

Utilization of health services and satisfaction of the patients in District Bhakkar, Pakistan

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Objective: To find the situation faced by patients in accessibility and utilization of health services in our area.

Methodology: This cross-sectional study was carried out in four public hospitals of district Bhakkar from April to May 2016. Two hundred patients were selected by using convenient sampling techniques. Data were collected through an interview schedule in a face-to-face survey.

Results: Out of 200 patients, 72% belonged to 11-50 year of age and only 28% belonged to 51-above years of age. Patients coming from rural areas were 69% and 31% belonged to urban areas. A great majority (74.5%) of the patients

agreed that doctors' behavior was very well. One of the positive sign was that majority (62.5%) of the patients agreed that up to great extents doctors pay full attention to the patients in public sector hospitals. It is also found that 59% patients were up to great extent satisfied with the overall treatment.

Conclusion: Patients were satisfied with the overall health services being provided in public sector hospitals of our area. (Rawal Med J 202;45:192-195).

Keywords: Patients satisfaction, service, Caring, quality, health practices.

INTRODUCTION

Health is the fundamental human right of every citizen.¹ Awareness should be raised about socioeconomic conditions that shape health care inequalities.² The protection of patients' health is most significant among primary duties of the state that encompasses regulation of patient-doctor relationship to funds allocation for health care.³ Provision of health services are influenced by availability of resources and policies.⁵

Satisfaction with healthcare includes level of satisfaction with health-related professionals and institutions.⁶ Patients' care is associated with patient-doctor relationship.⁷ Modern healthcare systems now evaluate their performance through gauging patient's subjective satisfaction.⁸ It is important to examine the satisfaction of patients where doctors and paramedical staff is found dissatisfied with hospital environment.⁹ Patients' satisfaction is significant to improve healthcare quality as they are the most sensitive and central stakeholder.¹⁰ Patients perceive satisfaction through services, reception, trust, ambiance, humanization, accessibility, effectiveness and expectations relating to the services they receive.¹¹

Patient satisfaction is a very important indicator for

reflecting the quality in health care.¹² Patient satisfaction represents the patient's perceived need, his expectations from the health care providers, and experience of health care.¹³ It also influences the timely, well-organized, and patient-centered delivery of quality health care.¹²

There are many factors that can affect patient satisfaction. These can be either provider-related or patient-related. Provider-related or external objective care factors associated with patients perception of quality of health care are as follows: hospital's association and structure of care,¹⁵ nurse-physician relationship,¹⁶ doctors' proficiency and interpersonal communication skills, atmosphere on the wards,¹⁷ number of beds on each ward,¹⁸ attitude of hospital staff as well as comfortable environment,¹⁹ cleanliness, good signs/information points, adequate seating, non overcrowding.²⁰ Patients have also identified, patient-related factors include persons' sex, education level,¹⁸ age²² stage of their ailment as well as patients' perception of a connection of trust and feeling of being involved in decisions about their care.²³

Although there is lack of consensus among researchers on the tools of patients' satisfaction measurement but the main dimensions of many

instruments utilized are patient-professional interactions, physical environment and internal management processes.²² Patients' experiences can suggest effective ways to tackle hospital issues.¹⁷ Studies have shown how doctors' positive attitude makes patients satisfied even when hospitals lack extraordinary resources.²² The current study was aimed to gauge patients' level of satisfaction with hospital facilities.

METHODOLOGY

This cross sectional study was conducted at four public sector government hospitals in district Bhakhar, Punjab, Pakistan during April-May 2016. A sample of 200 patients (both males and females) was selected by using convenient sampling technique. A well-structured interview schedule was used to collect the primary data in a face-to-face survey in different wards of hospitals. An informed consent was taken from respondents during interviews.

Statistical Analysis: All the analysis was done by using SPSS version 21.0. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. In bi-variant analysis, relationship among different variables (dependent and independent) was examined through applying the Chi-square test for determining the degree of independence. The Gamma test was used to measure the strength of association/relationship of the cross tabulated data when two variables were being measured at the ordinal level of measurement.

RESULTS

Out of 200 patients, 148(74.00%) were males and 52(26.00%) females. Most of the patients (72%) belonged to 11-50 year of age majority (69%) belonged to rural areas (Table 1). Majority (70%) of the respondents completely did not agree that the doctors treat the patients properly and 10% of the respondents agreed that to some extent doctors properly treat the patients in public sector hospitals. Majority (62.5%) of the respondents agreed that up to great extent doctors pay full attention to the patients in public sector hospitals (Table 2).

Table 1. Baseline characteristics of the patients (N=200).

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	148	74.0
Female	52	26.0
Age Groups		
Below 10 years	16	8.0
11-20	18	9.0
21-30	28	14.0
31-40	11	5.5
41-50	71	35.5
51 and Above	56	28.0
Area of Residence		
Rural	138	69.0
Urban	62	31.0

Table 2. Perception of respondents regarding inequalities in providing health facilities (N=200).

Description of Health Services in the public sector hospitals	To some extent f (%)	To great extent f (%)	Not at all f (%)	Total
Treatment of the patients according to their status	20(10)	40(20)	140(70)	200(100)
Utilization of all resources of treatment in hospitals	87(43.5)	105(52.5)	8(4)	200(100)
Doctors give the better treatments in private clinics	54(27)	74(37)	72(36)	200(100)
Availability of Proper Health care facilities in wards	120(60)	69(34.5)	11(5.5)	200(100)
Doctors pay full attention to the patients	61(30.5)	125(62.5)	14(7)	200(100)
Satisfaction with Treatment in hospitals	77(38.5)	118(59)	5(2.5)	200(100)
Doctors' behavior in Public Sector hospitals	47(23.5)	147(74.5)	6(3)	200(100)
Affordability of family for treatment	57(28.5)	78(39)	65(32.5)	200(100)

Table 3. Association between education level and behavior of doctors (N=200).

Education level of the respondents	Behavior of doctors with patients			Total
	Polite	Satisfactory	Rude	
Illiterate	25(12.5%)	10(5.0%)	0(.0%)	35(17.5%)
Literate	21(10.5%)	8(4.0%)	0(.0%)	29(14.5%)
Primary	31(15.5%)	13(6.5%)	0(.0%)	44(22.0%)
Middle Pass	29(14.5%)	5(2.5%)	0(.0%)	34(17.0%)
Matriculation	26(13.0%)	5(2.5%)	6(3.0%)	37(18.5%)
Masters and above	15(7.5%)	6(3.0%)	0(.0%)	21(10.5%)
Total	147(73.5%)	47(23.5%)	6(3.0%)	200(100.0%)

Chi-square value = 31.414, d.f= 10, p value= 0.001, level of sig=0.05, Gamma=.002

Table 4. Association between age of the respondents and satisfaction with emergency performance of the hospital employees (N=200).

Age of the respondents (years)	Satisfaction with emergency performance of the hospital		Total
	Yes	No	
Below 10	16(8.0%)	0(.0%)	16(8.0%)
11-20	14(7.0%)	4(2.0%)	18(9.0%)
21-30	27(13.5%)	1(.5%)	28(14.0%)
31-40	11(5.5%)	0(.0%)	11(5.5%)
41-50	67(33.5%)	4(2.0%)	71(35.5%)
51 and Above	47(23.5%)	9(4.5%)	56(28.0%)
Total	182(91.0%)	18(9.0%)	200(100.0%)

Chi-square value 11.922, d.f= 5, p value 0.036, Level of significance= 0.05, Gamma=.264

There was a significant association between education level of the respondents and politeness of doctors' behavior towards them (Table 3). There was a significant association between age of the respondents and level of satisfaction with emergency performance of the hospital employees (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

It was paramount from this study that 60% patients replied that up to some extent health care facilities were properly available in wards according to the patients' needs and 5.5% of the respondents completely denied about the availability of proper health care facilities in government hospitals. It is evident from the results that majority of the patients

(80%) did not agree that doctors give proper treatment at public sector hospitals.

A study found that provision in the private sector in low and middle-income countries health services were sometimes considered to be more effective, accountable and sustainable than the public sector.¹⁹

On the contrary, the public sector is often seen as providing more equitable and evidence-based care.

This was also found in this study that majority (59%) patients were up to great extent satisfied with overall treatment in the public sector hospitals, while 38.5% patients were satisfied up to some extent regarding treatment in government hospitals. These findings are consistent with previous studies that doctors' attitude is important for patients' satisfaction.^{23,24}

It was found that 23.5 percent patients were up to some extent satisfied with behavior of doctors in public sector hospitals while 3.0 percent patients were of the view that doctors' behavior is very rude in public sector hospitals and 74.5 percent patients told that doctors' behavior is very polite in public sector hospitals.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that respondents were satisfied with the overall treatment facilities available in public sector hospitals but they could afford the cost of the medicine. However, availability of the medicines at hospitals is found as another challenge for the patients. It was found that patients had to face difficulties during the medical test, and getting the reports of these tests in time. The behavior of the doctors with patients was reported as good and polite and patients were satisfied in utilizing the health services in district Bhakkar.

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