

THE LIFELINE EXPRESS - A MOBILE EAR CLINIC FOR RURAL INDIA

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Abstract. The objectives of this study were to review the application and feasibility of providing screening, diagnosis, medical and surgical treatment for patients with ear discharge by setting a mobile hospital in rural India. The study was retrospective. The study involved collection of data from 1992 to 2005 from patients with ear diseases. The number of patients operated on for ear conditions and the distribution of free hearing aids were also recorded. Data regarding length of post-operative stay, complications and graft failure rates was collected from local medical centers and analyzed. Out of 304,321 patients, 4,426 were operated on for ear diseases, mostly ear perforations, grommet insertions and cholesteatoma surgeries. A total of 11,913 audiometric evaluations were done and 9,045 hearing aids were distributed. An overall success rate of 78.8% was achieved for achieving a dry ear and approximately 60% reported significant improvement in audiometric thresholds.

Key words: mobile hospital, lifeline express, ear surgery camps

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