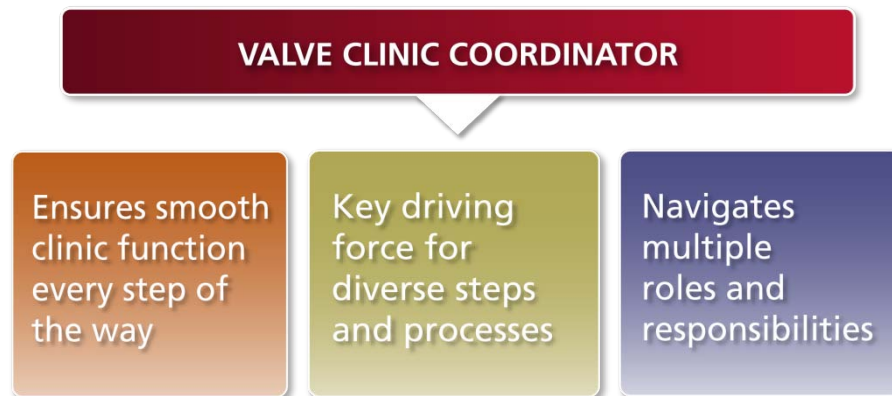


Fact Sheet: Valve Clinic

A valve clinic is a system or set of protocols that are implemented within a hospital system to ensure that patients with heart valve disease receive optimal care. The development of heart valve clinics has been driven by the awareness that optimal patient outcomes are achieved through a multi-disciplinary team approach to patient care.

The main goals of a valve clinic are to ensure patients undergo comprehensive evaluation by a multi-disciplinary team of specialists from cardiology, cardiac surgery, anesthesia, nursing and others, as well as to receive timely follow-up to manage disease progression as well as necessary treatment when appropriate. Depending on the severity of their disease and other factors, treatment options may include medical management, valve repair or valve replacement.

While some hospitals invest in physical infrastructure to create a dedicated space for patients who visit a valve clinic, others have implemented virtual valve clinics to manage valve disease patients. An overlapping feature of both models is the presence of a dedicated heart valve clinic coordinator, usually a nurse, who serves as the point of contact for patients and the clinical teams, tracks patients to ensure necessary follow-ups are conducted, and streamlines logistical aspects of the clinic.



Features of a Successful Valve Clinic Include:

- A system-wide protocol that identifies patients with severe valve disease
- Multidisciplinary team approach to patient evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment recommendation
- An integrated referral process that facilitates timely patient evaluation
- Clinical data collection to track diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of patients referred to the valve clinic
- Education for a referral network on valve clinic processes and goals