

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

SATISFACTION LEVEL OF PATIENTS WITH SERVICES PROVIDED IN DENTAL OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT OF RAWAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH SCIENCES, ISLAMABAD

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Background: Patient satisfaction reflects the level of ease that the patient experiences having used a service. It can identify the gap between the actual experience of the services versus expected. Patients' satisfaction has been widely used in the lay measurement of quality of health service. The purpose of this study was to examine the structural relationships between out-patient satisfaction and service quality extent. **Methods:** This was a cross sectional study carried out on 196 conveniently selected patients from 5 July to 5 September 2018 at the general outpatient department of Rawal institute of Health sciences Islamabad. Parameters used to measure the satisfaction levels of the presenting patients were: ease of access, waiting time for the patients, patient-provider communication, patient-provider relationship, hospital administration, and general hospital ambiance and environment. **Results:** The overall satisfaction score of the patients under consideration was 74.48%. Specifically, the respondents were highly satisfied with due attention given by the doctors (80%). Around (74%) said that the presenting doctors addressed them with a very humble and polite attitude; 80% said that they would recommend this hospital to their contacts. While 56% of the patients said they had to wait for longer time for the doctor. **Conclusion:** This study reveals that the overall level of patients' satisfaction with the provided services was satisfactory. Patients were highly satisfied with attention given by the presenting doctors. The only major point for dissatisfaction was the waiting time and the explanation of the procedure.

Keywords: Dissatisfaction; Outpatient; Quality of care; Rawal institute of Health sciences; Satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

Patient satisfaction reflects the level of satisfaction and ease that the patient experiences having used a service. It therefore reflects the gap between the actual experience of the service and the expected service on part of the patient. Patient's satisfaction has been widely used in the lay measurement of quality of health service. Despite all the advantages that it presents, there still has been growing condemnation of its measurement. Satisfaction rating reflect the personal preferences of the patient, the patient's expectations, and realities of received care; the latter can be affected by different components of the care. Satisfaction ratings being both a measure of care and a reflection of the respondent therefore do not reflect objective reality. To address this problem, it has been suggested to evaluate patient's own perceptions instead. For example, the joint commission on accreditation of health care organization has replaced term satisfaction with perceptions of service. Satisfaction level of the patients is of fundamental importance as a measure of quality of care because it gives information on the success and ability of the health care provider in terms of meeting the patients' values and expectations, which are matters on which the patient himself is the ultimate authority. The ultimate

goal of assessing the satisfaction level of the patients' level is to enhance the quality of life.¹⁻³

The economic and financial constraints and the prevailing political circumstances from the past few years in Pakistan have made the healthcare system suffer which in turn has made it necessary to assess the level of patients' satisfaction so that the policy makers can be persuaded to take the necessary initiatives and steps to enhance and improve the satisfaction level of the patients.¹ Thus health care services have also started setting up their priorities with improved patient care giving utmost importance to gain a high level of it.²

Not only this, improvement in the services provided and thus improved level of patients' satisfaction also lets the health services providers to achieve a better position and distinguish their services in the competitive industry.² WHO has also included patient satisfaction as one of the nine significant indicators which indicate the level of services provided by the health care system.^{1,2} Since the 1990s, the reported satisfaction level of the patients with the provided services has been made a key determinant of the patient centered care.⁴ Healthcare services have started depending on the ratings given by the patients to the level of care and services provided which in turn affects their national rankings and quality metrics.⁵

Globally, the emerging trend of the competition for the provision of highly efficient services to the patients has put the health care providers in a situation where improvement in the provision of care services and optimum level of patient’s satisfaction has become the priority and hence given foremost importance. This has made patients’ satisfaction a core factor in the delivery of services and performance level of the hospital.⁶

The aim of the present study was to determine the satisfaction level of the patients presenting to Dental OPD of Rawal institute of health sciences Islamabad. Our study will be useful to determine the quality of health care services provided by our hospital and how they affect the patients’ general perception about our health care system.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This was a descriptive cross-sectional study carried out on 196 patients, selected by non-probability convenience sampling, from 5 July to 5 September 2018 at the general outpatient department of Rawal institute of Health sciences Islamabad. A closed ended questionnaire containing 19 questions was used which

was pretested before adopting a final version. Informed written consent was taken by assuring and later on ensuring confidentiality of data. Questions asked were about source of income, entitlement, monthly income, easy access to the dentist, treatment offered, staff behaviour, previous dental check-up, enough visual privacy, appropriate time, taking verbal consent, explanation of the procedure, post treatment instruction and general status of hospital. The questionnaires were given to the participating patients and collected back after they completed it. Demographic data and educational level were also recorded using the same questionnaire.

Patients aged 18–60 years of both genders were included. SPSS software version 20 was used for analysis.

RESULTS

Total number of patients who participated in the study were 196, of which 116(59%) were females. The means age of patients were 34.30 years. Most of the patients presented to hospital were not educated (30%) Table-1.

Table-1: Educational status of patients utilizing Dental OPD

Level of education	Frequency	% of patients
No education	59	30.13
Primary	32	16.32
Middle	30	15.30
Secondary	39	19.8
Higher secondary	19	9.69
Graduate	17	8.6
Total	196	100

Table-2: Patient’s response to various questions

Variables	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Doctors paid full attention to Patient	157	80.10	39	19.89
Doctors tells us about the instructions	146	74.48	50	25.51
Patient questions were answered appropriately	132	67.34	64	32.65
Doctors told patient for next follow up	129	65.81	67	34.18
Patient had to wait for longer time for the doctor	86	43.87	110	56.12
Consultation time was appropriate	102	52.04	94	47.95
Doctors Understood the worries of patients	110	56.12	86	43.87
Doctor’s attitude was polite to patients	146	74.48	50	25.51
Doctor was sympathetic to the patient	102	52.04	94	47.95
Doctors take consent before physical examination	101	51.53	95	48.46
Did you have enough visual privacy during the examination	151	77.04	45	22.95
Doctors ignore what I tell them	86	43.87	110	56.12
Doctors were good about explanation for the procedures	73	37.24	123	62.75
Patients had to wait long for their check up	89	45.40	107	54.59
You are satisfied with the services of management staff	114	58.16	82	41.83
You had to pay more than your affordability	75	38.26	121	61.73
You were given advice regarding follow-up	114	58.16	82	41.83
If you would have again the problem with your oral health you will return to this hospital.	102	52.04	94	47.95
You will recommend this hospital to your friends and colleagues if they are having a dental problem	138	70.40	58	29.59

Table 3: General satisfaction with the services provided in RIHS

Are you satisfied with the services provided in RIHS	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
	146	74.48	50	25.51

DISCUSSION

The basic objective of this study was to assess the patient's level of satisfaction by the services provided at the outpatient department of RIHS, Islamabad depending on various factors including the waiting time, behaviour of the attending staff and doctors, method of examination, politeness and affordability.

This study also reflects the role of the attending doctors in establishing a good rapport with the presenting patients, addressing their concerns and achieving a good satisfaction level amongst them.

This study has shown that the overall the level of satisfaction of the patients with the quality of care they received was good regardless of some of the domains of dissatisfaction.

This result of this study revealed that 74% of the patients were satisfied and happy with the quality of provision of services by the hospital. According to a study, higher level of satisfaction was noted amongst the patients about the provided services by the health care system if due importance was given to the patient's dignity, autonomy and adequate attention given to meeting the patients' expectations.¹

Studies have shown that in addition to the general behaviour of health care professionals, the presence of medical equipment and their adequate conditions in the outpatient departments was associated with a general perception high standards, efficiency and efforts on part of the health care services and ultimately a high level of patient's satisfaction.¹

Doctor-patient understanding and interpersonal relationship also plays a significant role in shaping the patient's perception about the provision of services. Additionally, the role of lab services as a diagnostic tool is also of utmost importance. Various studies conducted in Greece, Norway, Finland and France revealed that high level of patient's satisfaction was associated with the quality of consultation provided by the physician.⁷

Moreover, the simplicity of admission process and costs of the services and admission slip demographic and clinical characteristics also seem to determine the level of satisfaction amongst the patients for example younger age, co morbidities, poor health and low socio-economic status are associate with a lower level of patient's satisfaction.⁴

Several factors that negatively affect the patients' satisfaction include long waiting time, inaccessibility, delay in the provision of services by the hospital, high costs and lack of empathetic behaviour on part of the attending doctors and staff.⁸ This makes the provision of high quality services to be given of foremost importance on the management agendas of the health care providers knowing that the success of their organizations ultimately depends on the patients' perceived values, satisfaction and faithfulness.⁹

Healthcare services need to work on improving the services provided to the patients to attend their needs and improve the effectiveness of the health care system in achieving a high level of satisfaction amongst the patients.¹⁰

Limitation of our study is that was conducted in only one hospital and generalizability should be done exercising caution.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the patients were satisfied with the services provided to them. Most of the patients' responses were positive for most of the questions. Doctors paid full attention was a positive and the major point for dissatisfaction was the waiting time and the explanation of the procedure.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

AFA: Design, Conception, Data collection, Analysis, writing. NN: Data collection, Analysis, Literature review. SM, MFK: Literature review, critical review, writing

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