



A study on client satisfaction as per standard treatment guidelines in a rural hospital of West Bengal, India

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ABSTRACT

Patient satisfaction level towards service provided to them was evaluated as per standard treatment guideline (STG). The objectives of STG were to scale up standardize treatment and other service status at the primary care level and to identify the critical gaps and lacunae for better, improved quality services. Patient satisfaction indicators remain stable over time as oppose to clinical indicators which will be changed with technology and progression of medical sciences. The objectives of the present study were to know the level of satisfaction among patients attending O.P.D. of Tarakeswar Rural Hospital. This cross sectional study was done among 204 patients selected by systematic sampling. According to the patient's opinion, the study showed good satisfaction with respect to doctor services, nurse services, laboratory services and pharmacy staff services. Statistically significant association of patient satisfaction with age, gender, marital status, type of visit, waiting time before consulting the doctor, waiting time before getting the drugs and percentage of availability drugs at pharmacy were found.

Keywords: Standard treatment guideline, client satisfaction, O.P.D. patients

INTRODUCTION

Patient satisfaction is a multi-dimensional healthcare issue affected by many factors. It is parameter for assessing the quality of patient care services.¹ Quality services increase the confidence of the patient about hospital care. Patient satisfaction and healthcare service quality can be increased by using a multi-disciplinary approach that combines patient inputs as well as expert judgment.² It is difficult to measure the patient satisfaction level. Both clinical and nonclinical outcomes of care have influence on patient satisfaction.³ Patients carry certain expectations before their visit and the resultant satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the outcome of their actual experience.^{4,5,6}

Patients' perceptions about healthcare systems seem to have been largely ignored by health care managers in developing countries.^{7,8} This is

despite the fact that patient satisfaction surveys are one of the established yardsticks to measure success of the service delivery system, functional at hospitals. Awareness about patient satisfaction is relevant in the sense that satisfied patients are more likely to abide by the treatment advised, to continue using medical services and to promote referrals, thereby increasing the service volumes.

Patient-centred outcomes have taken centre stage as the primary means of measuring the effectiveness of health care delivery.^{9, 10} Health professionals are also benefited and guided by the outcome of these surveys. The feedback received is likely to help them in predicting their planning and identifying potential areas for service improvement.^{4,5} Keeping this background in mind the present study was undertaken in Out Patient Department of a rural hospital to assess the quality

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of care provided in terms of patients' satisfaction with the following objectives:

- 1: To know the satisfaction level of patients attending Out Patient Department of Tarakeswar Rural Hospital.
- 2: To find out related socio demographic factors affecting satisfaction level of patients.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An observational cross sectional study was performed between March 2013 to May 2013 in Tarakeswar Rural Hospital which is field practice area of Department of Community Medicine, Medical College, Kolkata. Data was collected by systematic consecutive sampling technique. A patient attending the OPD and having age above 18 years was included in the study. Informed verbal consent was taken from each patient and they were ensured about the confidentiality. Patient working in the health care facility and patients with serious physical or mental pathologies, such as terminal disease and psychosis were excluded from the study.

A predesigned and pretested schedule was used for data collection. Some statements regarding services of physical facilities, registration staff, doctor, nurse, pharmacy, and laboratory staff were enquired from the patients. Patients were asked to give ratings to these statements. Likert's 5 points rating scale was used.¹¹The rating was done as following-5= Strongly agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1= Strongly disagree.

Taking the prevalence of patient satisfaction to be 50% with 15% allowable error and 10% non-response, the sample size came to be 178. Among these every third patient was interviewed by systematic sampling. Therefore total 210 patients were interviewed. Due to incompleteness of response by 6 patients, finally 204 schedules were used for analysis.

Data was tabulated in Microsoft Excel 2010 spread sheet & analysed by appropriate statistical methods in SPSS 16 software. Discrete data was analysed using Pearson's Chi-square test for normal distribution, values <0.05 were considered significant.

RESULTS

The study included 204 patients attending OPDs. Maximum number of patients i.e. 66(32.36%) were in the age group of 59 and above (mean = 49.29, SD= 18.23). About 70% patients were males. Only 14.21% of study population had higher education while 4.9% were illiterate.23% study population were unemployed. Majority (73%) of the study population were married. 90% patient said that OPD timings were convenient. 54.9% of study population were attained at their first visit. 49.02% study population were waited for 30 minutes-1 hour before consulting doctor and 49.5% were waited for 30 minutes-1 hour for getting drugs.43.13% of patients were getting 51-75% of drugs available at pharmacy. About 49% of patients came from 1-5 Km distance.

Regarding cleanliness of waiting area 21.07% patients were found unsatisfied. About adequacy of sitting arrangement 33.82% patients were satisfied.

Near about 24.01% patients replied that they were unsatisfied with friendliness and helpfulness of registration staff. Regarding examination and explanation received from doctor 84.79% patients were satisfied.

About friendliness and helpfulness of nurses 43.75%patients were found satisfied. When asked about explanation of treatment given by nurses 52.50% were found satisfied. 43.53% were satisfied regarding friendliness and helpfulness of laboratory staffs. Only 8.05% patients were unsatisfied with timeliness of reports from laboratory.

About explanation of treatment by pharmacist 43.54% patients were satisfied. 46.07% patients were satisfied with friendliness and helpfulness of pharmacy staffs. Service quality out-put indicators were measured by number of patients served during last 3 months considered as A. Number of patients served during corresponding period last year considered as B. Change in number of patients considered as A-B. Percentage changes was calculated by $(A-B)/B \times 100$. 15% or more change was given score 3, 5-15% change was given score 2, 0-5% change was given score 1and no or negative change was given 0 score.



Table 1: Distribution of study population according to different services and facilities with level of satisfaction (n=204)

Different services and facilities	Level of satisfaction (Likert's 5 point scale) Number (%)				
	5	4	3	2	1
1.Registration Services (n=204)					
• Registration staff is friendly & helpful to you	2 (0.98)	54(26.47)	99(48.54)	36(17.64)	13 (6.37)
• Registration staff has good communication skill	4 (1.96)	47(23.03)	89 (43.64)	53(25.98)	11 (5.39)
2.Physical facilities (n=204)					
• Waiting area is clean	02 (0.99)	91(44.60)	68(33.33)	30(14.70)	13 (6.37)
• Waiting area has enough sitting arrangement	-	69 (33.82)	88 (43.13)	36(17.66)	11 (5.39)
3.Doctor services (n=204)					
• Satisfied with the examination by Doctor	72(35.29)	101(49.50)	27 (13.25)	3 (1.47)	1 (0.49)
• Doctors explained about the illness	60(29.4)	97 (47.54)	44 (21.56)	1 (0.49)	2 (0.98)
4.Nurse's services (n=80)*					
• Nurse is friendly & helpful	3 (3.75)	32 (40.0)	39 (48.75)	4 (5)	2 (2.50)
• Nurses explain the treatment clearly	2 (2.5)	40 (50.0)	35 (43.75)	2 (2.5)	1 (1.25)
5.Laboratory Service (n=62)*					
• Laboratory Staff are friendly & helpful	3 (4.83)	24 (38.70)	2 (51.64)	1 (1.61)	2 (3.22)
• Tests results received on time as told	1 (1.61)	35 (56.45)	21 (33.89)	2 (3.22)	3 (4.83)
6.Pharmacy service (n=204)					
• Pharmacist explained about treatment	6 (2.94)	83 (40.60)	95 (46.56)	19 (9.33)	1 (0.49)
• Pharmacist is friendly & helpful	9 (4.41)	85 (41.66)	86 (42.17)	21(10.29)	3 (1.47)

5= *Strongly agree*; 4= *Agree*; 3= *Neutral*; 2= *Disagree*; 1= *Strongly disagree*

*Out of 204 patients only 80 patients utilized nurse's services and 62 utilized laboratory services

Table 2: Distribution of study population according to opinion about quality of services (n=204)

Quality of services	Responses		
	Yes Number (%)	Neutral Number (%)	No Number (%)
Would you recommend the services to friends/relatives?	93 (45.60)	93 (45.58)	18 (8.82)
In future, if you feel unwell, will you return to this hospital?	95 (46.56)	79 (38.72)	30(14.72)

Table 3: Out-put indicators for service quality assessment

Parameters to assess change in service provision	Patients Served during Last 3 months	Patients served During corresponding period of last year	Change in number of patients	% change	Score
Total number of OPD patients (new and old)	11510	14627	- 3117	- 21.30	--
Total indoor cases treated	2005	1765	240	13.59	2
Total AFB smears examined	254	253	1	0.39	1
Total LBW babies kept of 24hours observation	40	53	-13	- 24.52	--

Statistically significant association of patient satisfaction was found with age, gender, marital status, type of visit waiting time before consulting

the doctor, waiting time before getting the drugs and percentage of availability drugs at pharmacy ($p < 0.05$) (Table 4.)

Table 4: Association of various determinants and patient satisfaction (n=204)

Variables	Level of satisfaction (Likert's 5 point scale)					Significance
	5	4	3	2	1	
Age (years)						p=0.02
18-28	2	21	12	2	2	
29-38	2	5	6	6	2	
39-48	3	11	15	4	3	
49-58	4	20	10	4	4	
≥59	2	26	26	10	2	
Gender						P<0.001
Male	4	53	61	20	5	
Female	1	40	14	2	4	
Marital Status						p=0.02
Married	2	57	67	20	3	
Unmarried	2	16	4	2	2	
Widow/Widower	4	17	3	2	3	
Type of visit						p=0.04
First	4	53	47	4	4	
Follow up	6	20	22	14	1	
Referred	5	10	10	2	2	
Waiting time before consulting doctor						p=0.01
<30 minutes	2	11	21	10	2	
30minutes-1hour	2	59	31	4	4	
>1 hour	4	20	27	4	3	

Table 4: Association of various determinants and patient satisfaction (n=204) continued

Variables	Level of satisfaction (Likert's 5 point scale)					Significance
	5	4	3	2	1	
Waiting time before getting drugs						
<30 minutes	2	13	4	5	1	p=0.04
30 minutes-1hour	2	43	42	12	2	
>1 hour	4	34	34	10	3	
% of available drugs						
76-100	2	20	2	3	1	p=0.01
51-75	2	41	32	10	3	
26-50	2	31	38	5	5	
<25	1	1	3	2	1	

Statistically significant association of patient satisfaction was found with age, gender, marital status, type of visit waiting time before consulting the doctor, waiting time before getting the drugs and percentage of availability drugs at pharmacy ($p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

The health care system is basically service based and patient experiences, satisfaction is of the utmost importance. It has direct impact on improving the quality of care in the health service.¹² The present study highlighted the level of satisfaction and related determinants among patients attending O.P.D. of Tarakeswar Rural Hospital which is field practice area of Department of Community Medicine, Medical College, Kolkata. In present study, 46% patients replied that they were satisfied with cleanliness of waiting area.

In a similar study by Anjum Javed 90.5% patients were satisfied with cleanliness of hospital.¹³ In another study done by Pralhad Rai et al also found 65% satisfied patients with respect to cleanliness.¹⁴ This could be due to limited class IV employee in this hospital. They are overburdened. About sitting arrangement 69% patients were unsatisfied. This finding was consistent with study done by Anjum Javed.¹³ About 26.47% patients were satisfied with friendliness and helpfulness of registration staff. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Md. Ziaul Islam and Md. Abdul Jabbar where only 25 % patients were satisfied with friendliness and helpfulness of registration staffs.¹⁵

In another study by Talluru Sreenivas, G.Prasad only 13% patients were satisfied.¹⁶ With regard to explanation given by doctor about their illness/prognosis/time required for treatment only 2% patients were unsatisfied. This is consistent with the findings of Prasanna K.S. et al.¹⁷ They found only 3% patients unsatisfied. Within short span of time doctors had to examine large number of patients. About 46(22.55%) patients had to wait less than 30 min before consulting doctors. Ranjeeta Kumari et al found similar results.¹⁸ Whereas in an another study conducted by Prasanna KS et al showed that 20% patient waited less than 30 minutes.¹⁷ A cross sectional study conducted by Md. Ziaul Islam and Md. Abdul Jabbar had agreement with the present study.¹⁵ Half of patients (49.50%) could get drugs within 30 min-1hour. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Prasanna K.S. et al. This study showed that 50% of patient had to wait 30 min-1hour for getting drugs.¹⁷ Present study showed that 56.36% patient could get more than 50% of drugs from pharmacy.

Another study conducted by Talluru Sreenivas et al showed that only 20% patient could get all prescribed drugs.¹⁶ There was a statistically significant association between waiting time before consulting the doctor and total satisfaction. (P value = 0.001) Patients are already in pain or sufferings. Naturally they want to visit doctor as early as possible to get relieved from the sufferings and wish to get drugs as early as possible. Patients

who wait for longer time naturally had less satisfaction level.

Patients who said that availability of drugs was 75-100% were found more satisfied as compared to those who procured fewer drugs. Hence availability of drugs in the hospital is essential factor for patient satisfaction. It can be interpreted that patient satisfaction varies in different health facilities and circumstances. This variation may be due to difference in quality of services provided or difference in expectation of the patient. This study identified some of areas which can be improved in order to improve the patient care and quality of care. Hospital authority should take action to improve cleanliness and adequate sitting arrangement in the hospital. Waiting time for getting the drugs can be reduced by introducing token system at the pharmacy counter. The drug policy should be revised quarterly in the year and most prescribed drugs in OPDs should be made available.

Patient satisfaction assessment should be conducted regularly every 6 months interval. In the OPDs complaint and suggestion box should be kept, so that patients can freely put their complaints and suggestions.

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