**BACKGROUND**

- Education is a fundamental right of all children including those in a hospital.
- A hospital-based school is a child-centered service that provides an educational environment tailored to the specific needs of sick children.
- In majority of developed countries, hospital-based schools have existed for decades, with programs across levels from elementary to senior high schools.\(^1\) The Hong Kong Red Cross Hospital School, was one among them established in 1954 and later expanded to 18 schools by 2011.\(^1\)
- Schooling hospitalised children is either non-existent or remains a very low priority in developing countries including India. A study showed that, Taiwan has only one hospital-based informal school and eight hospitals with rotating bedside teachers.\(^2\)
- We are, amongst the first in India to start a dedicated hospital schooling programme.

**OBJECTIVE**

To overview the concept and various aspects of providing educational services to the children during prolonged hospitalization.

**OBSERVATIONS**

- The initial response was poor with an attendance of 5.6% in the initial 2 weeks, followed by an increase to 16% over time.
- Age Group: 92% children attending the classroom were between the age of 4 to 7 years and children above 12 years preferred not to do any academic work in the hospital.
- The main reasons for reluctance to attend school were:
  a) The child needs rest and needs to recover (71%)
  b) Do not want the added burden of studies during illness (61%).
- A verbal survey was conducted at the end of 6 months which initiative, revealed that 55% of the health care workers in the hospital were not aware of this initiative. Eightyfive % of parents were unaware about such facilities provided by the hospital.
- Among the 52 completed parent feedback forms:
  52/52 parents reported that their children felt happy in the day school
  51/52 parents reported satisfaction with the education that their child received
  43/46 parents thought that the school will help their kids to achieve his or her academic best, despite the medical odds

**METHODS**

- We started a day school in the play area for all our indoor patients as a pilot project in January 2017.
- The school covers curriculum from kindergarten to 9th grade in English and Hindi.
- The utility was ascertained from a self made feedback questionnaire.

**CONCLUSION**

- The learning opportunities for children with chronic illness are inadequate in India and scant educational resources are offered inside hospitals.
- For children undergoing treatment, school can offer a familiar and reassuring routine, as well as a feeling of being in step with their peers in the outside world.
- Till date hospital classroom initiative has helped us to identify 14 cases of learning disabilities.
- This concept needs to be popularised further specially in the developing world. We are trying our best with help of parental and staff awareness programmes, cut-outs, pamphlets etc.

Special Educator- Priyanka Mehta
PG Diploma School Leadership and management, B.Ed Special Education, B.Ed General Education, B.Sc