

Plan for the better regulation of the surgical department of the Royal Infirmary. Submitted to the consideration of the managers ... / by the Royal College of Surgeons.

Contributors

Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.
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P L A N
FOR THE
BETTER REGULATION
OF THE
SURGICAL DEPARTMENT
OF THE
ROYAL INFIRMARY.

SUBMITTED TO THE
CONSIDERATION OF THE MANAGERS
OF THAT
CHARITABLE INSTITUTION,
BY
THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by D. WILLISON, Craig's Close.
1800.



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PLAN, &c.

THE Royal College of Surgeons having taken into their mature deliberation the polite communication of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, requesting their opinion respecting some alteration in the Surgical Department of that Hospital, submit, with all due deference, the following Regulations to the Managers, conceiving them an improvement upon the present mode of attendance, which, if adopted, will conduce to the well-being of the Institution, to the interest of the Community, and to the advancement of Surgery.

The College beg leave to call the attention of the Managers, *in the first place,*
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to the several heads of the Plan ; and, *in the second place*, to the reasons which induce them to think that they should be adopted.

REG. I.—That two Ordinary Surgeons from the College of Surgeons, by rotation, according to seniority, shall be in attendance at the same time, having the charge of the opposite sides of the Surgical Wards, without interfering with each other, and shall continue in attendance for six months. They shall take the charge of the Waiting Room for one week alternately.

REG. II.—That the two Surgeons next in rotation, shall attend the House regularly for at least one month, immediately before coming into office as Ordinary Surgeons.

REG. III.—That three Consulting Surgeons shall be appointed by the Managers, whose privilege it shall be, to attend

attend at all times, to give their advice ; and whose duty, to go to the Infirmary upon every sudden emergency.

REG. IV.—That the Consultations shall consist of the two Ordinary Surgeons, and the three Consulting Surgeons ; but that any gentleman, who may accidentally happen to be present, shall be called upon to give his opinion ; and that, in particular cases, the Ordinary Surgeons shall have it in their power to call any, and what number of the Members of the College they shall think proper.

REG. V.—That the Ordinary Surgeons shall perform the necessary operations on their respective patients ; but, in case of the absence of one of them, by indisposition or otherwise, the other shall operate, and do the ordinary duty of the Hospital.

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REG. VI.—That the Ordinary Surgeons shall have it in their power, to select any of the Members of the College to assist them in their operations ; and that, in case of the absence of both Ordinary Surgeons, the Consulting Surgeons shall operate, and do every duty in their place.

REG. VII.—That the Ordinary Surgeons shall give regular reports to the Students in particular cases.

REG. VIII.—That the Ordinary Surgeons shall have it in their power to give Clinical Lectures during their attendance, for three months each, or one of them for six months ; and in case neither of them incline to do so, the Consulting Surgeons in rotation, according to seniority, shall be entitled to deliver such lectures.

REG. IX.—That the Consulting Surgeons shall take care that the instruments are kept in proper order ; and shall,
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at the end of every six months, or more frequently, report to the Managers the state of the Surgical Department.

REG. X.—That the Consulting Surgeons shall not be entitled, during the time they act in that capacity, to take their rotation as Ordinary Surgeons.

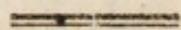
REG. XI.—That one of the Consulting Surgeons shall go out, by rotation, every year, to begin at the end of the second year, and shall not be again eligible to that office for at least four years.

REG. XII.—That the Surgeons shall have the power of admitting and dismissing their own patients.

REG. XIII.—That every Member of the College shall be summoned to the operations.

Having thus stated the several articles of the Plan, the College proceed to offer
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the reasons which induce them to think that they should be carried into effect.



REG. I. — That two Ordinary Surgeons from the College of Surgeons, by rotation, according to seniority, shall be in attendance at the same time, having the charge of the opposite sides of the Surgical Wards, without interfering with each other; and shall continue in attendance for six months. They shall take the charge of the waiting-room for one week alternately.

At present, only one Surgeon attends the house at a time; and it frequently happens, that the surgical patients are so numerous, as to render it almost impossible for any individual, however assiduous, to pay the necessary attention to each case under his care. Besides, there are often so many Students, that not one half of them can get near enough, either to
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see the patient, or hear the opinion of the attending Surgeon. In consequence of this, there is sometimes a degree of bustle and confusion in the wards, which ought, on every occasion, to be avoided.

By the Surgeon continuing in attendance for six months at a time, it may be presumed that he will be more interested in the cases under his management, and will find it necessary, for his own convenience, to form such arrangements, in respect of his private business, as will leave him full time to pay every attention to his duty in the Infirmary.

By thus taking the charge of the waiting-room alternately, the attending Surgeons will have an equal chance of cases of consequence coming under their care, and will have an opportunity, during the intermediate week, of attending particularly to the new cases, and of arranging the wards for the reception of other patients.

REG. II.—That the two Surgeons next in rotation shall attend the house regularly, for at least one month immediately before coming into office as Ordinary Surgeons.

By this means, the Surgeons next in rotation will have an opportunity of informing themselves of the nature of the different cases which may possibly come under their care, and of considering of such plans of cure as may appear to them most eligible.

A similar regulation exists under the present establishment, and has always been attended with the best effects.

REG. III. — That three Consulting Surgeons shall be appointed by the Managers, whose privilege it shall be, to attend at all times, to give their advice; and whose duty, to go to the Infirmary upon every sudden emergency.

The Managers having the appointment of the consulting Surgeons, it naturally follows, that those Gentlemen will be more particularly responsible to the Managers ; and as they will probably be selected from among the older Members of the College, they may be supposed capable of giving such hints and advices to the Ordinary Surgeons, as will be of great service to them in the execution of their duty.

REG. IV.—That the Consultations shall consist of the two Ordinary Surgeons, and the three Consulting Surgeons ; but that any gentleman, who may accidentally happen to be present, shall be called upon to give his opinion ; and that, in particular cases, the Ordinary Surgeons shall have it in their power to call any, and what number of the Members of the College they shall think proper.

Four or five Surgeons are certainly, in general, sufficient for a consultation ;

tation ; but sometimes cases occur, of such importance, and of a nature so intricate, that it may be adviseable to have the opinion of a greater number. These cases present themselves most frequently, in hospital practice, in consequence of their having been originally much neglected.

At present, as there is only one Surgeon, it may so happen, that none of the Gentlemen forming the consultation, excepting the attending Surgeon himself, has had an opportunity of considering, or has even seen any of the cases he is to decide upon, till the moment of the consultation ; whereas, according to this regulation, at least three of the five (of whom the consultation ought to consist) must have had an opportunity of seeing and considering the cases, before they are called upon to give their opinion.

It is hoped that the Managers will give particular instructions to such Consulting Surgeons as they may think proper to appoint,

point, to be very regular in their attendance to this part of their duty ; as it frequently happens, under the present establishment, that the attending Surgeon cannot procure a consultation, even in cases of the utmost importance.

REG. V.—That the Ordinary Surgeons shall perform the necessary operations on their respective patients ; but, in case of the absence of one of them by indisposition, or otherwise, the other shall operate, and do the ordinary duty of the Hospital.

The first part of this regulation is a matter of course ; the last provides against the occasional absence of one of the Ordinary Surgeons, by making his coadjutor perform his duty : and as it must be presumed, that these Gentlemen cannot fail to have some idea of the nature of the important cases under each others care, this seems to be the best manner of making up for the absence of either.

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REG. VI.—That the Ordinary Surgeons shall have it in their power, to select any of the Members of the College to assist them in their operations ; and that, in case of the absence of both Ordinary Surgeons, the Consulting Surgeons shall operate, and do every duty in their place.

This is a regulation of the first importance ; as the success of every operation depends, in a great measure, (perhaps even more than is generally imagined), upon the knowledge and dexterity of the assistant : The Surgeon ought likewise to have a thorough reliance on his assistant, such as only a friendly intercourse, and long habit of assisting each other in private, can give him : the assistant, on the other hand, should be acquainted with every peculiarity of operating in the Surgeon, and should know the moment of interfering, without incumbering him : they should be dexterous in administering to each other, as the two hands of one body.

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The last part of this regulation is calculated for preventing any irregularity, in case of the absence of both the Ordinary Surgeons.

REG. VII.—That the Ordinary Surgeons shall give regular reports to the students, in particular cases.

No doubt can be entertained, that, unless such reports be given, it is hardly possible for the students to get much information; and even the Surgeon himself, in consequence of the multiplicity of cases under his management, must be frequently at a loss to recollect the minute particulars of each patient's situation, without having recourse to the reports of the former day.

REG. VIII.—That the Ordinary Surgeons shall have it in their power to give Clinical Lectures, &c.

The improvement of Surgery, is an object of the first importance to the community;

community ; and it appears to the College, that nothing leads more directly to such improvement, than the delivering of Clinical Lectures : for it not only requires, on the part of the Surgeon, the most minute attention to the case, but obliges him also to study the profession in all its branches, with assiduity and perseverance.

REG. IX.—That the Consulting Surgeons shall take care that the instruments are kept in proper order ; and shall, at the end of every six months, or more frequently, report to the Managers the state of the Surgical Department.

By this regulation, the instruments will always be kept in the best possible order ; and the Managers will be put in possession of every necessary information respecting the state of the Surgical Department.

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REG. X.—That the Consulting Surgeons shall not be entitled, during the time they act in that capacity, to take their rotation as Ordinary Surgeons.

By this regulation, the consultation will be kept full: Besides, were the consulting Surgeons allowed to take their rotation, it would inevitably produce much confusion; because it might so happen, that two of them would come on as Ordinary Surgeons at the same time; consequently, the Managers would either be obliged to appoint two other Consulting Surgeons for the time, or the consultations would be reduced to only three, which is too small a number, as the attendance of each individual cannot always be depended upon.

The 11th, 12th, and 13th articles of the Plan, do not require any comment.

In order to put the above Plan in execution, it will be necessary for the Managers to appoint two Surgeons clerks, instead of the House Surgeon. And although, from this circumstance, a trifling additional expence may be incurred, it will be amply compensated, by the certainty of there being always at hand, a person qualified to take a temporary charge, in case of any sudden emergency.

The College have enacted a by-law, which will prevent any gentleman, who may in future enter with them, from taking his rotation as Ordinary Surgeon, until he have been three years a Member of the College.

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The Royal College, having thus endeavoured to explain, in the simplest manner, their reasons for adopting this plan, beg leave to assure the Managers, that no exertion shall ever be wanting on their part, to promote and secure the prosperity of the Royal Infirmary; and that they will, at all times, be happy to consult with the Managers upon a subject of so much real importance to the interest of the public.

The Royal College have the satisfaction to think, that the individual Members have hitherto conducted themselves, in the discharge of their duty, with skill and attention; and it is their opinion, that the continued exercise of these qualities, aided by this improved mode of conducting the Surgical Department of
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the Hospital, would place the Surgery of that House on the most respectable footing, and maintain the character of an Institution, founded upon the truest principles of Humanity, and which has contributed so much to advance the renown of the first Medical School in Europe.

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