

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Is only an accurate dispensing of medicine to patients sufficient for a word “quality”? At the present, community hospital is the main frontage of the healthcare service system which locates close to the community. In the year 2001, there were up to 724 community hospitals with about 28,000 beds open to the public. Nowadays, the establishment of community hospital has covered every district.

When there are a high number of hospitals, the rate of competition has been increased respectively. The competition will encourage each healthcare service center to improve its quality of services to be in accordance with the standards and customer’s satisfaction for the continued existence and success.

Nowadays, the alert of hospitals in the quality improvement can be seen extensively both in public hospitals and private hospitals. At the same time, it has been stated in Plan 8 that “Quality and efficiency improvement of organizations of all levels” is one of main health policies.

The Quality and efficiency of hospital is often judged by its service of out patient department where most patients first attend. Therefore, the out patient pharmacy department should be improved as well because it is the last unit before patient left from the hospital. The improvement of out patient department would increase patient's impression.

The principle of Total Quality Management (TQM), which emphasizes patient's opinion and satisfaction, has been effectively used to improve the quality of services.

Total Quality Management can sometimes be called Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). It is a management strategy that can be implied to every organization to improve the quality of works and to increase customer's satisfaction. It improves everyone in an organization, process, product and environment. CQI uses the basic principles of management and tools to create customer's satisfaction. Department of pharmacy implies it in personnel management, internal distribution and personal training. The results show the increasing of efficiency. Therefore, CQI will be used as a guideline

Banprak hospital, a ten beds community hospital in Ayutthaya province, handles out the patients of about 134 prescriptions per day. In 1998, Banprak hospital was one of many hospitals that join Health Care Reform projects and implies TQM or CQI Strategy to improve its quality of services. Department of pharmacy is a part of Banprak Hospital that has implied TQM or CQI Strategy to improve the quality of pharmacy service as well.

The study of the development of hospital pharmacy practices from the past to the present showed that there were 3 ages of the development. The first age was when the existence of pharmaceutical care was only for the completion of the hospital service cycle, but no awareness in accuracy of medicine dispensing. The second age of the development was focused on product-services where pharmacist had participation in checking accuracy of medicine predispending. This was continued for a very long period until pharmaceutical clinic was combined into hospital pharmacy practices resulting in the age of clinical services. It is the age that pharmacists have started to contact with the patients directly. Pharmacists could set up any activities on their own perspectives. It was until the beginning of the year 1990, a trend of customer focus service was widely well-known. Therefore, the development of hospital pharmacy practice at the present has started to be in the age of patient services which have the form of pharmaceutical care. For this form of services, pharmacist has an important role in assessing problems of drug use that happens to a particular patient. Also the pharmacists can participate in solving the problems according to pharmaceutical clinic activities and problem's characteristics.

The pharmacy department of Banprak Hospital has 5 health personnel (2 pharmacists, 2 pharmaceutical staff, 1 permanent employee). It is in the joint between the ages that accuracy of medicine predispending is emphasized with the start of customer focus. It is the same period that Banprak Hospital started to participate in Health Care Reform projects in a topic of hospital management with the use of Total Quality Management (TQM). Total quality management (TQM) refers to a seeing of importance of every personnel of the organisation and giving them the opportunity to

participate in the system. The outcomes will be that the participants have learnt and improved themselves to be the valuable human resources of the organisation. Furthermore, it found that health personnel in pharmacy department have changed their attitude from chief's command to be group participation and brainstorming for the improvement. In addition, there has been change from looking for someone's faults to what are the weaknesses of the system and find the solutions for problems. The service personnel see customer as an important person. The most important is that the trend of development has been initiated. The community pharmacy department had developed and improved the system in accordance with the policies of the hospital for example, setting up of clean and convenient drug dispensing center using 5s activities, participating in training course "development of service behaviors" for customer's satisfaction. However, these development activities were only carried out in non-systematic manner without the identified key performance indicators. Therefore, for the systematic and continuity of quality improvement of the pharmacy department, quality evaluation of pharmaceutical services is necessary in order to indicate how well the on-going system is and how to improve it.

From the literature research on quality improvement of the pharmaceutical services in Thailand, it was found that there were some development processes such as the study of learning and understanding of out patients who received medicine from Samutsongkram Hospital. The results showed that majority of the sample groups had inaccurate understanding about the medicine that they received from the hospital. Mostly, the patients used the method of remembering the external appearances of the medicine such as colour, symbol, and size of the tablets. They have no understanding

on name, properties and side effects of the medicine. The patients of 70.8 percent required advice and instruction about the medicine. The most frequent questions that patients required advices were about properties, side effects and medication instructions, which accounted as 44.0, 35.0 and 24.0 percent respectively. The most important variable that relevant to understanding of patient on medicine was liaison of the hospital which included personal liaison, drug label, and service of the dispensing room and drug types (Amornrat Chanthasart, 1994). A study of out patient services improvement of pharmacy department of Phaholpolphayuhayatta Hospital was to evaluate the level of customer satisfaction towards the pharmaceutical services of the hospital both before and after the quality improvement. The results of 2 months development showed that the score of customer satisfaction was lower than that of pre-improvement. The likely causes of this were different population characteristics, quality of the improvement process and the research design.

The above reasons inspired the pharmacy department of Banprak Hospital to intend to improve the pharmaceutical services covering all the main important processes systematically by using Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) activity as a tool for the continuity of the improvement.