

PATIENT SATISFACTION TOWARDS MEDICAL CARE SERVICES: A STUDY OF PATIENTS AT RIMS (RAJIV GANDHI INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES) KADAPA, ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Patient Satisfaction is an important aspect in health care. The degree of patient satisfaction can be used as a means of assessing the quality of health care and the personnel. It reflects the ability of the provider to meet the patients' needs. The main beneficiary of a good health-care system is clearly the patient. As a customer of health care, the patient is the focus of the health care delivery system. The patient satisfaction is of paramount importance in ensuring better quality on the way to total quality management. Patient satisfaction surveys are important from the view of improvement of quality services. The aim of the study is to assess the patient satisfaction at tertiary care hospital. A questionnaire was administered to outpatients and inpatients to assess their satisfaction level. The survey results revealed that majority of the patients are satisfied with medical services. The study recommends for the need to develop diagnostic services, hygienic and cleanliness, food and shelter to patient attendants and improvement of patient information through digital signage boards.

Key Words: Patient satisfaction, Health care system, Total quality management

INTRODUCTION:

Patient satisfaction is as important as other clinical health measures and is a primary means of measuring the effectiveness of health care delivery. It denotes the extent to which general health care needs of the people are met to their requirements. Patients carry certain expectations before their visit and the resultant satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the outcome of their actual experience. Patient satisfaction is deemed to be one of the important factors which determine the success of health care facility. It is easier to evaluate the patient's satisfaction towards the services provided than to evaluate the quality of medical services that they receive. Patient satisfaction is the health care recipient's reaction to aspects of his or her service experience.

The degree of patient satisfaction can be used as a means of assessing the quality of health care and the personnel. It reflects the ability of the provider to meet the patients' needs. Satisfied patients are more likely than the unsatisfied ones to continue using the health care services, maintaining their relationships with specific health care providers. Health care is changing rapidly.

PATIENT HEALTH CARE PERSPECTIVE

Cure is a fundamental health service expectation (Conway and Willcocks, 1997). Specifically, patient satisfaction is defined as an evaluation of distinct healthcare dimensions (Linder-Pelz, 1982). It may be considered as one of the desired outcomes of care and so patient satisfaction information should be indispensable to quality assessments for designing and managing healthcare (Turner and Pol, 1995).

Patient satisfaction is predicted by factors relating to caring, empathy, reliability and responsiveness (Tucker and Adams, 2001). Ware et al. (1978) identified dimensions affecting patient evaluations, including physician conduct, service availability, continuity, confidence, efficiency and outcomes. Other dimensions have been introduced to capture patients' healthcare evaluations.

If physical facilities, including: cleanliness; modern equipment; and the general feeling that the hospital is in a good physical condition, are well perceived then patient satisfaction increases (Andaleeb, 1988). Many dimensions so far come close to factors determined by Parasuraman et al. (1988): reliability (competence); responsiveness (communication); tangibles (physical facilities); and empathy (staff demeanour).

Wood side et al.(1989) highlighted the factors which influence patient satisfaction as follows: Admissions, Discharge, Nursing care, food, housekeeping and technical services.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Patient satisfaction depends up on many factors such as Quality of clinical services provided, availability of medicine, behavior of doctors and other health staff, cost of services, hospital infrastructure, physical comfort, emotional support, and respect for patient preferences. Mismatch between patient expectation and the service received is related to decreased satisfaction.. Therefore, assessing patient perspectives gives them a voice, which can make public health services more responsive to people's needs and expectations.

In the recent past, studies on patient satisfaction gained popularity and usefulness as it provides the chance to health care providers to improve the services in the public health facilities. Patients' feedback is necessary to identify problems that need to be resolved in improving the health services.

The satisfaction of patients coming to hospitals depends on the structure and function of the medical care system. The structure of the medical care system is guided by the policies of the govt. In a welfare state like India, where the government takes up the responsibility of providing free medical care to those who are unable to afford it, free consultation, medicines and treatment facilities have to be provided. Those receiving these kind of services may be satisfied or dissatisfied, hence the study was undertaken by the researcher to analyze the satisfaction levels of patients at RIMS, KADAPA.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To study the level of satisfaction of both out patients and inpatients at tertiary hospital, and to find out the causes for dissatisfaction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the level of patient satisfaction at tertiary hospital.
2. To identify the different factors affecting patient satisfaction.
3. To suggest some measures for improvement of services leading to better patient satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design This Research is Descriptive and Exploratory in nature. Empirical Analysis was done to quantify the satisfaction level of the out patients & inpatients and also by this way we can fill the gaps, so that better services can be developed and delivered in an effective way.

Sampling Frame: Out Patients and in patients who receive Medical services rendered by RIIMS Hospital of Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh.

Sample Size: Sample size of 100 patients is considered appropriate for the study.

Sampling Technique: Convenient sampling.

DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

PHYSICIAN SERVICES

Physician services play major role in enhancing patient satisfaction in hospital. Patients expressed their satisfaction towards physician services as follows:

Table No: 1

1.	Opinion regarding attention & attitude of the doctors	3.79
2.	Doctors listening to patients queries and explaining condition	4
3.	The courtesy and respect (friendliness, kindness) shown	3.89
4.	The daily rounds of doctors	4.02
5.	Treatment that patients received from doctors was effective	4.06

From above table it is inferred that patients expressed their satisfaction level towards doctor's attitude, attention, courtesy and respect towards patients.

NURSING SERVICES

Nursing services is the part of the total health organization which aims at satisfying the patient needs in hospital. Patients expressed their satisfaction towards nursing services as follows:

Table No: 2

6.	Attention and behaviour of the staff	3.88
7.	Listening attitude towards patients needs	4.06
8.	Explanation of procedures in an understandable way	4.11
9.	Timely administration of medication	3.99
10.	Information regarding your daily progress	3.95
11.	The consideration shown towards family & visitors	3.97

From the above table it is concluded that patients are satisfied with nursing services.. Effective nursing services include empathetic listening attitude of nurses towards patient needs, in time medication and concern towards patients attendants.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Diagnostic services facilitates the provision of timely, cost-effective, and high quality diagnostics care in safe and secure environments. It includes the clinical services of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Radiology, and Nuclear Medicine, patients expressed their satisfaction towards the Diagnostics services as follows:

Table No: 3

12.	Behaviour of the paramedical & technical staff	3.85
13.	Investigations are done on time	3.72

From the above table it is inferred that patients are satisfied with diagnostic services.

Non paramedical staffs are carrying out investigations in time.

ICU SERVICES

Critical care is for hospital patients with serious health problems who need intensive medical care units, also called ICU's, are cared for by a team of providers that may include specially trained nurses. Patients expressed their satisfaction towards ICU services as follows:

Table No: 4

14.	Explanation procedures in ICU	3.63
15.	Services of paramedical & class IV employees	3.66

From the above table it is concluded that patients are satisfied with ICU services provided by expertise medical professionals. ICU services are effective in providing emergency medical services to patients in time.

ACCOMODATION / PHYSICAL FACILITY

Patients expressed their satisfaction towards Accommodation/ physical facility as follows:

Table No: 5

16.	Hospital Environment	3.94
17.	Cleanliness of wards & corridors	4.15
18.	Availability of Equipments	2.97
19.	Water and electricity facility	3.6
20.	Canteen facilities	3.92
21.	Ambulance services	3.88
22.	Toilets / Washrooms were clean	2.07
23.	Facilities provided to the attendants & visitors	3.85
24.	Signboard facility	2.14
25.	Ventilation in wards	3.77
26.	Lift facility	3.74

From the above table it is interpreted that patients are satisfied with hospital environment, cleanliness in wards, water and electric facilities, ambulance services and lift facility. Patients expressed their dissatisfaction towards some facilities like cleanliness and hygieny in washrooms, availability of sophisticated medical equipment used in diagnostic services and sign board facility.

DISCHARGE SERVICES

The improvements in hospital discharge planning can dramatically improve the outcome for patients as they move to the next level of care. Patients, family caregivers and health professionals and health care providers all

play roles in maintaining a patient's health after discharge. Patients expressed their satisfaction towards discharge services as follows:

Table No: 6

27.	Awareness of discharge procedures in the hospital	3.82
28.	Information provided by doctor regarding post discharge medical care followed by patients in the home	3.54
29.	In case of any problems arise during patient discharge from hospital	3.76
30.	Information regarding discharge instructions	4.15
31.	Health education by the staff at discharge	3.99
32.	Transportation services during discharge	3.66

From the above table it is inferred that patients are satisfied with discharge services provided in hospital. Patients are aware of discharge procedures in hospital. Doctors and nursing staff are highly concern towards health education provided to patients during discharge. Transportation facility is satisfactory in hospital.

PATIENT OVERALL SATISFACTION TOWARDS HOSPITAL SERVICES

Table No: 7

33.	Registration and Admission	4.02
34.	Reception and Enquiry	4.04
35.	Critical care unit	3.96
36.	Diagnostic and Laboratory units	3.63
37.	Pharmacy	4.1
38.	In-patient rooms/ wards	3.91
39.	House Keeping	4.18
40.	Waiting rooms	2.47
41.	Parking areas	3.75
42.	Dietary department	3.4
43.	Blood bank facility	3.89
44.	Availability of Medicines	3.72

From the above table it is concluded that patients are satisfied with all medical services in hospital except waiting rooms for patient attendants, dietary department.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The hospital management need to provide sophisticated health care consists of effective diagnostic services with latest medical equipment like CT Scan services, MRI.
2. Good hygiene or cleanliness is a basic requirement for good health. Lack of maintenance leads to cross infections among patients. Hygienic facilities include adequate aeration, cross ventilation, daily washing and mopping of hospital rooms, proper disposal of fluids of patient, clean toilets using disinfectants. Hospital need to design its own infection control program which includes measures for cleanliness, hygiene and waste disposal.

3. The hospital need to provide enough facilities to provide food and shelter to patient attendants. However these poor and desperate people may be helped and facilitated and treated sympathetically during their stay in the hospital.

4. The hospital may focus on improving information provided to patients through digital sign board system. Content can be delivered dynamically within check-in areas providing patients with important information that is relevant to them. Digital signage solutions can replace typical white boards found in areas such as nursing stations, emergency and operating rooms improving the overall coordination of medical care.

CONCLUSION

Patient satisfaction surveys in health care organizations leads to quality improvements regarding medical services provided to patients. The Hospital management need to focus on improvement of medical services provided to poor people in the community.

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