

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Patient Satisfaction Survey at a Tertiary Care Teaching Government Hospital in Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The goal of a hospital is to provide quality care to patients at a reasonable cost without exposing them to avoidable risks. Quality may be defined as conformance to standards. Once patients come to the hospital and experience the facilities, they may become either satisfied or dissatisfied. Satisfaction of dissatisfaction refers to emotional response to the evaluation of service, consumption, and experience. Satisfaction of patients is one of the most important criteria for assessing the quality of care in a hospital. Objective of the study was to carry out a patient satisfaction survey at the outpatient department of K R and Cheluvamba hospitals.

Material and Methods: A cross sectional survey using a pretested questionnaire was conducted on 510 patients using purposive sampling. Outpatient registration, outpatient consultation and lab investigation components were tested.

Results: 84.4% of the respondents were not satisfied with the registration/reception services. 64% of respondents were not satisfied with the time spent by the doctor with patient. 64% of respondents were not happy with the time taken for laboratory investigations. 73% of respondents were opined that medicines were prescribed outside.

Conclusion: Majority of the patients were not satisfied with outpatient's services provided by the hospital.

Keywords: Quality service, outpatient's registration, Laboratory services, doctors time per patient.

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of a hospital is to provide quality care to patients at a reasonable cost without exposing them to avoidable risks. Quality may be defined as conformance to standards. Who decides the standards in a hospital - the patients, doctors, nurses, management, medical associations or accreditation board? All of them may have some stake in defining the standards of medical care but the patients are the single largest category. They deserve special attention. Therefore, the satisfaction of patients is one of the most important criteria for assessing the quality of care in a hospitals.¹ The primary function of a hospital is patient care. The patient is the ultimate consumer to the hospital. It is one of the yardstick to measure the success of service that it produces. The effectiveness of the hospital relates to provision of good patient care as intended. The patient satisfaction is the real testimony to the efficiency of hospital administration. As the hospital serves all the members of the society the expectations of the users differ from one individual to another individual because everyone carries a particular set of thoughts, feelings and needs. Hence determination of patient's real feelings is very difficult. It is the responsibility of the administrator. "Put yourself in your patient's shoes", this proverb explains how to proceed with a patient. Though it is difficult one can get it by using some tips such as listening to the patients, asking questions and seeking answers, by doing something extra for each patient and by admitting mistakes gracefully and so on.²

Satisfaction is an important element in the evaluation stage. It refers to the consumers' state of being adequately rewarded. Adequacy of satisfaction is a result of matching the actual past experience with the expected reward. Patients form certain expectations prior to the visit. Once patients come to the hospital and experience the facilities, they may become either satisfied or dissatisfied. Satisfaction of dissatisfaction refers to emotional response to the evaluation of service, consumption, and experience.³ Objectives of the study were to carry out a patient satisfaction survey at the outpatient department of K R and Cheluvamba hospitals and to make recommendations to improve the quality of outpatient services.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Study was conducted at Out patients departments of K.R.Hospital and Cheluvamba hospitals attached to Mysore

medical college and research institute, Mysore. Purposive sampling method was used and a total of 510 patients were interviewed. It was a cross sectional study. A pretested and structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The study was conducted during March 2014.

General Medicine and General Surgery departments at K.R. Hospital were chosen for the study. Obstetrics and Gynecology department was chosen in Cheluvamba hospital. Patients were explained about the study and the questionnaire was administered, after taking informed consent. Answers were elicited in a three point scale.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical analysis was done using descriptive statistical tests like mean, frequency and percentages. SPSS 16 version was used for the analysis of data.

RESULTS

The study was conducted among the patients who sought outpatient services from KR and cheluvamba hospitals in Mysore. 510 patients participated in the survey. 290 male and 220 female patients responded. 80% of patients were from lower socio economic class. Only 22% of the study population had more than 10 years of schooling. Since k R and Cheluvamba hospital are tertiary care government hospitals in Mysore they are major referral centres. Most of the patients attending these hospitals are from mid-

dle and low income groups. Their visit to the hospital involves travel and other opportunity costs and many a times involves loss of labour. Inpatients services in any hospital

Item No	Particulars		(%)
1	Procedure adopted before consulting the Doctor is satisfactory	Yes	23.3
		Can't say	8.9
		No	67.8
		Total	100
2	Staff at waiting area re sympathetic towards patients problems	Yes	21.1
		Can't say	2.2
		No	76.7
		Total	100
3	Time interval between patient arrival and consulting the Doctor is reasonable	Yes	16.7
		Can't say	3.3
		No	80
		Total	100
4	Space and physical facilities at consulting room are satisfactory	Yes	25.6
		Can't say	10
		No	64.4
		Total	100
5	Doctor has given enough time to narrate the illness	Yes	20
		Can't say	6.7
		No	73.3
		Total	100
6	Doctor has given enough time for clinical examination and advise	Yes	27.7
		Can't say	6.7
		No	65.6
		Total	100

Table-2: Perception of the outpatients towards consultation and treatment facilities

Item No	Particulars		(%)
1	Reception services Are good	Yes	10
		Can't say	5.6
		No	84.4
		Total	100
2	Adequate information is available at Reception counter	Yes	13.3
		Can't say	7.8
		No	78.9
		Total	100
3	Time spent at Reception Counter is Satisfactory	Yes	16.7
		Can't say	6.7
		No	76.7
		Total	100
4	Present queue system at Registration Counter is satisfactory	Yes	12.2
		Can't say	10
		No	77.8
		Total	100
5	Counters provided at Registration is enough	Yes	13.3
		Can't say	3.3
		No	83.4
		Total	100
6	There is need for security staff at registration counter	Yes	76.7
		Can't say	10
		No	13.3
		Total	100

Table-1: Perception of the outpatients towards registration procedure

Item No	Particulars		(%)
1	Many investigations are done for the ailment	Yes	60
		Can't say	17.7
		No	22.3
		Total	100
2	Investigations done at the outpatient department are satisfactory	Yes	8.9
		Can't say	4.4
		No	86.7
		Total	100
3	Facilities at investigation room are good	Yes	10
		Can't say	17.8
		No	72.2
		Total	100
4	Laboratory tests are done in time	Yes	14.4
		Can't say	21.1
		No	64.5
		Total	100
5	Space and staff at laboratories are enough	Yes	33.3
		Can't say	6.7
		No	60
		Total	100
6	Required medicines are available in the hospital	Yes	20
		Can't say	6.7
		No	73.3
		Total	100

Table-3: Perception of the outpatients towards investigation procedure

reflects the load on the hospital and constitutes a very important hospital indicator.⁴

DISCUSSION

Reception and registration services form the initial contact point of the patients and hospitals and waiting period, information and guidance provided, security form important components influencing patient satisfaction. In our study majority of the patients were not satisfied with these services. This finding is similar to the studies conducted by Balaraman and Jagannathan.^{5,6}

Outpatient consultation services includes waiting period, privacy in the examination room, doctor patient interaction time, scope for questions by patients, explanation offered by doctors. In our study majority of the patients were not happy with all of these components. Possible causes for this include excess patient load and adverse patient doctor ratio and poor infrastructure support by the government. This finding is similar to the studies conducted by Sethuraman and Balachandra.^{7,8}

Outpatient laboratory services constitutes yet another important area which complements appropriate clinical care. Majority of the patient population were dissatisfied with the laboratory services. They felt that too many investigations are prescribed and sometimes outside also. They are not happy with the waiting time and facilities provided at the central laboratory. This is due to the paucity of human resource and other infrastructure provided to the hospital. This finding is in agreement with studies conducted by Balachandra S.⁸ Majority of the patients felt that many medicines are prescribed outside which they cannot afford. Again this is related to the drug policy and supply chain which is a system component. This is similar to the findings reported by Kuppuswamy and Lisliepaine.^{9,10}

CONCLUSIONS

Majority of the patients opined that registration services provided at OPD is not satisfactory. They felt that waiting period is too much and they also felt that security services should be provided at registration. Majority of the patients also expressed that the approach and attitude of staff is not good at the OPD. They felt that the time spent by the Doctor in the examination is inadequate. Majority of the patients felt that lot of investigations are done and also prescribed outside. They felt that the waiting is too much to undergo investigations. Majority of the patients felt that many drugs are not available in the hospital and are prescribed outside which they cannot afford.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Patient satisfaction is one of the important dimension of quality care in hospitals hence frequent surveys should be

done to assess the satisfaction levels of the patients and necessary changes should be implemented.

- Maximum time is spent for the registration process in the OPD; hence number of counters should be increased. Separate queues for male and female patients will be useful.
- The patient has to wait at many places which can be reduced by adopting single window approach for examination, investigation, pharmacy and minor procedures.
- Help desks can be created near OPD counters to guide the patients.
- Drinking water and toilet facilities will improve the patient satisfaction
- Electronic HMIS will reduce the time for both Doctors and Patients.
- Medical students, Interns and Residents should be properly deployed to handle the patient load.
- Para medical staff should be deployed in adequate number.
- Proper Queuing system will reduce waiting period.
- More doctors and paramedical staff during rush hours will be useful.

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