



San Miguel Centre
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INFORMATION SHEET No. 4

BEING ADMITTED INTO HOSPITAL IN SPAIN

The overall standard of medical care received in hospitals in this region is excellent, but crucial differences exist between caring for an inpatient in a UK hospital and a Spanish hospital.

In the case of admission as an inpatient into the Accident and Emergency department of a Spanish hospital, visiting rights will be limited and the hospital staff will attend to the needs of the patient. However, on admission to a general ward, the 'Duty of Care' is a shared responsibility between the hospital and the patient's carers. Neither side of this partnership will provide the total care. The hospital will provide the medical care, including all medication and food. The patient's carers (these can be family, friends or professional carers) must provide the non medical and personal care (i.e. day to day care). For this purpose a bed or chair is usually provided for those looking after the patient. It is important to note that when family or friends are unavailable the patient must employ someone else to provide the non medical care and support required.

Patients particularly need care and support following an operation when they may not be mobile enough to get out of bed on their own to visit the bathroom. They may have "drips" attached to them and require bed pans etc. They may need help with washing or (in the case of male patients) with shaving. They may also require assistance at meal times. Sometimes the food tray delivered to the room is put in a place that cannot be reached by the patient. This tends to happen when the top of bed side cabinet is cluttered. The meals provided will, naturally, be of the Spanish variety. It is also important to understand that in a hospital with single rooms it can be very lonely if the patient is left unsupported overnight or for any length of time.

The fact that some patients, especially foreigners, are unprepared for this or have no local family network to call on is not the fault of the Valencian Regional Health Authority (SVS) who provide an excellent medical service. More correctly, it is a difference that the foreigner may be unaware of prior to being admitted to hospital.

Therefore, if you are going into hospital or know someone who is about to be admitted, please advise family and friends and ask them to become involved. Alternatively, a private nursing or care agency can be contacted and arrangements can be made for one of their staff to sit with a patient during the night if necessary. Fees for this service vary (and often are based on hourly rates) and should be verified before engaging the nursing agency services. The HELP Association of Vega Baja provides hospital visiting teams at the Vega Baja Hospital and Torrevieja Hospital. Details of nursing agencies can be obtained from members of the team or by telephoning the HELP Association of Vega Baja office on 966 723 733

One last point; arrangements should be made for the care of any pets left at home whilst the patient is in hospital.