

PATIENT SATISFACTION LEVELS IN SURGICAL WARD OF A TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL IN KARACHI

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ABSTRACT

Patient satisfaction is a good yardstick to measure care giver's success. Patient satisfaction is one of the pertinent objectives of health care system. Since doctor-patient relationship is most crucial and decisive in patients' perception of care and satisfaction, from this survey, we explore various aspects of care received from doctors that determine the overall satisfaction level of patients.

The objective of this study was to find out the level of patients satisfaction with various aspects of care provided by doctors in surgical ward in a tertiary care hospital in Karachi.

Data was collected from a convenient sample of 174 patients, at the time of discharge from the health facility, who were admitted to surgical ward of Ziauddin Hospital, KDLB campus. Study design was cross sectional. Data collection was done from August till September 2013. Questionnaire was developed after literature review. Patient satisfaction was recorded using the 5 point Likert scale. Data analysis was done on SPSS version 19.

Overall there were 57.5% males and 42.5% females participants. 41% of the participants were between 35-44 years of age. 42.5% were educated up to primary level, while 19.5% were not educated at all. Overall satisfaction level was 100%, with 66.7% noted as very satisfying while 33.3% as satisfying. Doctors' politeness, availability, provision of post operative care and discharge counseling were strong determinants of overall satisfaction. Explanation of medicines and patients' participation in their illness discussion were areas of uncertainty and dissatisfaction.

Conclusion: Doctors' polite attitude, consultation and availability are vital to patient satisfaction. Areas that need more attention are, seeking patient views in their illness discussion, explaining them prescription drugs and lab investigations.

Key Words: *Patients, satisfaction, care givers success.*

INTRODUCTION

Patients have a legitimate and important role as evaluators of healthcare. Obtaining feedback from patients about the quality of healthcare is a powerful way to develop more patient-centered approaches to

healthcare delivery by doctors.¹ Measurement of patient satisfaction is expected to play an increasingly important role in the growing push toward accountability among health care providers.² Over the past decade there has been increasing realization of the need to take into account patient reports of their hospital experiences in the development of action plans for improvement of services and care provided³ and many studies have been done throughout the world to determine the patient satisfaction and its related factors.^{4,5,6} It is suggested that efforts to improve health care will be wasted unless they reflect what patients expect from the service.³

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Received for Publication: March 14, 2014

Revision Received: March 29, 2014

Revision Accepted: April 5, 2014

Patient satisfaction is a domain to which slightly less importance is attached in this part of the world, especially if we talk about tertiary care hospitals. Involvement of the users in the health services leads to improved outcomes⁷ and satisfied patients show improved compliance, continuity of care and ultimately better health outcomes resulting from trustful and dependable contact with their physician.⁸

A study was thus required to survey patients' views of care provided to them during admission and comprehending patient satisfaction as it is an essential tool that can be aptly used in identifying voids in the delivery of health care services and hence improving them.

The objective of this study was to find out the level of patients satisfaction with various aspects of care provided by doctors in surgical ward in a tertiary care hospital in Karachi.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the inpatient setting the surgical ward of K.D.L.B campus, Ziauddin Hospital using cross sectional, descriptive study design. Data were collected from a sample of 174 patients (A convenient sample of 170 patients was selected randomly from the inpatient setting) from August to September 2013. Patients were surveyed at the time of discharge from hospital. Patients' age ranged from 18 to 64 years.

A self-administered questionnaire, designed after literature review, keeping in perspective this study objective was used to assess the patient satisfaction from the care received from doctors. The Proforma consisted a total of 17 questions, 12 of which directly concerned patient satisfaction with variables, which include; level of satisfaction with attending doctors' politeness, availability, seeking patient's participation in discussion of their illness, explaining medication and investigations, putting the patient at ease during physical examination, obtainment of written consent and post operative care. The responses were measured on a 5 point Likert scale with 1 as very satisfied and 5 as very dissatisfied.

The inclusion criteria included patients of both genders with surgical interventions and surgical patients admitted to the ward but were treated conservatively with medications while the patients with any mental disabilities and those who refused to consent were excluded from the study. Informed verbal consent was obtained from all the patients and their confidentiality and privacy was maintained.

All statistical data were recorded and analyzed by SPSS version 19. Chi square test was done for categorical variables. Frequency and proportions reported for ordinal variables.

RESULTS

Of our 174 in patient sample size, 57.5% were males and 42.5% were females. Overall 200 precipitants were recruited however 26 left the study there after. Response rate was 87 percent. Maximum numbers of the respondents, 21.8% were between 35-44 years of age followed by age group 25-34 and 45-54, having 20.7% of the participants in each group. 42.5% were educated up to primary level, while 19.5% were non - educated. In our study analysis, we found 5 out of 13 variables where uncertainty or dissatisfaction was encountered by the patients surveyed, namely: explanation of patient's illness, participation in discussion about their illness, explanation of investigations, explanation of medication upon discharge and discharge counseling (Table 2).

Level of uncertainty (2.9%) and dissatisfaction (7.2%) were noted in medication explanation, the aspect with maximum negative scoring. Chi square test applied to nominal variables revealed age as having a significant association with overall in patient satisfaction, $P < 0.05$.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

		N	(n) %
Gender	Male	100	57.5%
	Female	74	42.5%
Age	Under 18	20	11.5%
	18-24	34	19.5%
	25-34	36	20.7%
	35-44	38	21.8%
	45-54	36	20.7%
	55-64	10	5.7%
Educational status	Primary school	74	42.5%
	Secondary school	54	31.0%
	Higher secondary	6	3.4%
	University graduate	6	3.4%
	Not educated	34	19.5%
Total		174	100.0%

TABLE 2: PATIENT'S SATISFACTION RESPONSES

Variables		n	(n) %
Doctor's politeness	very satisfied	104	75.4%
	satisfied	34	24.6%
Putting you at ease during physical examination	very satisfied	82	59.4%
	satisfied	56	40.6%
Explaining your illness	very satisfied	96	69.6%
	satisfied	32	23.2%
	uncertain	10	7.2%
Doctor's availability	very satisfied	110	79.7%
	satisfied	28	20.3%
Seeking your participation in discussion about your illness	very satisfied	68	49.3%
	satisfied	64	46.4%
	uncertain	6	4.3%
Explaining you the investigations	very satisfied	78	56.5%
	satisfied	58	42.0%
	dissatisfied	2	1.4%
Treatment modality received	surgical	124	71.3%
	medical	36	20.7%
	both	14	8%
Counselling regarding surgical procedure	very satisfied	120	87.0%
	satisfied	18	13.0%
Obtaining an informed written consent	very satisfied	94	68.1%
	satisfied	44	31.9%
Post operative care	very satisfied	104	75.4%
	satisfied	34	24.6%
Explaining you medications	very satisfied	72	52.2%
	satisfied	52	37.7%
	uncertain	4	2.9%
	dissatisfied	10	7.2%
Discharge counseling	very satisfied	116	84.1%
	satisfied	20	14.5%
	dissatisfied	2	1.4%
Overall satisfaction with doctor's performance	very satisfied	92	66.7%
	satisfied	46	33.3%

DISCUSSION

This study revealed a high degree of in patient satisfaction in the following areas such as doctors' politeness, their availability, post operative care received from doctors and discharge counseling. The overall satisfaction level is rated by 66.7% patients as very satisfying. These results were similar to a few local

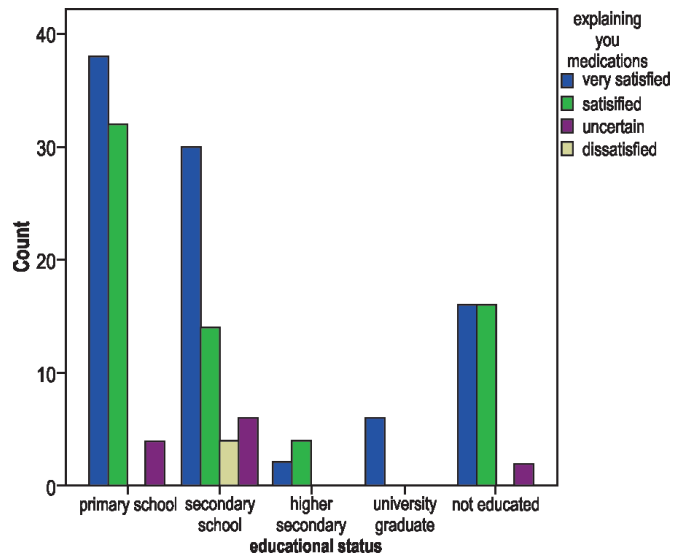


Fig 1: Patients satisfaction for explanation of medicines

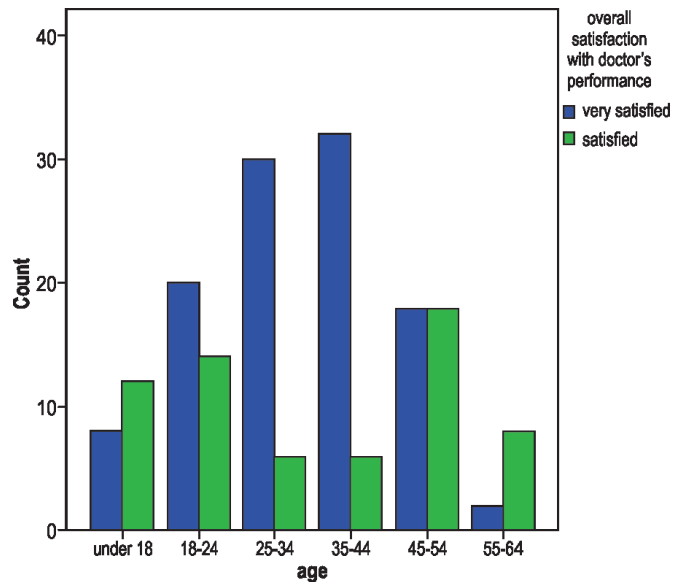


Fig 2: Overall satisfaction level with doctor's performance

and international studies. In a study carried out at a tertiary care hospital in Rawalpindi, Pakistan by Khan et al⁹, the availability and courteousness of doctors' was rated by 98.3% as good and satisfactory. In some other studies, communication skills and attitude of care givers received a similar high score in terms of satisfaction.¹⁴

This survey found a significant association between age and overall patient satisfaction. It is pertinent to mention similar association drawn by Gani et al. They found younger age groups to be more satisfied.¹⁰ More in line with the findings of the present study that is patients in the 4th decade of life were most satisfied, as Blenkeron et al found older age group to be significantly associated with satisfaction and similar were the results

of a few more such surveys.^{11,12} The above mentioned association could be linked to certain factors common to older age groups such as a higher level of patience, acceptance and previous hospital experiences.¹³

Patients were largely satisfied with provision of care and drug prescription.^{15,16} On the contrary, some studies revealed patient dissatisfaction with medicines' availability and lab investigations^{17,18}, patients' unawareness of their diagnosis, causes of illness, number of medicines they were taking, lack of information of prescription, why were the medicines prescribed and their lack of understanding of laboratory investigations.¹⁹ Current study analysis found 10% patients uncertain and dissatisfied with doctors' explanation of medication and had a significant association with patients' education level, with patients educated up to higher secondary and university level being satisfied, whereas patients educated up to primary and secondary level and the uneducated, showed mixed response, ranging from satisfied to dissatisfied.

The overall satisfaction level in patients ranked high in this survey, with providers' politeness, consultation and respect for privacy being key determinants in users' perception of satisfaction, findings common to other similar studies.^{20,21}

CONCLUSION

Care givers' politeness, concern for patients' privacy and ease during physical examination, consultation during ward stay and at the time of discharge and their availability play key role in overall patients' satisfaction.

Aspects of care such as seeking patients' participation in discussion of their illness, explaining them prescription drugs and lab investigations need more attention, especially with regards to socio-demographic factors like age and education.

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