

PATIENT SATISFACTION IN A PUBLIC SECTOR TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL

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ABSTRACT

Background: Health care scenario is changing all over the world. Patient satisfaction is one of the established yardsticks to measure success of the services being provided in the hospitals and patient satisfaction is one of the most important goals of any health system. **Objective:** To measure the satisfaction of patients attending the OPD as well as patients admitted in various wards in a public sector tertiary care hospital. **Subjects and Methods:** 1535 patients were included in this descriptive study to know their perceptions towards the hospital, reason for choosing the hospital, perception towards registration process, basic amenities & perception towards doctors and other staff. Pre-structured questionnaire was administered and data collected from patients attending the OPD as well as from admitted patients in various wards. The data was entered and analyzed in SPSS version 15. **Results:** The study included 1535 patients attending various OPDs and wards. Demographic data consisting of, education, occupation, and marital status was collected. Patients were also inquired about the concerned department. About (52%) patients were males. Majority of the patients were married (72%). Regarding the registration (74%) of OPD patients reported that registration counter was overcrowded. In our study 84% were in the category of illiterate and (10%) were above matric. Majority of patients were satisfied with the facilities available as well as with the behavior of doctors (83%) and other health staff. **Conclusion:** It was concluded that most of the patients were satisfied with the behavior and care by the doctors and majority patients who came for health care were illiterate, married, housewife. Most of the patients found that registration counter was overcrowded, have no problem in locating departments.

Key words: Patient satisfaction, Tertiary care hospital, Doctors

INTRODUCTION

Patient satisfaction, is the degree of congruency between a patient's expectations of ideal care and his/her perception of the real care (s) he receives.¹ Health care scenario is fast changing all over the world. Patient satisfaction is one of the established yardsticks to measure success of the services being provided in the hospitals and patient satisfaction is one of the most important goals of any health system, but it is difficult to measure the satisfaction and gauge responsiveness of health systems as not only the clinical but also the nonclinical outcomes of care do influence the customer satisfaction.²

A patient is the ultimate consumer of the hospital. He/She is the person in distress and he expects from hospital comfort, care and cure.³ Once the patient come to the hospital and experience the facilities, they may become either satisfied or dissatisfied. Patient satisfaction assessment is

playing an increasingly important role in quality of care reforms and health-care delivery. Patient's perceptions about health care system seem to have been largely ignored by the health care managers in the developing countries.⁴ Patient's satisfaction depends on many factors such as quality of clinical services provided, availability of medicine, behavior of doctor and other health staff, cost of services, hospital infrastructure, physical comfort, emotional support and respect for patient preferences.⁵ Health care consumers today, are more sophisticated than in the past and now demand increasingly more accurate and valid evidence of health care quality. Patient-centered outcomes have taken center stage as the primary means of measuring the effectiveness of health care delivery.⁶

It is being accepted that the patient's feedback is very important indicator for quality of healthcare. Patient's feedback is very valuable for the hospital management as a guideline to improve quality of services.⁷ Mismatch between patient expectation and the service received is related to decreased satisfaction.⁸ Therefore, assessing patient perspective gives them a voice, which can make public health services more responsive to people's need and expectations.⁹ Patients (and clients) use different types of health care services i.e; promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitation care services.

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Patient's feedback is necessary to identify problems that need to be resolved in improving the health services. This type of feedback triggers a real interest that can lead to a change in their culture and in the perception of patients.¹⁰ Health care services utilization can be enhanced/improved by assessing the satisfaction of patients. This study was designed to assess the satisfaction of patients regarding services provided in this tertiary care hospital of public sector.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

This hospital based, cross sectional, descriptive study, was conducted in Sheikh Zayed Hospital, Rahim Yar Khan, from 1st July, 2012 to 31st October, 2012. All the patients visiting out patients department and patients admitted in different wards were included in this study. The patients were between the ages of 19 to 79 years, of both sexes. Those patients who were severely ill and were not able to communicate, data was collected from the attendants of those patients.

The data collected from the respondents was recorded in the pre-designed performa. Performa was consisting of questions regarding age, gender, education and patients medical history., Patient satisfaction regarding doctors, and facilities in hospital

A total of 1535 patients were included. The duration of study was 4 months. The performas were thoroughly checked and completed before including the study: Data was recorded in the SPSS version 15, and relevant analysis was done.

RESULTS

The study included 1535 patients attending various OPDs and wards. Demographic data consisting of, education, occupation, and marital status was collected. Patients were also inquired about the concerned department, type of visit .Whether it was first visit, follow up visit or referred from other Hospital.

About 52% patients were males. Majority of the patients were married (71%). Regarding the registration, 73% of OPD patients reported that registration, counter was overcrowded. In our study 83% were in the category of illiterate and only 10% were above matric. (Table. I)

It was noted that 45% of the patients reported "Satisfactory" behavior of doctors, whereas, 48% reported it as "good". When asked about

explanation of treatment given by doctors, 84% were found satisfied.

Patients who perceived that the time given by the doctors is adequate, were 89%. Present study reported that 77% patients come to hospital for treatment and (22%) for follow-up. Majority of the patients were checked by MO (56%) and their response. (Table II)

Table I: Characteristics of patients (N=1535)

		Frequency	%age
Age (years)	<20	281	18
	20-29	276	17.98
	30-39	262	17.07
	40-49	352	22.93
	50-59	122	7.95
	60-69	179	11.66
	70-79	63	4.10
Gender			
	Males	807	52.57
	Females	728	47.43
Education			
	Illiterate	1287	83.84
	Matric	93	6.06
	Above Matric	155	10.10
Residence			
	Urban		
	Rural		
Marital status			
	Married	1104	71.92
	Unmarried	431	28.08
Occupation			
	Businessman	63	4.10
	shopkeeper	45	2.93
	Labor	317	20.65
	Employee	122	7.95
	House wife	633	41.24
	Student	141	9.19
	Farmer	135	8.79
	No	79	5.15
Problems in locating the department			
	Yes	383	24
	No	1152	75
Was registration counter overcrowded			
	Yes	1130	73
	No	405	26

Table II: Patients perception towards doctors

Behaviour of the doctor?	
Good	750(48%)
satisfactory	697(45%)
poor	88(5%)
Patient perceives that time given by the doctor is adequate	
Adequate	1370(89%)
Inadequate	165(10%)
Patients come to hospital for?	
Followup	353(22%)
Treatment	1182(77%)
Have patient got checked by doctor	
Yes	1503((97%)
No	30(1%)
Patients checked by whom?	
Medical Officer	867(56%)
Assistant Professor	342(22%)
Associate Professor	125(8%)
professor	201(13%)
Did doctor tell the patient about disease?	
Yes	1370(89%)
No	165(10%)
Did doctor tell the patient about treatment?	
Yes	1370(89%)
No	165(10%)
Are the patients satisfied by doctor?	
Yes	1318(85%)
No	217(14%)

DISCUSSION

Measuring patient satisfaction has many purposes, but there are three main reasons to do so. Such interviews help to evaluate health care services from the patient's point of view, facilitate

the identification of problems and help to generate ideas towards resolving these problems.

Patient dissatisfaction occurs when the patients' experience of the service falls short of expectations, while patient satisfaction occurs when the patients' experience of the service exceeds their expectation.¹²

This study showed that, patients were more satisfied with behavior of doctors (93%). Arpita Bhattacharya et al also reported 98.2% patients were satisfied with behavior of doctors which is similar with our study. In another study conducted in India, it was noted that, 94% patients did not find any problem in locating the hospital or locating different departments within the hospital (70%). Regarding the registration 80% of patients reported that registration counter was overcrowded. However, almost 63% of patients were satisfied with behavior of registration clerk. Majority of patients were satisfied with the basic amenities. About 66% of patients reported that doctor's behavior as good and felt that doctor gave adequate time to them (77%).¹³ This is comparable to our study, in which majority of the patients were satisfied with the behavior of doctors, whereas, majority of the patients have no problem in locating different departments.

Crow *et al*, suggested various explanations for why older people generally report higher satisfaction. For instance, it may reflect that older patients may be more accepting than younger patients. Moreover, older patients may also have lower expectations based on previous experiences when the standards were lower.

A cross-sectional study was conducted to determine the level of patients' satisfaction with hospital care in Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal among inpatients during the month of May 2007. Most of the patients (260, 74.1%) were satisfied with the overall care received. Patients were found to be unsatisfied in the domains pertaining to admission procedure (145, 41.3%), comfort and cleanliness (164, 46.7%), food service (194, 55.3%).¹⁴ In our study, majority of the patients told that registration counter was over crowded.

In a study conducted to measure the satisfaction of OPD (Outpatient Department) patients in public health facilities of Madhya Pradesh in India, it was found that most of the respondents were youth and having low level of education. This is comparable to our study. In that study, patients were more satisfied with the basic amenities at higher health facilities compared to lower level facilities. It was also

observed that the patients were more satisfied with the behavior of doctors and staff at lower health facilities compared to higher level facilities, and this is comparable to our study.¹⁵ In another study, on four hundred OPD patients to know their perceptions towards the hospital, reason for choosing the hospital, perception towards registration process, basic amenities and perception towards doctors and other staff. The major reason for choosing the health facility was skilled doctors. Majority of patients were satisfied with the facilities available, as well as, with the behavior of doctors and other health staff.¹⁶

In a study, in Pakistan to gather information on existing prescription practices, dispensing practices and patient satisfaction in government health centers, it was noted that, forty seven percent of encounters involved children under 15 years of age. Female patients comprised of 56% and the mean age of the entire sample was 26 years. The mean dispensing time was only 38 seconds, the mean consultation time was 1.79 minutes and the average number of drugs per prescription turned out to be 2.7 out of which only 1.6 drugs were being dispensed from the facility. More than half of the prescriptions contained antibiotics and 15% of patients were prescribed with injectables. Only half of the patients expressed satisfaction with their visit to health facility, this is in contrast to our study, where most of the patients were satisfied.¹⁷

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that most of the patients were satisfied with the behavior and care by the doctors and majority patients who came for health care were illiterate, married, housewives. Most of the patients found that registration counter was overcrowded, have no problem in locating departments. The health care delivered can be improved furthermore once the organization, measures the delivery of quality of care on ongoing basis and continually making small changes accordingly.

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