

## ABSTRACT

A look at the Private Hospitals in Kingston revealed they are all facing various levels of financial crisis. The financial situation of these institutions may be related to the underutilization of their services. The problems facing these institutions are as unique as the Hospitals themselves and affect not only the staff and management but also the wider society.

This study targeted the St. Joseph's Hospital, to highlight specific problems it faces as it relates to the immediate community and to propose suggestions that could assist the hospital out of its crisis. The objectives of the study include an analysis of the level of utilization of the institution by the community doctors and their patients, the impression of the services by these users of the institution, as well as what alternative and additional services they would like to see being offered.

The first sample comprised of doctors from the immediate communities of Vineyard Town, Rollington Town, Windward Road, Mountain View and Franklyn Town. The second sample comprised of patients using specific departments at the St Joseph's Hospital over a given period, and the management staff of the Hospital. Two pre-coded questionnaires were used and were self administered by the respondents.

The results of the study revealed that a little over half of the doctor respondents (52%) referred patients to the Hospital. The most utilized departments by these doctors were Radiology (24%), Pharmacy (22%) and Laboratory (21%).

The exit interviews revealed that the majority of the patients using the institution were from outside communities (74%). These interviews also revealed that cost was the major concerns to

85% of the patients using the institution. Cost was the major concern to 61% of the community doctors. It served as a deterrent for 60% of the fifteen doctors who did not refer patients and the major concern for 62% of those who did refer patients. While all the Doctors indicated some additional or alternative Services they would like to see being offered, very few were willing to meet and discuss these suggestions.

With regards to the level of utilization of the services the fundamental issue of a restructuring of the institution arises. St. Joseph's Hospital could be the forerunner in this major exercise by restructuring its services to meet the needs of the communities that immediately surround the Hospital. This will not only increase the revenue base of this institution but also provide well needed services to a particularly vulnerable sector of the society.