

What if our collective rights are being violated in healthcare?

Groups of people or communities can have a common need and problem. For example, HIV patients do not have access to certain medicines they are supposed to get. In these cases the people should come together, form a group and try to find a way to get the government to meet their needs. You can for example call a meeting with the Community Health Forum. If they don't do anything you should then complain to the management of the clinic or hospital. They are the people who can address the problem and report back to you. In case you have any problems or need to get information, please contact any of the numbers in the information box.

Why should we complain about public policies when they limit our personal rights?

Another way to use human rights is to try to change policies which do not promote people's rights and for better conditions for patients. You have the right to question public policy that may affect your health or your access to health care facilities. In case of complaints you can discuss them with your health forum or hospital board. By working together you can find out what the problem is and find ways to deal with it. When you don't speak up they will not know what the problem is. Or they do know, but will not deal with it because nobody complains.

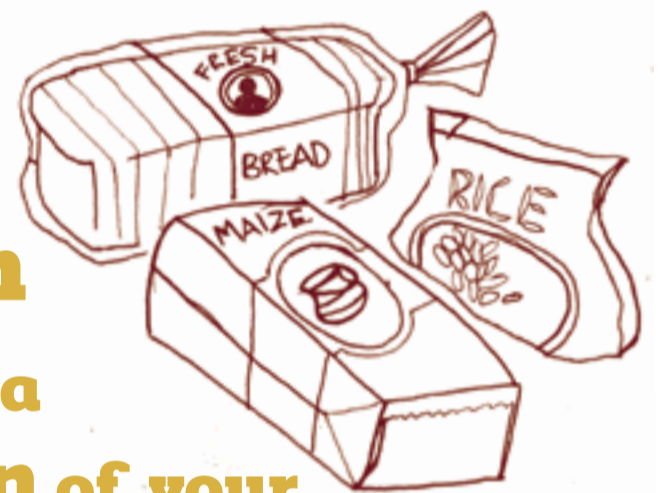
Also, if someone has had their rights violated, some redress has to be provided. In this manner, human rights strengthen agency - our ability to understand and act to change the world we live in. On the other hand it is also important for the community to understand difficulties that hospital and clinic management have at a system level. One might say for example that his right to health is not being recognized because he is being referred to another hospital for treatment. If you ask about this the hospital can explain to you that certain types of care are only available at certain health care facilities.

Complain and clarify our needs as individual or as a group

When members of the public realize they share a common problem or have the same need, it is good to come together and organize around that need. Groups usually have a stronger impact than individuals. For example, you are not treated with respect by your doctor and want to complain about this. It is possible to do it as an individual, but there may be other people who have the same experience as well. You can try to talk to people about this and form a group with people who want to complain as well.



Not having enough food is a violation of your right to health as well!



People need food to stay and get healthy. Malnutrition and hunger are experienced by many people in the same communities. You need food in your stomach to take medicine, you need food to feel good, you need food to survive. As a community you can get together and write letters of request and support to your government on for example:

- Basic Income Grant
- Provision of free basic commodities and nutrition pack

How can we complain when we do not know and understand what our rights are exactly?

You are not treated well and think someone or the hospital is violating your rights. The best thing to do is stay calm and respectful towards the health care workers and contact any of the numbers in the contact box. They can tell you if your rights are being violated or not and take further action. It is okay to stand up for yourself even if you are not right.

What if your rights are violated at a hospital or clinic?

There are certain rights and responsibilities you have as a patient when you go to public health care facilities. (See pamphlet Patients rights charter)

If you feel you are not treated in this way please contact any of the numbers in the information box.

