.1	Evidence-based interventions for the management of COPD: smoking cessation	150
6.2	Evidence-based interventions for the management of COPD: long-term oxygen therapy and non-invasive ventilatory support	154
6.3	Evidence-based interventions for the management of COPD: surgical treatment	156
6.4	Integrated Respiratory Team (IRT), Kings Health Partners, London, UK	156
6.5	Telehealth teams for monitoring patients with COPD post discharge, Barcelona, Spain	163
6.6	COPD discharge care bundle project, London, UK	163
6.7	Integrated effort for people living with chronic diseases (SIKS) project, Copenhagen, Denmark	165
7.1	Defining emergency medicine	182
8.1	Patient stories: traditional versus integrated care	207
8.2	Patient story: shared decision-making	214
8.3	Torbay Hospital Clinic shows financial viability	215

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-108-79005-5 — The Changing Role of the Hospital in European Health Systems
Edited by Martin McKee , Sherry Merkur , Nigel Edwards , Ellen Nolte , Assisted by Jonathan North
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

xii		<i>List of Boxes</i>
8.4	Employment of non-physicians to give anaesthetics	219
9.1	Molecular imaging	236
9.2	Picture archiving and communication systems	236
9.3	Interventional radiology	237
9.4	The four-tier radiographer structure in the United Kingdom	244
10.1	Case Study – Genomics England and the 100 000 Genomes Project	263
10.2	Case Study – a national framework for quality assurance in cellular pathology	266
10.3	Case Study – extending the roles of scientists in cellular pathology	272
10.4	Case Study – decline of consented autopsy following hospital death in Europe	279

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Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

xiv

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List of Contributors

xv

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Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

xvi

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Foreword

Our world is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Some might say that this is threatening and destabilizing, while others might say it is a world full of opportunities. But one thing is clear: we cannot ignore the constant change, whether technological or societal. This is also true for us as health policy-makers. But what stance should we take towards change: Accept? Adapt? Embrace? Or maybe actively shape and promote?

What if we ask “What kind of model of care do we want?” rather than “What model of health care does the technological advance impose on us?” And: “How can we include technology in a smarter, more effective and efficient organization of health care?”. What if we ask ourselves what kind of health care providers we want and which role we want to give to insurers in the future?

The hospital has always been key in the delivery of health care. What do we expect of the hospital of the future? How do we see its impact and role in the health system, in society and regarding the wider environment? We know that its role is changing. It is faced with challenges regarding integrated care for chronic patients, the concentration of medico-technical capacity and medical expertise, patient expectations concerning their care process, etc. The way we see the institution “hospital” will need to adapt to these evolutions.

As policy-makers, we should actively engage in this reflection, linking evidence, vision, strategy and action. The present study by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies will provide important contributions to this reflection. The study takes a unique perspective by observing different patient groups seen in modern hospitals: from young to old, from acute to chronic. Each chapter considers the provision of services for these patients and how these will need to change.

This book has the ambition to guide readers in their thinking about how care can be optimized in hospitals of the future. It wants to help in the understanding of care pathways, bottlenecks to care optimization,

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Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

xviii

Foreword

workforce issues and future trends. Health policy-makers will benefit from gaining insights from the clinician's perspective on the current service landscape, ongoing change, and the need for further change. Likewise, the authors consider recent technological developments and address issues of changes in patient management – impacting hospitals, professionals and patient experience.

We would like to invite the reader to use this study as a basis for further reflection and to encourage this reflection to go beyond the existing; to think bold, transversal, across disciplines and diseases.

We wish you an interesting read!

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