



Patient Satisfaction With OPD Services Through Different Healthcare Determinants: A Study at a Newly Constructed Tertiary Care Teaching Hospital In Northern India.

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Abstract

Introduction: Patient satisfaction encompasses the patients perceived need, his expectations of quality in health care services. It is believed to be one of the most important factors which determine the level of the quality health care in a hospital.

Aims & Objectives: To evaluate the level of patient satisfaction with outpatient department (OPD) services.

Materials & Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional research design was utilized at the outpatient departments of a tertiary care teaching government hospital from 01/04/2023 to 10/04/2023. An anonymous, pre-designed, tested, semi structured questionnaire was administered after taking informed consent for assessing patient satisfaction.

Results: Majority of patients were satisfied with health care services provided by health workers in OPD service. 85% patients were satisfied with the courteous attitude and 83% satisfied with the communication by the doctor. 43% of patients were unsatisfied with the toilet facility and 55% of patients were unsatisfied with availability with sanitation in hospital and 40% of patients were unsatisfied with availability of security. Overall satisfaction judgement with Outpatient Department services were rated as 61% good, 16% satisfactory, 12% excellent and 11% poor.

Keywords: Patient satisfaction, OPD services, Health care, waiting area

Introduction

Patient satisfaction has been defined as an assessment of perceived differences between expectations and needs of the patient to what is actually received during the process of patient care.(1) It is a measure of health care quality and requires to be often evaluated and depends upon many factors such as quality of clinical and supportive services provided, availability of medicine, doctor-patient relationship, cost of services, hospital infrastructure, comfortable physical environment, compassion and respect for patient preferences.(2) Patients' satisfaction with quality health care is becoming an essential factor in promoting health, when patients are satisfied with healthcare services, it leads to quick recovery,

encouragement to the hospital which results in increase funds for service provision. Also, satisfaction with care is an important quality tool in the monitoring of the quality of health care (3,4). Also, the quality of care given to a patient can be influenced by patient's attitude to the healthcare provider and his past experiences with the patient (5). Satisfaction with health care increases the probability of a patient to continue to use healthcare facility and stick to medical advice and determinant of overall care coverage and effectiveness (6). Also inter-professional collaboration has been documented to positively influence patient satisfaction with healthcare (7).

The Patient is the ultimate consumer of the hospital services and Outpatient department (OPD) is the first point of contact of the hospital with the patients. The care in the OPD is deemed to indicate the quality of services of a hospital and is reflected by patients' satisfaction with the services being provided.(8) Being an vital outcome measure of the effectiveness and efficiency of health care delivery system functional at hospitals the present study was conducted at a tertiary care teaching Institute in Udhampur district of union territory of Jammu and Kashmir to evaluate the level of patient satisfaction with OPD services in the of the hospital and the factors associated with patient satisfaction with reference to doctor-patient interaction, registration desk, waiting area, security, sanitation and overall health facilities. The results of the study will be helpful for hospital administrators of health system at different levels to incorporate meaningful interventions.

Materials and Methods

Study design: This was a descriptive cross-sectional study carried out among patients attending outpatient department of GMC Udhampur, a tertiary care teaching Government hospital in the UT of J&K during the period from 01/04/2023 to 10/04/2023.

Sample size: The sample size calculation was based on the study conducted by

Sharma A et al (9) in the Out Patient department of tertiary care hospital in Madhya Pradesh, India. The sample size was calculated by using the formula $n=Z^2pq/d^2$ (where $Z=1.96$ at 95% confidence; p = prevalence of patient satisfactions;

$q=1-p$; d = absolute allowable error. For this study we presumed maximum variability, therefore $p=0.5$; $q=0.5$; $d=20\%$ of p . Sample size thus yielded is 96

which is rounded off to a figure as 100.Simple random sampling technique was used to select patients attending different specialties of OPD.

Inclusion criteria: First OPD visit.

Exclusion criteria: The In-patients, individuals attending the emergency department or patients attending the radiodiagnosis, psychiatry department and patients not giving consent to participate and follow up patients were excluded from the study.

An anonymous, pre-designed, pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire was administered after obtaining an informed written consent from each patient. The questions included the information related to the patient's socio-demographic profile, perception of OPD services, behaviour of doctors and other health staff, and attitude of patients towards doctors, seating arrangement in waiting area, waiting time at registration desk, cleanliness, toilet facility, drinking water facility and security arrangement. The respondents answered in this study satisfactory/unsatisfactory, yes/no. The patients were prior informed that the objective of the study was to evaluate the patient satisfaction of OPD services provided by hospital so as to bring further improvement and quality in health care services. The patients were pre informed that the investigator was not part of treatment team and they can freely give their opinion without any hesitation. The data was analysed with SPSS v20.0 software.

Results

A total of 100 patients were interviewed. Among these (55%) were female and (45%) males, the majority (31%) were in the >60years age group. Almost half (52%) of the patients had completed primary level education. The respondents were asked about speciality consulted (Table1).

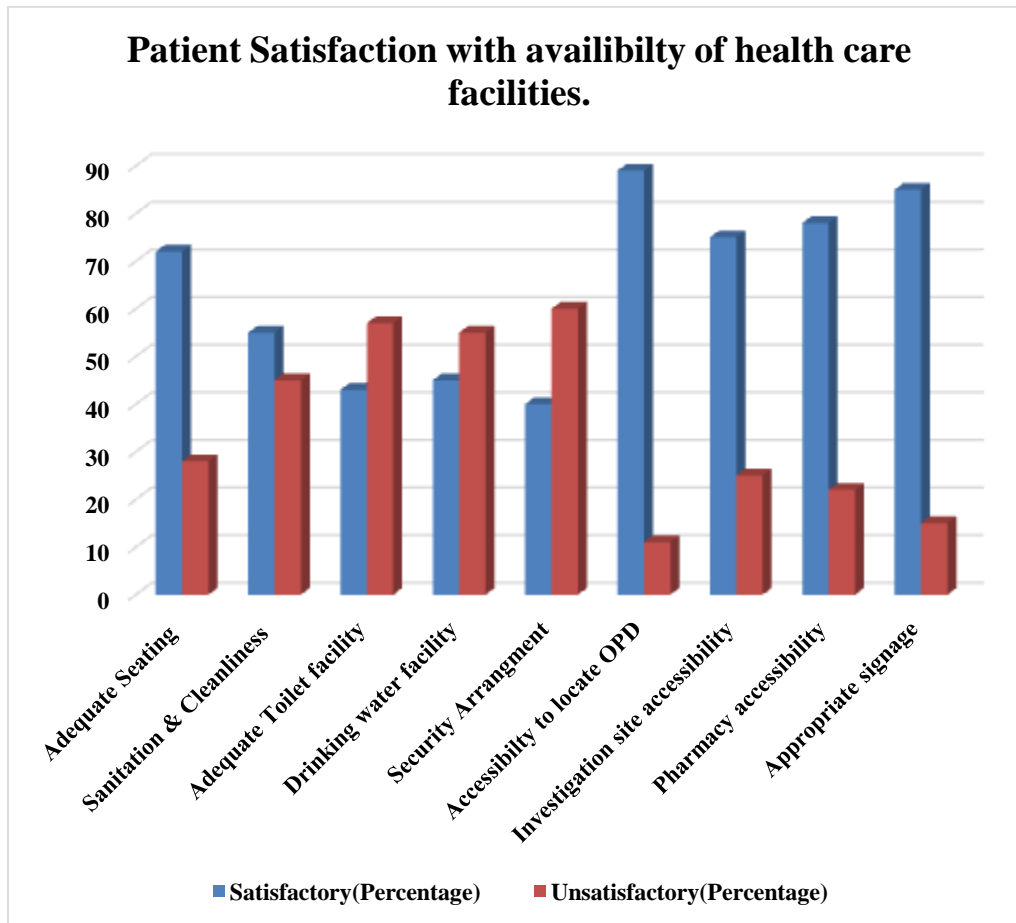
Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of patients who participated in the study

| Variables | Categories | Respondent (n=100) (Percentage %) |
|-----------|------------|--------------------------------------|
|-----------|------------|--------------------------------------|

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Age(years) | <15 | 5 |
| | 15-45 | 45 |
| | 46-60 | 19 |
| | >60 | 31 |
| Sex | Male | 45 |
| | Female | 55 |
| Education | Primary | 52 |
| | Secondary | 31 |
| | Tertiary | 17 |
| Occupation | Service | 7 |
| | Business | 30 |
| | Labourer | 25 |
| | House wife | 29 |
| | Student | 9 |
| Clinic Consulted | Medicine | 28 |
| | Surgery | 18 |
| | Gynaecology & Obstetrics | 13 |
| | ENT | |
| | Dermatology | 3 |
| | Ophthalmology | 2 |
| | Orthopaedics | 4 |
| | Dentistry | 17 |
| | Paediatrics | 2 |
| | 13 | |

When Patients' opinion was taken regarding availability of health care facilities (Figure-1) it revealed that, most of the patients were satisfied with availability of sitting, appropriate signage & symbol, convenience to locate OPD, convenience to reach investigation site, laboratory and pharmacy counters present in hospital OPD. Satisfaction with security arrangement revealed that only 40% of participants were satisfied and similar was the case with sanitation where only 55% of the participants were satisfied. Respondents were mostly unsatisfied with adequate drinking water and toilet facility.

Fig-1: Patient Satisfaction with availability of health care facilities.



Patient’s opinion on various aspects of doctor–patient relationship were ascertained (Table 2). Patients and their attendants who participated in the study opined that 85% of doctors were courteous towards patients. It was revealed that most of participants, about 78% were satisfied with doctor’s way of explaining the condition of patient and treatment prescribed. When asked about difficulty to telling doctor about some private history 70% patient responded it was difficult.

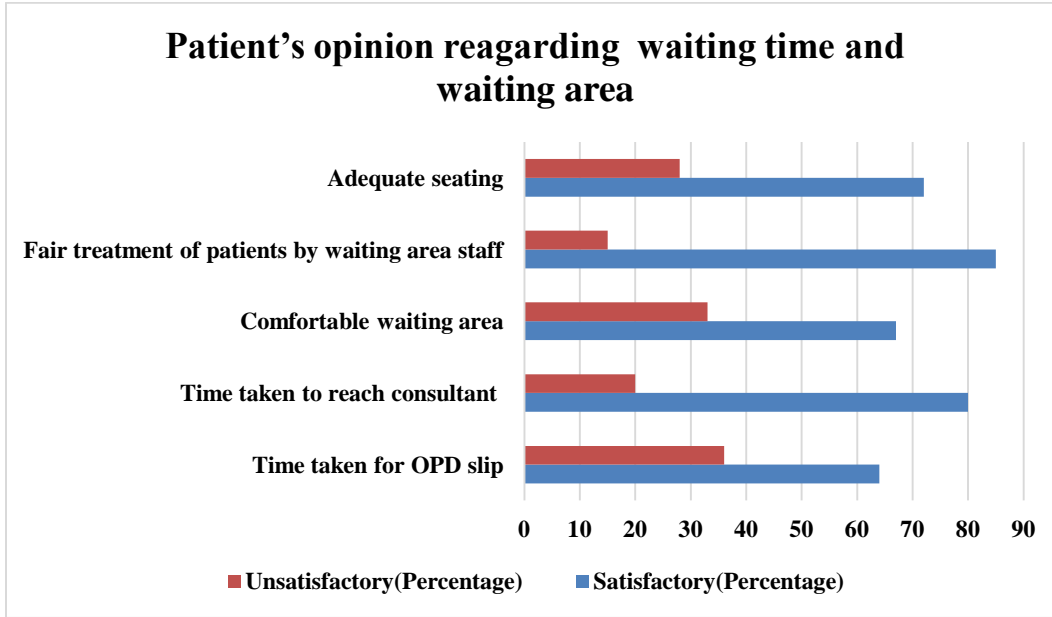
Table 2: Patients’ satisfaction with health care services delivered by health workers.

| Professional care | Respondent (n=100) (Percentage %) |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Doctor was Courteous toward patients | |
| Satisfactory | |
| Unsatisfactory | 85 |
| | 15 |
| Doctor’s explanation about treatment | |
| Satisfactory | |
| Unsatisfactory | 78 |
| | 22 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Patient Given chance to talk about his illness | |
| Satisfactory | 83 |
| Unsatisfactory | 17 |
| Understanding illness after consultation with doctor | |
| Satisfactory | 88 |
| Unsatisfactory | 12 |
| Doctor listened to the patient's problem attentively | |
| Yes | 82 |
| No | 18 |
| Difficulty in telling doctor about private thing | |
| Yes | 70 |
| No | 30 |
| Doctor maintained confidentiality | |
| Yes | 90 |
| No | 10 |

With regard to waiting time and waiting area (Figure-2) about 64% of the patients were satisfied with time taken to get OPD slip from registration counters, 80% patients were satisfied with time taken to reach consultation room. 85% patients opined that the paramedical staff in the waiting area treated them on fair grounds.

Fig-2: Patient’s opinion regarding waiting time and waiting area



Majority of the respondents rated overall feeling about visit to hospital OPD services towards higher side of satisfaction level (Fig-3).

Fig-3 Distribution of satisfaction judgement about hospital OPD services.



Discussion

The present study was conducted to assess the level of satisfaction of the patients with the various aspects of the health care delivery system in OPD of Government Medical College and associated hospital Udhampur. We evaluated patient satisfaction in three

domains of health care (availability of health care services, professional care by doctors and waiting time and waiting area for availing services). In the present study majority of patients belonged to age group of 15-45year age, which is productive age group 55% of them were females. A similar finding was observed in a study conducted by a Kolade J

Obamiroin at Nigeria where majority of patients were also female (65%) dominated with patients of 18 to 24 ages (45%).(10) Nandkeshav A et al who in his study found that out of 320 respondents, 40.3% were males and 59.7% were females.(11) This was contrary to the findings in the study conducted by Sharma A et al which had 52% male patients, 48% females with a mean age of 42.9 ± 19.53 years.(9) Level of education may affect the needs and expectations of the patients with the health care delivery system. In our study 52% patients had primary level of education followed by 31% who were matriculate pass and only 17 patients being graduate. Similar finding was reported by Sharma A et al who noted that 22% of patients were graduate and above followed by primary education (26%), higher secondary education (20%), middle school (18%) and illiterate (14%). (9) According to the speciality wise distribution of patients of the 100 patients interviewed, 28% attended the medicine OPD, followed by surgery OPD 18%, orthopaedics OPD 17%, Obstetrics & gynaecology OPD & Paediatrics 13% each, Ophthalmology 4%, and ENT 3%, dermatology & dental OPD 2%. A similar finding was reported by Mankar et al where out of 508 patients interviewed, majority 108 (21.3%) had attended the medicine OPD, followed by orthopaedics 80 (15.8%), Obstetrics and gynaecology (OBGY) and ENT 11.8 respectively. The Paediatrics and Ophthalmology OPD had an attendance of 10.2% each. (12) Patient's opinion on different OPD services was ascertained. The majority of patients were satisfied with OPD area accessibility (89%), appropriate signages (85%), seating arrangements (72%), convenience to reach investigation site and pharmacy in hospital (75%) & (78%) respectively. However only 55% of patients were satisfied with cleanliness in the OPD, when it was worked out it was found that the reason behind poor cleanliness and sanitation was lack of sanitation staff strength and the ongoing construction of additional 200 bedded hospital within the area of existing hospital which produce lot of dust thereby requiring frequent dusting and mopping. Similarly, patients were dissatisfied with the security arrangement with only 40% of patients being satisfied, reason was lack of staffing in Security. Only 45% of patients were satisfied with drinking water facility. The study observed that 43% patients were unsatisfied with the

toilet facility. Similarly, Joshi et al in his study found that 68% of patients agreed that there was enough drinking water in waiting area of Medicine OPD and 70% of patients opined that there was adequate & clean toilets facility in waiting area. (13) Similarly in a study by Sodani et al 58% respondents said that they did not find any problem in locating the hospital (93%) or locating different departments within the hospital (87%). More than half of the respondents (54%) found sitting arrangements adequate and 71% respondents found hospitals adequately cleaned. (2) Similar findings were found by Galhotra in his study in which the respondents were satisfied with the basic amenities. (14) When Patients' views on various aspects of doctor-patient interaction were analysed it was observed that 85% of patients were satisfied with the behaviour of the staff and felt that doctors had courteous attitude toward them. 83% patients were satisfied with the time & opportunity the doctor gave to them to talk about their condition. Similar findings were observed by Patel et al in his study where 98.52% patients were satisfied with the behaviour of hospital staff. (15) Sharma A et al found that 78% of patients were satisfied with doctor's behaviour, 64% were satisfied with behaviour of nurses and paramedical staff. (9) The quality of doctor's communication while history taking, examination & explaining treatment to the patient has a great impact on the health outcome of the patient (15). In the present study majority of the patients were able to understand the illness (88%) and (90%) patients were satisfied with confidentiality maintained by the doctor. 70% of patients had difficulty in telling doctor about private thing, the reason could be that majority of the participants in our study were from far flung areas and 52% had attained primary level of education so they might be hesitating in telling the private history to the doctor, while in a study conducted by Jadhav SB et al time taken for consultation & examination by doctor was found to be satisfactory in case of 68.82% participants. (16) In a study from Lahore it was seen that 94% of the patients who visited the OPD were satisfied with their doctor. (17) According to the protocol followed in the hospital, patients have to obtain a slip from the reception desk before they proceed for their check-up by the doctor. 65% patients were satisfied with time taken in getting OPD slip, necessitating the need of application of operation research techniques and

various waiting time models by hospital administrators to decrease queue length and waiting time in OPD. Once in the waiting area the patient interacts with the attendant who is responsible for sending patients inside the doctor's room according to their slip numbers, 85% patients reported being treated fairly and humbly by the staff in the waiting area. 72% patients were satisfied with the seating arrangement being adequate whereas only 67% reported waiting area comfortable. Such issues involving the attitude of hospital staff with patients has great influence on the reputation of a hospital and infact is a value added service In the current study most of the respondents rated overall feeling about visit to hospital OPD services towards higher side of satisfaction level, 61% felt good, 16% satisfactory, 11% excellent and 12% reported poor level of satisfaction. In our study, almost three-quarters of participants felt that OPD service were either "good" or "excellent." Similar findings have been reported by other authors as well (9, 18, 19, 20,21). In a study conducted Asma Ibrahim et al it was observed that there was 10% overall satisfaction. (22) The study conducted by Chetwynd S.J. reported total satisfaction was 49%. (23)

Conclusions

The patients were mostly satisfied with the courteous and attentive attitude of doctors towards them. Most of the participants were satisfied with the availability of services, professional care provided by consultant in OPD, behaviour of consultant, nurse's and paramedical staff. They were unsatisfied with sanitation, security, toilet and drinking water facility and waiting time in queue especially during peak hours in OPD. which is vital for quality of health care services. This is a strong message to hospital administrators and health managers to improve the quality of services and patient experience in public hospitals. OPD services are an essential part of health care services and is the shop window of a hospital that need to be improved by developing patient feedback system.

Limitation

Generalization of the study findings is limited because of limited time period for the project. This study can be expanded by increasing the variables and sample numbers to measure further levels of patient satisfaction

Recommendations

It is recommended to improve the domain of waiting time for smooth functioning of the hospital using different operation research technique and various waiting time models. Moreover further studies should be conducted to assess patient satisfaction in health care facilities. OPD being shop window of a hospital need to be improve with special focus on improving toilet facility, drinking water, sanitation facility and security. Efforts should be made to get regular feedback from the patients.

Authors Contributions

Dr Mukul Gupta and Dr Meenakshi koul conceptualized the study, participated in data collection, study design, writing-review, designing the methodology, analysis of data and writing of the initial draft. Dr Khalid Mehmood supervised the study, review literature review, study design and editing. All authors proof read and approved the manuscript

Disclosure Statement

The authors did not receive any funding for this study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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