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Organizational records management at Effia Nkwanta Regional, Takoradi

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Abstract

This paper looks at the records management in organisations with emphasis on Effia Nkwanta Regional, Takoradi. Organisations are not aware that proper management of records contributes to the good of the organisation. Making of profit is all that organisations aim at; they forget that the maximization of profit depends partly on deciding which records to keep and which once to destroy. Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital (ENRH) was established in 1938 as a Military Hospital by the then British West African royal Frontier Force (BWARFF) based in Takoradi. The Distribution and Charts shows the Top Ten (10) Disease of the Out-Patient department from 2018 with malaria recording the highest percentage each year at the hospital. This shows the organisation is able to carry out its duties smoothly by keeping records of top ten diseases each year. Objective of the study was to Maintaining adequate documentary records identify the problems associated with records management in the organisation among others. The finding of the study shows that Management does not organise training programmes for employees and staff on how records are managed.

Keywords: central, regional, teaching, hospital, records, management, organisations

Introduction

Background of the study: Records management is an important aspect of office administration. Thousands of documents, letters, memos, reports, contracts, invoices, statistics, catalogues, tax records, price lists, vouchers etc. are received or created each day in businesses and government offices throughout the country. These documents or records etc. are of utmost importance because they contain vital information on the basis of which decisions are taken and programmes are drawn up for the successful management of affairs. Records are essential for the continuous and successful operation of any organisation.

The success or failure of an organisation to achieve its objectives may depend on good records management. Records management is a systematic control of recorded information, regardless of the format and it must be managed properly from its creation to disposition. Records management can be done properly so that one can have easy access to accurate information. It should be noted that no Institution, Government or organisation functions properly without the use of information. Unfortunately many offices do not manage records containing information properly. Files are poorly handled; there are no better procedures for opening and closing of files. Records are dumped haphazardly in rooms where nobody cares to keep them neat and tidy.

While Companies, Organisations and Institutions keep their records in order, few people are tempted to ask why; meanwhile some are aware of the importance of records management.

It is so hurting to see management transfer staffs that are considered to be troublesome to the records office as a form punishment. This indicates that there is no importance or value attached to records office and records staff. It is rather unfortunate because the more unprofessional or untrained staffs are sent to the records office; the harm management does to itself when it comes to retrieving information.

Lack of proper records management can bring frustration because things cannot be found quickly and it can also bring about congestion in store rooms. Companies, Institution or Organisations need to employ professional record managers for efficient and effective records. With this, important documents of the organisation can be properly managed. Proper keeping of records increase productivity. Every business and information needed are received and used on time. We must also not forget that without records and speedy access to them, all organised administrative work would come to a halt.

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In fact with records, government objectives such as rule of law, accountability, management of state resources and foreign relations will be difficult to realize.

Managing mails, stock, wages or salaries etc. makes it possible for organisation to carry out of records in an organisation such as the names and address of its clients, administrative duties with ease.

Statement of the problem

In this modern times, management is spending huge amount of moneys to recruit and train human resource because it is believed that great human resource is the key to good performance and increased productivity. Some managers have not yet realized the importance of records management and its effects on organisations.

Most organisations store their records in whatever space is available to them regardless of how ill-structured it might be for the purpose. Records stored under such circumstances are not conducive to easy information retrieval.

Another problem also is, some organisations lack proper records management. Also those dealing with the records are familiar with the information and format used in keeping information and therefore does not take the trouble of finding a more suitable way of doing things. Organisations are not aware that proper management of records contributes to the good of the organisations. Making of profit is all that organisations aim at; they forget that the maximization of profit depends partly on deciding which records to keep and which once to destroy.

Objective of the study

Organisations or Institutions create or receive information in staggering volumes. Therefore the researcher aims at:

1. Maintaining adequate documentary records.
2. Identify the problems associated with records management in the organisations.
3. Finding the best and improved ways of managing records.
4. Increasing productivity through effective records management.
5. Improving the speed and reliability of administrative work through proper records management.

Significance of the study

This research will seek to improve the collection, use and managing of information by organisations, this performance is care and service delivery process. Student of office management would bring to light the reality of records management as an essential feature in office management. The study will maintain confidentiality and integrity of information. It will also give the general public the insight of how to manage good records in organisations.

Proper records management ensures that records are protected especially ones which are important to the organisations.

Methodology

The information will be based on Secondary and Primary source for this research. Primary source of information would be collected by conducting interviews and observations. Questionnaires will also be sent to various departments within the organisations. It will be in a form of close and open-ended respondents to express themselves fully.

Organisation of the study

This research will be grouped in five (5) chapters.

One (1) looks at the introduction of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study and methodology.

Chapter two (2) reviews the information that is already in existence by different writers.

Chapter three (3) also covers the profile of the organisation under study.

Chapter four (4) include data analysis of information gathered on records Chapter management.

Chapter five (5), the final chapter covers summary, conclusion and recommendation by the researcher.

Chapter two

Literature review

Introduction

This chapter reviews the books on records management. It will also take a look at office management, creation and retention of records, statistics as well as definition of records management. Records management is an important aspect of office administration. Documents, memos, reports, letters, statistics, contract etc. received and created each day in business and government offices throughout the country. Records management addresses the life cycle of records. Records are essential for the continued and successful operation of any Organisation.

Some people have the mistaken impression that records management is about hoarding everything that comes across ones desk in the course of doing business. In some highly regulated industries it may seem that is the case. But in most cases it is not only making sure that what needs to be kept as a record is retained but also prescribing how long it should be kept, where it should be stored, who has access to it and when it should be destroyed (if ever).

What is records management?

There are many different definitions of records management. According to the Federal Records Act, record management is a professional discipline that is primarily concerned with the management of document based on information systems.

1. The application of systematic and scientific controls to recorded information required in the operation of an organization's business.
2. The systematic control of all organizational records during the various stages of their life cycle from their creation or receipt, through their processing, distribution, maintenance and use, to their ultimate disposition.
3. The purpose of records management is to promote economies and efficiencies in record keeping to assure that useless records are systematically destroyed while valuable information protected and maintained in a manner that facilitate its access and use.

What is a record?

According to the Federal Records Act, a record is "Recorded information, regardless of medium or characteristics, made or received by an organisation that is evidence of it's operations and has value requiring it's retention for a specific period of time".

According to the National Achieves and Records Administration (NARA) records include "All books, Papers,

Maps, Photographs, Machine readable materials or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristic, made or received by an agency of the United State Government under Federal Law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the Organisation, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of the data in them".

File management

According to Agnew *et al.* (2001) [1] establishing efficient filling system, deciding on the type of equipment and materials required for each system; instituting measures to control and improve the system.

Records protection

According to Agnew (1967) [1], determining which records of an organisation is vital and vital for drawing up a programme for them. Vital records, according to the authors are those needed to continue operation after a disaster. Correspondence Management Developing the best way of communication by letter.

Forms and report control

According to Agnew *et al.* (1967) [1], forms and report control is establishing the most effective method of obtaining and giving needed information.

The above definitions indicate that records management in its broadest sense concerns itself with the records creation, maintenance, retention, preservation, retrieval, distribution and disposal. The definitions also show that filling constitute an important segment of records management.

2.2 Purpose of records management

Robinson and Leffingwell, (1994) have identified five purposes of records.

They are.

- To keep an orderly Account of Progress. That is, production and preservation of letters, reports, memos etc. make it possible for the progress of the organisation to be received. This is regarded as the historical function of records.
- To Detect Errors and Wastes proper. Records Management leads to the detection of errors and waste. This constitutes the control function of records management.
- To Prepare a Statement of the true Conditions. Up-to-date records provide information about the true conditions or real state of affairs of an Organisation, this facilities review of corporate plan and the Mapping out of Strategies to ensure the continued survival of the Organisation.
- To make Comparisons: Records enable an Organisation to make the following types of comparisons:
 - Comparison between one period of time and another
 - Comparison between different product lines; and
 - Comparison with different firms engaged in the same line business. These comparisons have been described as the analytical function of records.

Office management

Office management is a specialized branch of the broad area of management. Is therefore the process of planning? Organizing directing, coordinating and controlling the activities of the office in order to achieve some pre-determined objectives in the most economical manner.

The Institute of Administrative Management of Great Britain has defined Office Management as That branch of Management which is concerned with the service of Obtaining, Recording, and Analysing information, of Planning and of communicating, by means of which the Management of a business safeguards its assets, promotes its affairs and achieves its objectives.

The word "manage" in the view of Denyer means to Guide and to have under command or control. The term "Office Management" therefore implies the guidance of the personnel who carry out office functions.

The purpose of the office

Mills and Standing ford (2019) have defined the purpose of the Office in their book he nrow the service. Of as the provision of the means of communication, the provision of the service of record and they are as follows:

a. Recording Information

After classifying/arranging, the information must be recorded according to laid-down rules and regulations. The principal objective of keeping record is to enable information to be readily given to Management (When required) for making decisions required for continued pursuance of the organisations goals and objectives. Records are maintained for future references. Some records are kept in compliance with legal requirements e.g. title deeds, memorandum and articles of association, agreements etc.

b. Giving Information

It is the duty of the Office to ensure that those who need information be they members of the organisation or outsiders get it. Customers must be provided with accurate and complete information about price and delivery date; Management must have a clear and unambiguous picture of the current state of the business to enable it to discern danger signals and to put in place appropriate managerial strategies for the realization of the Organisation. It is only through effective predetermined goals and objectives communication that information can be disseminated. The Office supplies information of any kind, whether written or verbal e.g. sales invoice, reports and accounts, letters, telephone calls, fax, e-mail etc.

c. Receiving Information.

The office is a center into which information pours from diverse source both internally and externally via means of communication -letters, telephone calls, quotations, minutes, reports etc. besides receiving such information as may come into the Organisation, the office is duty bound to gather or obtain any other necessary information that may be required by management.

d. Sorting and Classifying Information

This involves analysing content, indexing, coding and systematically arranging for further processing and distribution. Unless information is properly sorted for further processing. It may be too plentiful, too disjointed

and unrelated to be of any real value

Administrative management functions of the office

Arora (1984) regards the acts of receiving, collecting, processing, storing, retrieving and distributing information as the basic function of the offices. According to him there are certain Administrative Management functions that must be performed to enhance the efficiency of the important administrative management functions include:

1. Instituting office systems and procedures

Office Systems and procedures constitute a planned approach to the discharge of functions. A system is a group of inter-related and inter-dependent parts operating in sequence according to pre-determined plan so as to achieve the goals and objectives of the organisations. Office system/procedures enable programme activities to be carried out with maximum efficiency.

2. Forms and design control

Preparation of records is one of the important functions of the office forms are extensively used for the preparation or records. A form can be defined as a standardized document used to accumulate and transmit information. It is important that forms are properly designed in line with the needs of the Organisation so that maximum benefits could be derived from their use.

Chapter three

An overview of the Organisation

Introduction

Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital (ENRH) was established in 1938 as a Military Hospital by the then British West African royal Frontier Force (BWARFF) based in Takoradi. The hospital was handed over to the Colonial Administration soon after the Second World War in 1945 and eventually developed to its present state. The Maternity and the Service Blocks were built in 1964 and commissioned in 1965.

Location

The hospital is situated about 500 meters from the sea and share borders with Adiembra road to the North, Poase road to the South, Essaman to the East and West African Mills 11 to the West, covers an area of 202 hectares and is currently the third largest hospital in the country after Korle-Bu and Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospitals.

Overview of the hospital.

The hospital has a bed compliment of 416 and a total workforce of about 572. It offers practical training for Health Service Administrators, Students Nurses and other Medical Housemen and interns.

Management structure, systems and departments

Management team of the hospital

The hospital is managed by the Tripartite Executive Management Team. These include:

Medical Administration General/Business Administration Nursing Administration Management Strategies Weekly Core Management Meetings are organised to discuss pertinent institutional issues. It is done to assess the performance of the facility over a week's period and to map up strategies for the ensuing ones.

Management structures

There are various committees in the hospital that assist management to run the activities of the hospital. AS at now, the following operational committees are in existence and functional at the hospital.

1. Core Management Committee
2. Hospital Management Committee
3. Committee of Units and Departmental Heads
4. Procurement Committee
5. Quality Assurance Committee and Monitoring Team
6. Drugs & therapeutic Committee
7. Disciplinary Committee
8. Staff Welfare Committee and
9. Advances Committee
10. Estate Committee Medical director

Medical Director

The present Medical Director is Dr. Robert A. Sagoe, a physician, with a certificate in Hospital Management (HM).

Principal health service administrator (Head of administration)

The current Administrator is Mr. Asare Bediako Micah, Principal Health Services Administrator with Masters in Hospital Management.

Deputy Director of nursing services

The incumbent D.D.N.S is Mrs. Ester Pesseh a professional nurse, with Dpio Nursing Education and Certificate in Systematic Counseling.

Departments

- Medicine including Communicable Disease Unit
- Pediatrics
- General Surgery including
- Orthopedic & Urology Obstetrics and Gynecology
- STD/AIDS Counseling
- Psychiatry
- Ear, Nose and Throat
- Accident and Emergency
- Dental

Clinical support departments/units

- Pharmacy
- Laboratory
- X-Ray
- Public Health Reg. Lab.
- Mortuary
- In-Service Training
- blood Bank
- Physiotherapy
- C.S.S.D
- Nutrition

Non-clinical departments/units

- Administration/finance
- Medical Statistics
- Catering
- Environmental Health
- Medico-Social Welfare
- Engineering & Management
- Transport

- Laundry
- Estate
- Store & Supplies

Staffing position of the hospital

Doctors 27 (3 on contracts, 3 on Study Leave)
 Medical Assistants 2
 Nurses 207 (4 on contract, 28 on Study Leave) 80
 Clinical Support Services 179
 Non-Clinical Support Services 79
 Casual Workers 574
 Totals 3.7

Chapter four

Presentation of data and analysis

The study is based on Primary and Secondary Data. Questionnaires that were retrieved, interviews conducted with top management and staff at the Administration section of the hospital and personal observation from the organisation under study will be put in the form of tables and graphs and then analysed in this chapter.

Sample population.

This chapter gives the vivid sample of population analysis and findings on Views obtained from respondents at Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital. The study was carried to solicit views from management and staff on the importance of Records Management in general. Effia Nkwanta Hospital was chosen because of the irregular keeping of records and

how records are retrieved in time.

Analysis of data collected

In all twenty five (25) questionnaires were circulated to management and staff of the hospital. The researcher also adopted interview as another means of soliciting information. With the help of the Head of Records Department the researcher was made to spend days at the Records Department to undergo practical training being taught by the workers of the department, this was done to enable the Head of Records Department know whether the researcher has really understood the process being taught. Below is the information gathered during the researcher's practical training.

Table 4.1: Distribution showing head count of out-patient attendance from 2018 to 2020

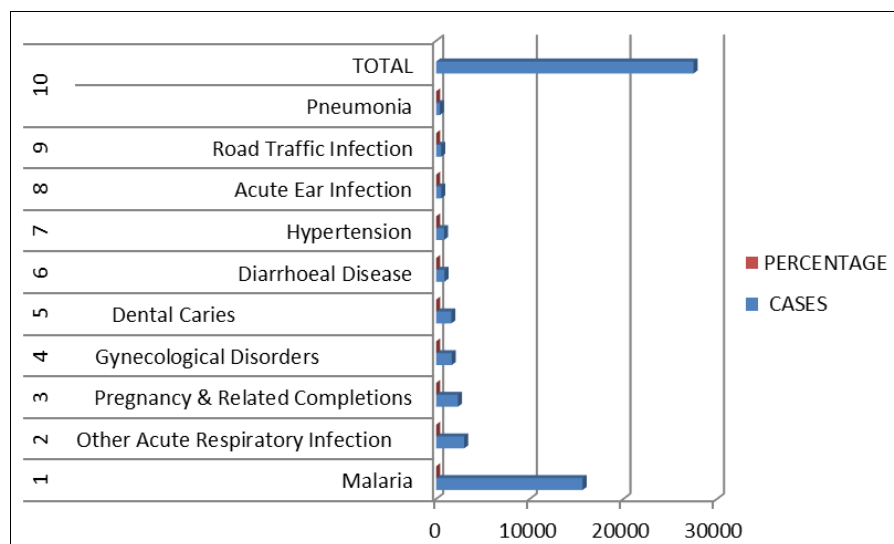
Year	Male	Female	Total
2018	32,749	48,685	81,434
2019	33,299	58,823	89,122
2020	31,369	54,033	85,402

Source: Field Research May 2021

This table 4.1 is representing the total number of attendance at the Out-Patient department of the hospital from 2018 to 2020. This shows the high number of patients who attended the hospital within the years. Year 2019 got the highest attendance.

Table 4.2: Distribution showing Top ten O.P.D. disease attendance 2018

No	Disease	cases	Percentage
1	Malaria	15653	56%
2	Other Acute Respiratory Infection	2999	10%
3	Pregnancy & Related Completions	2332	8.5%
4	Gynecological Disorders	1671	6.1%
5	Dental Caries	1624	5.9%
6	Diarrhoeal Disease	893	3.2%
7	Hypertension	842	3.1%
8	Acute Ear Infection	549	2%
9	Road Traffic Infection	544	2%
10	Pneumonia	400	1.5%
	TOTAL	27,507	



Source: Field Research May 2021

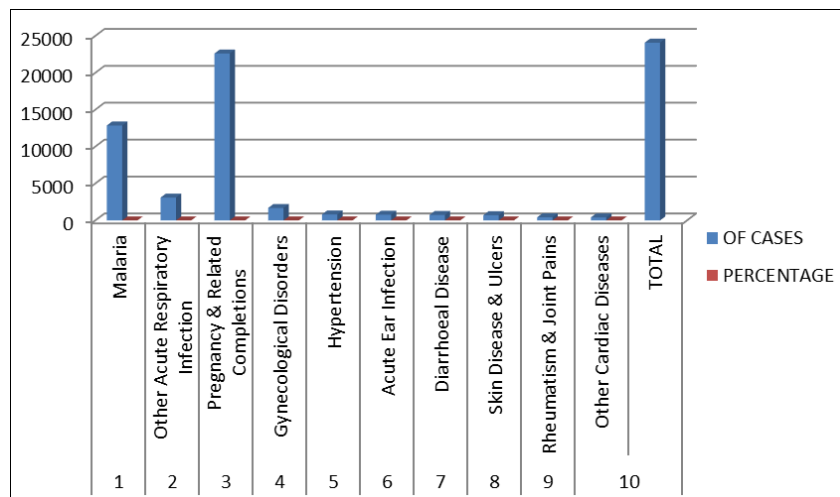
Fig 1: Top Ten OPD 2018

The Distribution and Charts shows the Top Ten (10) Disease of the Out-Patient department from 2018 with malaria recording the highest percentage each year at the

hospital. This shows the organisation is able to carry out its duties smoothly by keeping records of top ten diseases each year.

Table 4.2: Distribution showing Top ten O.P.D. disease attendance 2019

No	Disease	Of cases	Percentage
1	Malaria	12858	53%
2	Other Acute Respiratory Infection	3095	12.9%
3	Pregnancy & Related Completions	22611	10.8%
4	Gynecological Disorders	1685	7%
5	Hypertension	805	3.3%
6	Acute Ear Infection	775	3.2 %
7	Diarrhoeal Disease	744	3.1%
8	Skin Disease & Ulcers	699	3%
9	Rheumatism & Joint Pains	412	1.7%
10	Other Cardiac Diseases	395	1.6%
	Total	24,079	



Source: Field Research May 2021

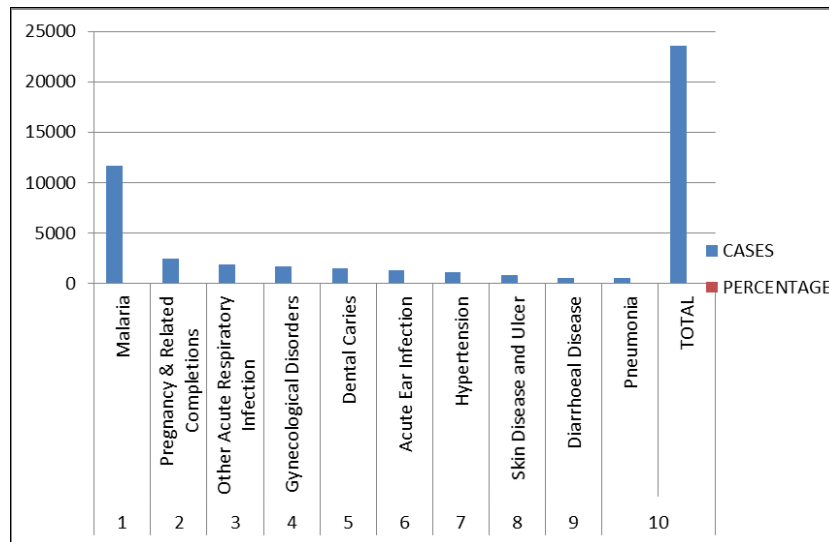
Fig 2: Top ten attendance 2019

The Distribution and Charts shows the Top Ten (10) Disease of the Out-Patient department from 2019 with malaria recording the highest percentage each year at the

hospital. This shows the organisation is able to carry out its duties smoothly by keeping records of top ten diseases each year.

Table 4.4: Distribution showing top ten O.P.D. disease attendance 2020

No	Disease	Cases	Percentage
1	Malaria	11712	49.6%
2	Pregnancy & Related Completions	2492	10.6%
3	Other Acute Respiratory Infection	1895	8.0%
4	Gynecological Disorders	1656	7.0%
5	Dental Caries	1453	6.2%
6	Acute Ear Infection	1315	5.6%
7	Hypertension	1149	4.9%
8	Skin Disease and Ulcer	823	3.5%
9	Diarrhoeal Disease	571	2.4%
10	Pneumonia	529	2.2%
	TOTAL	23,595	



Source: Field Research May 2021

Fig 3: Top Ten OPD Attendance 2020

The Distribution and Charts shows the Top Ten (10) Disease of the Out-Patient department from 2020 with malaria recording the highest percentage each year at the hospital. This shows the Organisation in able to carry out its duties smoothly by keeping records of top ten diseases each year.

Interviews conducted

Information gathered for this project is based on individual interviews conducted within the organisation to find out what they understand by keeping records and its importance to the organisation.

Seven (7) persons were interviewed from various departments i.e. Administration, Out-Patient Department, Main Dispensary and Records Department. The interview revealed that though records management is important to the organisation, little attention is being placed on the need to have expert to handle all the records. It was also revealed that, there were no rules governing how records are maintained from its creation to disposition and so a high-level policy decision to set up a programme of records management for staff. Finally respondents suggested that records management programme should be since it will serve as a means of saving space and also the need to understand record keeping as a specialized function of office management which helps a great deal to improve performance.

Personal observation

From Personal observation management do not organise training programmes t manage records although staffs are willing to undergo training programme on the proper way to manage records. It was again observed that there were no laid down procedures as to how the records should be kept.

Chapter five

Summary, conclusion and recommendations

Introduction

This Chapter covers the summary of the major Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations. This is based on the information received and analysed.

Summary

The study researched into Records Management in an organisation at the Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital Takoradi. The objectives of this research are:

- To increase productivity through effective records management
- To identify the problems associated with records management in the organisation.
- Creating and maintaining adequate documentary records and then recommend effective ways to managing records.
- Strategies used to manage records in the organisation
- The impact records management has on the efficient performance of organisation. Information gathered was through questionnaires administered and retrieved from the organisation, the library and internet. Interviews were also conducted and personal observation made.

Findings

Despite the role of Records Management in the organisation, the study managed to come out with some problems facing Records Management at Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital. These are

- a. Management does not organize training programmes for employees and staff on how records are managed.
- b. Records Management programmes do not have a place in the strategic plans of the hospital.
- c. The hospital does not have enough room to keep records.
- d. There were no laid down procedures as to how they should be kept.
- e. Employees and staff lack knowledge on how to keep proper and orderly records.

Concluding information

Records Management is a process for the systematic management o recorded on all media-traditionally paper and Microfiche or Film, but increasingly information held in electronic format including, Emails, Web-based contend and database.

In the light of recent high profile cases there is an increased emphasis being placed on all organisation to be able to demonstrate good corporate governance. effective

management of records help achieve this by ensuring that sound decisions can be made based on full, accurate and up-to-date information and by ensuring that the rationale for those decisions can be traced, scrutinized and justified as necessary. Records management encompasses the whole life cycle of records from creation through operational use to find disposition.

The related literature revealed that records management policies must be imposed on electronic records as early as possible preferably prior to or at the point of creation. This is due to the ease with which electronic material can be quickly become inaccessible and effectively lost due to media decay or out-of-date technology (Technical Obsolescence) it also made known that records management is a professional management discipline, with a proven and established theoretical basis, recognised international standards and an acknowledged professional training route. Proper records keeping is needed for the organisation to do their business, recording decision and action taken, and documentary activities improve the reliability and speed of administrative work.

Information gathered from the field revealed that majority of staff want change in the style of managing records. The study revealed that they know the importance Records management which brings congestion in store room and wastage of time in Search of unavailable information.

Recommendations

The recommendation of this research is based on the conclusion made and when Implemented would solve the problems associated with Records Management at the Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital.

- Management must supervise records management staff and assist them to develop appropriate skill and capabilities.
- Management must involve Records Management programme in the strategic management plans of the hospital as a whole.
- The Records Management unit charged with carrying out the Records Management programme should produce a business plan of its own.
- There should be management for the implementation of a system for electronic records management.
- Management must try and provide enough room for the storage of records. They must provide Records Management staff with all needed systems and facilities in undertaking their duties and if possible motivate them.
- Identifying the document needed to keep for each function performed and designate a record copy of each document, deliverable, product, or other record and kept it in an official file.
- File records according to the office file plane.
- Records Management has an important role in the development and security of the hospital; it is recommended that essential records, once created be properly retained.
- Maintain an inventory of records maintained and where they are located. It is therefore the wish of the researcher that these recommendations would be put into effect to speed up administrative work and to increase productivity in the organisation.

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