



**STUDY OF PATIENT SATISFATION AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED AMONG
OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT IN THE GOVERNMENT REGIONAL HOSPITAL OF A
DISTRICT IN NORTH INDIA**

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ABSTRACT

Background: Patient satisfaction is a significant indicator of the health care quality is directly related to distribution, access and utilization of health services. There are many factors which have an impact on patient satisfaction and its knowledge provides the necessary information for designing and implementing programs to satisfy patients. **Aim and Objectives:** To study the level of satisfaction in OPD patients and to improve health services delivery and help to fill gaps which ultimately contribute to enhancing patient satisfaction within the Regional Hospital. **Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among patients attending the outpatient department of a District Regional Hospital. The study was conducted over a span of 3 months. **Results:** Convenient sample of 740 patients were interviewed with the pre-structured questionnaire regarding various clinical and support services. The overall satisfaction level was very high (95.14%). Patients were satisfied with supportive healthcare services and waiting time was reasonable on most of the accounts and most of the patients were satisfied with the behaviour and services provided by the health staff and doctors. **Conclusion:** Patient Satisfaction is cost-effective strategy involving continuous monitoring of expectations of patients which will help to improve the quality of hospital care. Appropriate siting area for waiting patients and drinking water facilities needs improvement to enhance the comfort and satisfaction of the patients. Overall, the service provided at the hospital is of good quality and the level of satisfaction is very high.

KEYWORDS: Patient Satisfaction, Outpatient Department, Waiting time, Health care services

INTRODUCTION

Patient Satisfaction is the extent to which patients are happy with their healthcare in a hospital. According to World Health Organization (WHO) 2000 report, health systems have to be responsive to the health needs of the patient and the community. The major beneficiaries of a good healthcare system are clearly patients. Actually, it is difficult to measure patients' satisfaction and responsiveness of health systems directly. It importantly depends on the clinical outcomes of patients from health care treatment received.^[1] patient feedback is important to identify problems from health services that need to be resolved in improving patient satisfaction.^[2] There are many factors which have an impact on patient satisfaction and its knowledge provides the necessary information for designing and implementing programs to satisfy patients. Patients' satisfaction mainly depends on the duration and efficiency of care, and empathetic and communicative behaviour of health care providers. It is favoured by a good doctor-patient relationship, patients who are well-informed of the necessary procedures in a clinical encounter, and the time it is expected to take, are

generally more satisfied even if there is a longer waiting time.^[3] Several other factors, which include: Pharmacy services, diagnostic, dietary and lab services to assess the patient satisfaction.

Patient Satisfaction is simple and cost-effective strategy involving continuous monitoring of expectations of patients will help to improve the quality of hospital care. Patient satisfaction has become one of the strongest determinants of hospital functioning will help the hospital administrators to revise their patient-care strategies and also it is an internationally accepted factor which needs to be studied repeatedly for the smooth functioning of the hospital's healthcare systems.^[4] Healthcare is one of the major sustainable development goals (SDGs) of agenda 2030 of the United Nations Organization (UNO), which states that: "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", as well as its target to achieve universal health coverage, affordable medicine, accessibility, effective and safe quality, and access to quality essential healthcare for everyone.^[5]

Purpose of this study is to provide evidence-based results to improve health services delivery and help to fill gaps which ultimately contribute to enhancing patient satisfaction within the Regional Hospital in distt. Bilaspur.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study design: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among patients attending the outpatient department. A preformed pre-structured questionnaire in Hindi and English language was prepared and face to face interview was done regarding various clinical and support services of the Hospital.

Study population: The present study was conducted among the patients attending the outpatient department (OPD) of government Regional Hospital in District Bilaspur. (H.P)

Period of study: The period of survey was from June 2021 to August 2021.

Eligibility Criteria: All patients of all ages (for children with their attendants) who were presented to OPDs to get health services and willing to provide answers to study interviews were included in the study. Patients who fulfilled inclusion criteria were collected as samples by convenient sampling technique and were included in the study.

Patients who were in the condition of very seriously ill and with no attendants and unable to communicate and not willing to participate, were excluded from the study.

Sample size: The sample size was calculated using Convenient sample of 740 patients, interviewed with the pre-structured questionnaire regarding various clinical and support services.

Ethical Considerations: The approval to conduct the study and publish the research findings was obtained from the institutional head and Secretary (Health), Government of Himachal Pradesh wide letter no. Health-A-B (15)3/2021-2757.

METHODOLOGY

The pre-structured questionnaire was developed as study instrument based on patient expectations, guidance being taken from questionnaires adopted in earlier studies in India and abroad.

Study Variables

The questionnaire included the general profile of the patient (socio-demographic variables, including age, sex, educational level, professional status). The questions included registration process, cleanliness, approach to the doctor, pharmacist and investigation site, services provided by the doctor and other Paramedical staff & their behaviour with patients, time required for locating the consultant, consults by the doctor, investigations and

taking medicines from pharmacist. Also, the patient was asked to grade the waiting time for various services, quality of services provided and behaviour of health personals along with overall satisfaction level. The grading for waiting time was done using Likert Scale ranging from too long to short whereas quality of services and behaviour was measured as satisfactory or not. All the questions in the survey are prepared in such a way that provokes all the appropriate evidence that is needed for the study.

Exit Interview was used as a tool to assess the quality of health services and felt needs of community. Data collection was carried out by the researcher when patients had finished consultation at OPD and they were interviewed at the exit point of OPD.

The study was conducted over a span of 3 months and a total of 740 persons were interviewed. The data collected was analysed by applying appropriate statistical test.

RESULT

A total of 740 patients were interviewed during the duration of the study period. Most of them lived in the rural area (63.65%) and males constituted majority of the participants (53.52%). Maximum patients were educated till graduation (43.11%) and only (8.65%) patients were primary educated. (Table 1)

Patients coming for first time in OPD for consultation formed the major chunk of the study population (58.78%) followed by follow up patients (12.57%) for three or more visits in OPD (Table 2)

Patients were aware and found Hospital location convenient on their own (96.22%) and only (3.78%) participants found the location of the hospital away from their hometown. Only (42.70%) patients got parking for their vehicles. Majority of patients were satisfied with facilities of face mask and hand sanitizer provided by hospital administration during covid-19 period. Most of the OPD patients (97.97%) found help desk location suitable and got (100%) enquiry guidance at the enquiry counter as to where and how to go for next service. The signboards displayed in the OPD were found useful by most of the participants (92.16%) and they were properly guided. About (95%) patients found convenient and appropriate display of user charges but only (52.57%) found adequate waiting area as more sitting area required to manage overcrowding. Also, most were happy with the location of the supportive services like laboratory (96.22%), radiology (98.11%). The basic facility like drinking water was limited, so only (39.86%) patients were satisfied which needs improvement by installation of more water cooler. Dietary facilities with seating area were easily available in OPD in opinion of most of the patients (98.78%). Most were happy with the cleanliness of the hospital premises (98.78%) but were dissatisfied (50.54%) with cleanliness in washrooms. There is constant need of proper supervision to improve

cleanliness. About (96.22%) patients were satisfied with availability of prescribed drugs in Jan Aushadhi Kendra /hospital pharmacy, (95.27%) with Ayushmann Bharat services and (93.51%) with green area of hospital. The overall satisfaction level was very high (95.14%) (Table 3) This is an important parameter for assessing the quality of the patient care services being delivered at Regional Hospital and overall, of good quality. This satisfaction level is comparable to other similar studies with satisfaction level ranging 59%- 94%.^[7,8,12]

Most patients were satisfied with the behaviour of, staff at registration counter (97.16%), staff at supportive services like laboratory, radiology (97.03%) and staff nurses (96.62%) and security staff at the hospital (96.76%). Most patients (99.19%) felt that adequate time was given by the doctor in listening and examining them. Most of the patients were satisfied with the counselling done by the doctor. (Table 4)

Most of the people felt that the time taken for registration and waiting time for OPD was satisfactory, means < 1hour (85.40%) and (79.60%) patients were seen by doctor. Waiting time for laboratory services was reasonable for most of the participants (58.92%), so was for radiological services (66.90%). Most of patients (97.70%) collected drugs from hospital pharmacy <1 hour. (Table 5)

DISCUSSION

The gender distribution was male dominant, similar to other studies where it ranged from 52% to 61.7%.^[6,7,8,9] A few studies had female predominance.^[10,11] Most of the patients were graduates in education level, the findings were similar to other study by Mohd Athar et al most of the subjects were graduates (47%).^[6] Government hospital provides patient care at cheap and subsidized rates to the common people. In this study (63.65%) patients belongs to rural area.

The central location of the hospital and easy accessibility made it convenient for the patients to attend the OPD, similar finding was there in other studies.^[12] It was observed that majority of patients (57.30%) were not satisfied with vehicle area location and parking which needs to be resolved. Enquiry counter has been setup for helping the needy and most were utilizing its services. In study by Lyngkhai et al 87% respondents were satisfied with information given at enquiry counter. Signboards have been provided at various locations for the patient's convenience and proper guidance has been provided. Appropriate sitting area for waiting patients and drinking water facilities needs improvement for larger interest of public. The user charges were found to be appropriate and satisfactory by most people which was in contrast with other study where most of the patients felt that the registration fee, OPD consultation and investigation charges were high.^[9] More than 80% patients had easy access to the basic facilities which was much higher in comparison to other studies.^[6,9] Cleanliness of the hospital premises is very important and a high level of it

is needed. The study found that the hospital area was well maintained and clean but cleanliness in washrooms was not upto the mark whereas other studies had high percentage of patients dissatisfied with the cleanliness.^[10,11,12] Patients were highly satisfied with the behaviour of doctor, time given for listening to the problem, counselling and treatment provided. In most of the studies it was found that doctors provide good and adequate service and satisfaction level was high among the participants. Provision for medicine collection from hospital pharmacy was satisfactory and was in sync with findings of other studies.^[6,8,9]

Waiting time is an important parameter affecting the satisfaction level of the patients and it was reasonable on most of the accounts in our study. The behaviour of staff at registration counter, security guards, diagnostic services staff, nurses and doctors was satisfactory for most of the patients This was similar to other studies where patients felt that waiting time was good.^[6,10]

Table 1: OPD Patient Profile – (n=740).

| Sociodemographic Variable | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Sex | | |
| Male | 396 | 53.52 |
| Female | 344 | 46.48 |
| Education | | |
| Primary | 64 | 8.65 |
| Till 10 th std | 105 | 14.19 |
| >10 th std | 217 | 29.32 |
| Graduate | 319 | 43.11 |
| Post-Graduate | 35 | 4.73 |
| Area of residence | | |
| Rural | 471 | 63.65 |
| Urban | 269 | 36.35 |

Table 2: Hospital Profile (n=740).

| Variables | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| OPD Visits in last 6 Months | | |
| 1 st Visit | 435 | 58.78 |
| 2 nd Visit | 212 | 28.65 |
| >3 Visits | 93 | 12.57 |

Table 3: Convenience at Hospitals – Quality of Services (n=740).

| Variables | Satisfactory | Not satisfactory |
|--|--------------|------------------|
| Hospital Location | 712 (96.22) | 28 (3.78) |
| Vehicle Parking | 316 (42.70) | 424 (57.30) |
| Facility of Face Mask, Hand Sanitizer | 723 (97.70) | 17 (2.30) |
| Help desk location | 725 (97.97) | 15 (2.03) |
| Enquiry guidance | 740 (100) | 0 |
| Signages | 682 (92.16) | 58 (7.84) |
| Display of user Charges | 703 (95) | 37 (5) |
| Adequate waiting area | 389 (52.57) | 351 (47.43) |
| Diagnostic services (Radiology) | 726 (98.11) | 14 (1.89) |
| Laboratory Services | 712 (96.22) | 28 (3.78) |
| Dietary services | 731 (98.78) | 9 (1.22) |
| Drinking Water Facility | 295 (39.86) | 445 (60.14) |
| Cleanliness in Hospital premises | 731 (98.78) | 9 (1.22) |
| Cleanliness in washrooms | 374 (50.54) | 366 (49.46) |
| Availability of Prescribed Drugs in Jan Aushadhi Kendra /Hospital Pharmacy | 712 (96.22) | 28 (3.78) |
| Ayushman Bharat Services | 705 (95.27) | 35 (4.73) |
| Green area of Hospital | 692 (93.51) | 48 (6.49) |
| Overall Services | 704 (95.14) | 36 (4.86) |

Table 4: Behaviour of the Health Staff (n=740).

| Variables | Satisfactory | Not satisfactory |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Registration Counter | 719 (97.16) | 21 (2.84) |
| Doctor | 734 (99.19) | 06 (0.81) |
| Staff Nurse | 715 (96.62) | 25 (3.38) |
| Diagnostic/lab. staff | 718 (97.03) | 22 (2.97) |
| Security Staff | 716 (96.76) | 24 (3.24) |

Table 5: Waiting Time (n=740)

| Variables | Too Long (>2Hr) | Long (1-2Hr) | Satisfactory (<1Hr) |
|---|-----------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Registration process in OPD | 48 (6.49) | 60 (8.11) | 632 (85.40) |
| Seen by Doctor | 17 (2.29) | 134 (18.11) | 589 (79.60) |
| Laboratory Services | 119 (16.08) | 185 (25) | 436 (58.92) |
| Radiology (Diagnostic services) | 24 (3.24) | 221 (29.86) | 495 (66.90) |
| Collecting Drugs from Hospital Pharmacy | | 17(2.30) | 723 (97.70) |

CONCLUSION

Assessing the level of patient satisfaction related to different parameters of quality health care at Regional Hospital which has provided us with the certain areas that need corrective efforts to improve hospitals' service quality. Appropriate siting area for waiting patients and drinking water facilities needs improvement to enhance the comfort and satisfaction of the patients. Overall, the service provided at the hospital is of good quality and the level of satisfaction is very high. Although feedback from patient satisfaction surveys provides the opportunity for administrative heads to yield a better understanding of patient views and perceptions, and the extent of their involvement in improving the quality of care and services.

Patient attending each hospital are responsible for spreading the good image of hospital and therefore satisfaction of patients attending the hospital is an

important quality outcome indicator to measure success of the services delivery system. It is necessary to conduct periodic assessment of health services delivery in regard to patient satisfaction.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declare that no conflicts of interest exist in the publication of this paper.

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