

ASSESSMENT OF PATIENT SATISFACTION: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY AT OUT-PATIENT DEPARTMENT OF A TERTIARY CARE PUBLIC HOSPITAL IN JABALPUR

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ABSTRACT

Background: Patients satisfaction has always been important issue for physicians and hospital administrators. A patient is the ultimate consumer of the hospital. He is the person in distress and expects comfort, care and cure from hospital. He can better judge the performance of a hospital.

Aims & Objectives: The present study was conducted with the objective to assess the level of satisfaction in patients attending the OPD of NSCB MC Hospital, Jabalpur, regarding waiting time, professional care and facilities available at OPDs.

Materials and Methods: This cross sectional study was carried out at Out Patient Departments of NSCB Medical College, Jabalpur. A total of 422 patients or their attendants >15 year, were chosen as respondents by systemic random sampling, in the period of 62 days from 9 OPDs. A 30- item questionnaire was administered, and responses were noted in term of excellent, good, fair and poor.

Results: A total of 400 forms were analyzed out of 422. Mean age of the respondents was 39.08 years. 33% were illiterate and 43% were working on daily wages. The mean waiting time for OPD registration was 25.13 minute, and for consultation, it was 33.04 minutes. A total of 82% respondents were satisfied with examination of doctor, and 70% were satisfied that doctor explained well their queries, but most of them were unsatisfied with public facility and signage available at OPDs.

Conclusion: An assessment of the level of patient satisfaction related to different OPD care reminded us of certain areas that need improvements, to improve hospital's services - like waiting area, appropriate signboards, availability of public facility, like drinking water, and cleanliness.

Key Words: Patient Satisfaction; Outpatient Department (OPD); Jabalpur

Introduction

Health care is the prevention, treatment, and management of illness; and the preservation of mental and physical well-being, through the services offered by the medical, nursing, and allied health professions. Patients are the foundation of our medical practice. It is very obvious, that patient's satisfaction is an important component of the health care facilities, in this competitive modern era. Patient satisfaction as healthcare recipients, is reaction to their care. It is a reaction - that is composed of both, a cognitive evaluation, and an emotional response. No right or wrong, all reactions are valid.^[1] In the hospital, the Outpatient Department is often called "Shop Window".^[1] At OPD, patients are dissatisfied with unsuitable/inadequate service hours, long waiting time, delay in consultation, lack of proper guidance, and inadequate drug supply etc.^[1,2]

Now-a-days, the patients are looking for hassle free and quick services in this fast growing world. Recent studies have shown a direct correlation between patient satisfaction and image of health care facility. Thus a healthcare facility would be better positioned to succeed in a competitive health care environment, that demands

quality and cost-efficiency.^[3] Quality has two dimensions. One has to do with technical excellence, and the other relates to subjective experience. In health care, it is subjective dimension, that patients experience most directly.^[4] In a helping profession, the ultimate judge of performance is the person helped, in terms of respect for patient values, preferences, and needs, coordination and integration of care, information, communication and education, physical comfort, emotional support and alleviation of fear and anxiety. ^[4]We were interested in current topic, because satisfaction is recognized as an important parameter for assessing the quality of patient care services, and very few studies have been done in our tertiary care hospital of NSCB Medical College, Jabalpur, to measure patient's satisfaction. The findings of the present study can be utilized to know and improve the services at public health facilities.

Therefore, the present study was conducted, with an objective to assess the level of satisfaction in patients attending the OPD of NSCB MC Hospital, Jabalpur, regarding waiting time, professional care, depth of relationship, behavior of hospital staff and facilities available at OPD.

Materials and Methods

This cross sectional study was carried out in NSCB Medical college & hospital of Jabalpur district, during the period of 62 days (≈ 2 months) - October 6 2013 to December 6, 2013. This is the only tertiary care public health centre in Mahakaushal area.^[5]

Sample Size: The sample size was calculated with the help of sample size software n-master (version 2.0) based on the 50% proportion in one group at 95% CI and 5% precision. it can also be calculated by using the formula, $n = Z^2pq/d^2$ (where $Z = 1.96$ at 95% confidence; $p =$ prevalence of patient satisfaction, $q = 1-p$; $d =$ absolute allowable error. For this study, we presumed maximum variability, hence $p = 0.5$; $q = 0.5$; $d = 5\%$. Sample size thus yielded was of 384. Adding a 10% for incomplete answers, the total number came out to be 422. Thus 422 new patients, attending OPD at the NSCBMC hospital, Jabalpur, was interviewed, from the 9 most frequently attended OPDs [(Medicine (90), General surgery (65), Obstetrics and Gynaecology (62), Paediatrics (45), Orthopaedics (40), Ophthalmology (40), ENT (40), Tuberculosis and Chest diseases (20), skin (20)], according to their proportion in average per day OPD attendance, based on the last week's new OPD registrations. Follow up patients, patients from hospital staff, and patients not giving consent were not included.

Sampling: Systemic random selection sampling was used to select representative patients as respondents. For a particular department, we obtained out sampling interval $[(\frac{x}{y} * z)]$ $x =$ average one day attendance, $y =$ decided proportion of sample and $z =$ duration of data collection- for each department 6 days in a week]. Then a random number was chosen, and every n th patient was selected for the interview, till the required sample size was completed from each department.

The study was conducted after obtaining the approval from the research ethics committee, and permission was sought from the hospital superintendent. Informed consent was obtained from patients. The patients were told to give their honest responses, and were also explained that the purpose of the study was to assess the patient satisfaction of services provided by the hospital, so as to bring about further improvement of services.

A 30 item pre-tested and pre-structured closed ended questionnaires was given to the literate, and illiterate respondents aged ≥ 15 years or their attendants were interviewed, at the end of their outpatient visit, between

9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The items in the questionnaire referred to the particulars of the patient; such as name, age, sex, education, occupation, name of the department, waiting time, experience about professional care, depth of relationship, guidance and signage, and various other OPD services. The questionnaire included choices like Excellent (E), Good (G), Fair (F) and Poor (P). E+G were collectively taken as satisfied.

Statistical Analysis: Data were analyzed using the statistical software in Microsoft excel 2007. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for all the categorical variables. Mean and Standard deviation were calculated for age and waiting time for various variables.

Results

A total of 400 forms were filled, with all entries correct, and were analysed - out of 422 patient interviewed. 22 forms were rejected because of being incompletely filled. [Table -1] Out of 400 respondents, there were 264 (66%) males, and 136 (34%) females. 136 (34%) were between 15-29 yr, 124 (31%) were between 30-44 yr, 76 (19%) were between 45-59 yr, and 64 (16%) were ≤ 60 years of age - with mean age of 39.08 (± 14.834) years. Number of illiterates was the highest i.e. 132 (33%); whereas the lowest percentage was of the graduates and beyond i.e. 48 (12%). Regarding the respondents' profession, those working on daily wages, were most represented i.e. 172 (43%); whereas the salaried people were least represented i.e. 39 (9.8%).

With regard to waiting time [Table 2], 45% of the respondents said, that it took 15-30 min for registration (average time = 25.13 \pm 14.143 min.). A total of 40% of the respondents said, that they reached concerned department conveniently in 10-15 min (average time = 14.2 \pm 9.141 min.). The time required for consulting the doctor was less than 5 minutes as per 2% of the respondents, 10 to 15 minutes as per 12% of the respondents, 16 to 30 minutes as per 36% of the respondents, 31 to 60 minutes as per 46% of the respondents, > 60 minutes as per 4% of the respondents (average time = 33.04 \pm 14.156 min.). Time taken for getting the investigation lab slip was 16-30 min as per 48.8 % of the respondents (average time = 21.50 \pm 11.420 min). Time required in getting medicine from store was 16-30 min as per 38% of the respondents, and 31-60 min as per 36% of the respondents (average time = 30.93 \pm 15.149 min).

A total of 72% of respondents said that doctor was good to examine everything, and as per 10% patients, doctor

was excellent to check everything – collectively, satisfactory for 82% of the respondents. 70% respondents were satisfied that doctor explained well their queries, and 56 % respondents said that doctor explained satisfactorily about medicines and precautions. But when we analysed their understanding about illnesses, it was considered that it was not satisfactory, as 62 % respondents did not understand about their illness completely after consultation. [Table-3]

Table-1: Distribution of the respondents according to the age, sex, occupation and education (n = 400)

Parameters	N		%	
	N	%	N	%
Age (Years)	15-29	136	34	
	30-44	124	31	
	45-59	76	19	
	60 and above	64	16	
Sex	Male	264	66	
	Female	136	34	
Education	Illiterate	132	33	
	Primary	88	22	
	Middle	72	18	
	Secondary	60	15	
	Bachelor or more	48	12	
Profession	Students	64	16	
	Housewife	76	19	
	Working daily wages	172	43	
	Salaried	39	9.8	
	Retired	17	4.2	
	Others (farmer, unemployed etc.)	32	8	

Table-2: Distribution of responses of the respondents regarding waiting time (n = 400)

	Perceived Time (Minutes)										Mean	SD
	< 5		10-15		16-30		31-60		> 60			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Getting OPD slip	24	6	104	26	180	45	72	18	20	5	25.13	14.143
Reaching consultant room	104	26	160	40	120	30	16	4	0	0	14.2	9.141
Waiting for Consultation	8	2	48	12	144	36	184	46	16	4	33.04	14.156
Getting lab slip from OPD	45	11.2	104	26	195	48.8	56	14	0	0	21.50	11.420
Getting medicine from store	16	4	64	16	150	38	146	36	24	6	30.93	15.149

A total of 60% respondents were satisfied that doctors tried to know everything about them and interacted well, 40% said it was fair interaction. 16% respondents were excellently free in sharing some private thing to doctor, 34% workably free, while 36% respondents were not so free in sharing private things to doctor. 62% respondents were satisfied that doctor was good, and gave enough time to explain everything, and gave complete information about illness. Guidance and signage facility for reaching up to various OPDs was satisfactory according to 40% of respondents only, 60% respondents said that it was unsatisfactory. Only 26% were satisfied with signage to reach up to consultant room, while more

than 60% were unsatisfied with guidance and signage to reach up to consultant room, investigation site and medicine store.

Table-3: Distribution of responses of the respondents regarding different aspects of OPD care

Responded	E		G		F		P		E+G satisfied %
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Professional Care									
Careful to examine everything	40	10	288	72	72	18	0	0	82
Doctor ready to answer questions	56	14	224	56	104	26	16	4	70
Told everything about medicine and precautions	32	8	192	48	112	28	64	16	56
Do you understand as illness better after meeting	40	10	112	28	184	46	64	16	38
Depth of Relationship									
Does the doctors tried to know everything about respondents	16	4	224	56	160	40	0	0	60
Does respondents free to tell some private thing to doctor	64	16	136	34	144	36	56	14	50
Doctor gave enough time to explain	36	9	196	49	164	41	4	1	58
Guidance & Signage									
OPD	80	20	80	20	176	44	64	16	40
Consultant room	8	2	96	24	200	50	96	24	26
Investigation sites	0	0	80	20	232	58	88	22	20
Medicine store	0	0	96	24	192	48	112	28	24
OPD Services									
Were there different counters for senior citizen, Physical hand cape, Male and Female	0	0	80	20	96	24	224	56	20
Were the OPD workers cooperative with respondents	0	0	152	38	128	32	120	30	38
Were there proper sitting arrangement	0	0	88	22	160	40	152	38	22
Were there drinking water facility	0	0	48	12	184	46	168	42	12
Were there ventilation and toilet facility	0	0	56	14	184	46	160	40	14
Were there cleanliness	0	0	96	24	192	48	112	28	24

In observations related to different OPD facilities, most of the respondents termed it unsatisfactory. Only 20% were satisfied with registration counters, 385 were satisfied with behaviour of OPD staff, 22% were satisfied with sitting arrangements, 12% were satisfied with drinking water facility, 14% were satisfied with toilet facility, and 24% were satisfied with cleanliness.

Discussion

This study was done to assess the satisfaction of patients with the OPD services, being rendered in the tertiary care hospitals. In this study, a greater proportion of respondents (66%) were male, and the mean age was 39 years. Narinder K Saini et al.^[6] also found that 72.3% of the responders were male, and the mean age of the responders was 35.90 years in a tertiary care hospital. Ranjeeta Kumari et al.^[7] found that accessibility was difficult for 42% patients, and waiting time was more

than 30 min for 62.5% of those attending the tertiary level health facility – while in this study, it was found that waiting time for registration was more than 30 min for only 23% of those attending the tertiary level health facility. The registration time was different from the observation of Syed Mohamed Aljunid^[8] in his study in Malaysia - where the patients waited for 52 minutes on an average. Prahlad Rai Sodani et al.^[9] found that most of the patients (54%) at district hospital waited less than 10 minutes for the doctor; but in a tertiary care hospital in this study, it was found that 46% had waiting time of 30 to 60 min for consulting a doctor. Prasanna KS et al.^[10] found, that time spent in the pharmacy was satisfactory in only 53% of the patients (average time = 26.8 ± 18.36 min.). We also found that average time spent in getting medicine from store was 30.93 ± 15.149 minutes.

The satisfaction regarding the examination done by the doctors was higher than that found in Peerasak Lertrakarnnon et al (69.1%),^[11] and Janko Kersnik et al (56.9%),^[12] study - while findings related to communication by the doctor was quite similar. Prahlad Rai Sodani et al.^[9] found that the majority of the respondents (above 85%) observed doctor's behaviour as good, and they also felt that the doctor has given adequate time to see the patients. Prasanna KS et al.^[10] also recorded 81% of the respondents saying that the communication by the doctor was good.

Ranjeeta Kumari et al.^[7] also found that the satisfaction with the presence of signboards (46.6%) was low. Unsatisfactory availability of drinking water (45.7%) toilet facilities (37.4%) and the cleanliness of the toilets (27.3%) were similar to those of Srilatha Sivalenka^[13] and Peerasak Lertrakarnnon et al,^[11] who also found these as the major areas of concern in their study.

Conclusion

An assessment of the level of patient satisfaction related to different OPD care reminded us of certain areas that need improvements, to upgrade hospitals' service quality. The decreased level of satisfaction with the OPD care at the tertiary level could be attributed to a number of factors - such as long waiting time, relative lack of appropriate signboards, registration counters. Lack of cleanliness, unsatisfactory condition of the toilets and drinking water are the hallmarks of government hospitals, and play a very important role in making

people dissatisfied with the services. Reduction in the waiting time, by channelizing the patients to prevent undue burden on the tertiary health facilities, is required. The waiting time and area could also be made informative and comfortable, and can be utilized to provide health education to the people. Also, there is an imperative need to make a clean hospital, with good water and toilet facilities, along with good communication with the patients about their disease and the treatment. Lastly, to decide on the value of respondents judgements, there is an urgent need to know the causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, by periodical survey in the health organizations.

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