

# PATIENT SATISFACTION ABOUT HEALTH CARE SERVICES: A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY OF PATIENTS WHO VISIT THE OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT OF A CIVIL HOSPITAL AT SURENDRANAGAR, GUJARAT

Krupal Joshi, Kishor Sochaliya, Shyamal Purani, Girija Kartha  
Department of PSM, CU Shah Medical College, Surendranagar, Gujarat, India

Correspondence to: Krupal Joshi (dr\_krupal@yahoo.co.in)

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Patient satisfaction is deemed to be one of the important factors which determine the success of health care facility. The real challenge is not getting ready with mere requirements, but also delivers services ensuring good quality. Thus, there is a need to assess the health care systems regarding patient satisfaction as often as possible.

**Aims & Objective:** To measure the patients' satisfaction towards health care services.

**Material and Methods:** A randomly selected 100 patients were interviewed by using pre-structured questionnaires at the end of their O.P.D. visits for 5 days from 16th- 20th January, 2012 at Civil Hospital, Surendranagar. While analysing, they were grouped into categories like availability of services, clinical care, waiting time and cost.

**Results:** The overall opinion about the efficiency of hospital was satisfactory in 92% of patients. 68% respondents said that the time of coming to hospital and consulted by doctor was too long. Although in 75% of patients the time devoted by doctor was only between 0-5 min., the communication and explanation of disease by doctors were found satisfactory in 80% and 91% respectively. The need of investigations was necessary as per 90% of patients. Time required to locate and get medicines from pharmacy was satisfactory in nearby all patients.

**Conclusion:** According to patient's opinion, the study revealed that the degree of satisfaction was mild to moderate with respect to waiting time and availability of specialist in the hospital, which need to be further explored and corrected.

**KEY-WORDS:** Patient Satisfaction; Health Care Services; Outpatient Department

## Introduction

The purpose of health care services is to improve the health status of the population. The scope of health services varies widely from country to country and influenced by general and ever changing national, state and local health problems, needs and attitudes as well as the available resources to provide these services. There is now broad agreement that health services should be comprehensive, accessible, acceptable, provide scope for community participation and available at a cost the community and country can afford.<sup>[1]</sup> 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.<sup>[2]</sup> Therefore, a research on patient satisfaction can be an important tool to improve the quality of services. Health care

consumers today, are more sophisticated than in the past and now demand increasingly more accurate and valid evidence of health plan quality. Health care organizations are operating in an extremely competitive environment, and patient satisfaction has become a key to gaining and maintaining market share.

The health care system depends on availability, affordability, efficiency, feasibility and other factor.<sup>[3]</sup> Consumer satisfaction regarding medical care organization like our tertiary care hospital is important in the provision of services to patients. This study was therefore undertaken with the aim to find out the level of patient satisfaction related to different parameters of quality of health care.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Aims and Objective

Our study attempts to highlight patient satisfaction among the outpatient departments

after their interaction with the system in different phase of services such as approach to the hospital, department & doctor, examination by doctor, information given about disease & medications, availability of services, waiting time and cost provided for services. The aim of our study is to identify the key factors that affect patient satisfaction regarding health care services.

## Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional study was carried out in 100 patients attending outpatient department of Mahatma Gandhi hospital (Civil Hospital), Surendranagar, Gujarat, India. The patients were selected randomly from different specialty department. The study was conducted for 5 days from 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2012 to 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2012. All patients were interviewed by using pre-structured questionnaires which including,

1. Socio-demographic characteristics of patients
2. Registration process, waiting time, seating arrangements, cleanliness
3. OPD timing
4. Approach to the hospital and doctor.
5. Services provided by the doctor and other Para-medical staff & their behaviour with patients.
6. Clinical care
7. Time required for locating the hospital, finding the department, registration process, consults by the doctor, investigations and taking medicines from medical store.
8. Cost of registration, medical services and medications.

The questionnaires included in this study can be replied in choices like satisfactory/ unsatisfactory, adequate/inadequate, yes/no, good/moderate/poor. In case of paediatric (below 12 year) patients, the opinion of care taker or parents were taken for the satisfaction. Consent of each patient was taken orally.

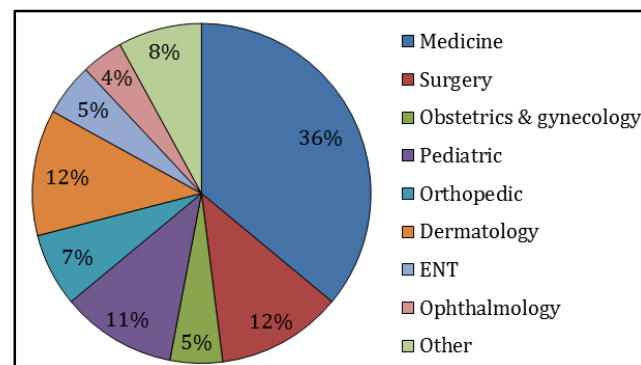
## Results

Our study consists of total 100 patients who came to Mahatma Gandhi hospital Surendranagar, Gujarat. Out of these 100 patients, the male-female ratio was 42:58.

Table 1 revealed that of the total 100 patients interviewed, majority of patients were adult i.e., above 20 years of age. While only 1/4<sup>th</sup> patients were either children or adolescents. Literacy status of the patients shows that around 70% of patients were either illiterate or educated up to primary level.

**Table-1: Distribution of Respondents Regarding their Socio-Demographic Characteristics (n = 100)**

Characteristics	No. of Patients	
Age	0-5 yrs	07
	5-20 yrs	20
	20-40 yrs	30
	40-60 yrs	22
	60 and above	21
Literacy Rate	Illiterate	29
	Primary	41
	Secondary	19
	Higher secondary	06
	Graduate and above	05
Occupation	House wife	33
	Student	18
	Service	02
	Business	04
	Labour	22
	Unemployed	21



**Figure-1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Concern Departments (n = 100)**

**Table-2: Distribution of Responses from the Respondents according to Availability of Service (n = 100)**

Availability of service	No. of Patients	
Seating Arrangement in OPD	Satisfactory	97
	Unsatisfactory	3
Cleanliness in OPD	Satisfactory	95
	Unsatisfactory	5
OPD Timing	Satisfactory	93
	Unsatisfactory	7
Services by the Paramedical Staff	Satisfactory	83
	Unsatisfactory	17
Finding the Specialist in the Department in OPD	Easy	59
	Difficult	41
Availability of Doctor in Hospital	Adequate	85
	Inadequate	15

On categorizing the patients by their occupation, it was shown that 33% patients were housewife

(out of 58 female respondents), 22% were labourer, 21% were unemployed, 18% were students, 4% were having some kind of business and only 2% were serviced.

In regarding to the distribution of visiting departments (Figure 1), it was seen that more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> (36%) of patients were consulted by medicine department, which is followed by 12% by Surgery, 12% by skin, 11% by pediatric, 7% by orthopedic, 5% each by Obstetrics & gynecology and ENT and only 4% by ophthalmology department.

Data in table 2 reveals that the overall satisfaction level of patients for availability of services in hospital was good. As it was 97% for seating arrangements in OPD, 95% about cleanliness in OPD, 93% for OPD timing, 83% regarding services provided by the paramedical staff and 85% for availability of sufficient doctors in hospital; while 41% of respondents were having some kind of difficulty in finding the specialists in the department in OPD.

**Table-3: Distribution of Responses from the Respondents Regarding Clinical Care (n = 100)**

Clinical Care		No. of Patients
Approach by the Doctor	Satisfactory	94
	Unsatisfactory	6
Communication by the Doctor	Good	80
	Moderate	17
	Poor	3
Explanations about the Disease to the Patient	Satisfactory	91
	Unsatisfactory	9
Clinical Care	Satisfactory	98
	Unsatisfactory	2
Opinion about the Need of Investigation Assess by the patient	Necessary	91
	Unnecessary	9
Interpretation of Investigation Report by the Doctor to the Patient	Satisfactory	95
	Unsatisfactory	5
Nature of Prescription	Simple and easy	96
	Complex and difficult	4
Instruction for Taking Medication by Pharmacist	Satisfactory	97
	Unsatisfactory	3

Patients' compliance in respect to clinical care (table 3) was more towards satisfactory side. As it was 94% for approach by the doctor, 80% for good communication by the doctor and 98% for clinical care provided by the doctor. Explanation of the disease by the doctor was satisfactory in about 91% of patients. As many as 96% of the

patients replied that the nature of prescription was simple and easy. 91% of the patients were agreed with the doctor for the necessity of the investigation suggested by them and 95% patients were fully satisfied with the interpretation of the investigation report explained by the doctor. 97% of patients were satisfied with the instruction given for taking medication by pharmacist.

**Table-4: Distribution of Responses from the Respondents Regarding Waiting Time (n = 100)**

Waiting Time		No. of Patients
Time Require to Locate the Hospital	Satisfactory	71
	Unsatisfactory	29
Time Require to Getting Registered	Satisfactory	76
	Unsatisfactory	24
Was time Required to Find the Concern Department too Long?	Yes	29
	No	71
Was Time Gap between Coming to Hospital and Consult by the Doctor too Long?	Yes	32
	No	68
Time Devoted by the Doctor	0-5 min	75
	6-15 min	22
	16-30 min	2
	30 min and above	1
Time Taken for Investigation	Satisfactory	79
	Unsatisfactory	21
Time Require to Locate the Pharmacy	Satisfactory	100
	Unsatisfactory	0
Time Spent in Pharmacy	Satisfactory	98
	Unsatisfactory	2

**Table-5: Distribution of Responses from the Respondents Regarding Cost (n = 100)**

Cost of Services		No. of Patients
Cost of Registration	Satisfactory	94
	Unsatisfactory	6
Cost of Investigation	Low	68
	Moderate	29
	High	3
Cost of Medicine	Satisfactory	100
	Unsatisfactory	0

Patient waiting in outpatient clinics is often the major reason for patients' complaints regarding their experiences in outpatient clinics. Therefore, patient satisfaction with waiting time plays a crucial role in the overall satisfaction with services. In the present study (table 4) around 1/4<sup>th</sup> (29% & 24%) of the patients were unsatisfied regarding conveniences for locating the hospital and getting registered. 71% of the respondents were found their departments conveniently. As much as 1/3<sup>rd</sup> (32%) of the patients were agreed with the fact that the time gap between coming to hospital and consult by

the doctor was too long. In majority of patients (75%), the time devoted by the doctor for consultation was only 0-5 min. 79% of respondents were satisfied with the time taken for investigation process. Almost all of the patients were satisfied with the time require to locate the pharmacy and getting medicine.

In general, as it was a civil hospital, the registration & medicines were completely free of cost, while a very minimal charge is taken for the laboratory investigation. It results that regarding the expenses for the various medical needs, majority of the patients were satisfied with the cost of registration and medicines. 32% respondents were felt that the cost of investigation is moderate to high. (Table 5)

## Discussion

Patient satisfaction is considered one of the important quality indicator(s) at the health care institutes. Satisfaction is achieved when the patients' perception of the quality of care and services that they receive in healthcare setting has been positive, satisfying, and meets their expectations.

Bashaier Fathi Tawfeq Al Sharif<sup>51</sup>, in his thesis on patient's satisfaction with hospital services at Nablus district, West Bank, Palestine, observed that 36.7% of cases were from internal medicine department which is similar to the present study. Apart from it, 36.7% from surgery department, 15.3% from Obs. & Gyn. and 9.6% cases were from orthopedic department.

Dr SK Jawahar<sup>61</sup>, in his study on out patient satisfaction at a super specialty hospital in India, had reported that, as much as 50% of the patients were satisfied with regard to the cleanliness of the hospital. In another study by Prasanna K S. et al<sup>71</sup>, on consumer satisfaction about hospital services: A study from the outpatient department of a private medical college hospital at Mangalore, it was shown that patients were fully satisfied in respect to seating arrangement, cleanliness in the OPD and OPD timing, which was almost similar to our study. While satisfaction level regarding services by the paramedical staff, finding the specialist in the department in OPD and

availability of doctor in hospital were 88%, 84% and 99% respectively.

Explanation of the disease by the doctor was satisfactory in about 91% of patients in the present study; which was 81.6% in a study of Acharya & Acharya.<sup>81</sup> The findings of the study by Hassan Soleimanpour et al<sup>91</sup>, on emergency department patient satisfaction survey in Imam Reza Hospital, Tabriz, Iran revealed that the satisfaction level of patients in regard to the information given by care provider about medication was very good in 49.4% of patients.

In a study by Acharya & Acharya<sup>81</sup>, 82.8 % of the respondents showed that the approach of the doctor is personal, 93.2% of the subjects were satisfied with the examination by the doctor, and it was simple and easy to understand in 60% of the cases.

Aleena Tasneem et al<sup>101</sup>, in their study on patient satisfaction: A comparative study at teaching versus DHQ level hospital in Lahore, Pakistan; noted that location of hospital was convenient in 38% of patients for teaching hospitals and 42% of patients for DHQ level hospital; while 80% of patients in teaching and 95% in DHQ level hospital were satisfied with the time waited by them to be seen by doctor. And regarding satisfaction level of patients with the medications available free of cost in hospital and with the amount spent for medical needs were 76% & 74% for teaching hospitals and 95% each for DHQ level hospital respectively.

## Conclusion

Patient satisfaction is an increasing important issue both in evaluation and shaping of health care. So it should be carried out routinely in all aspects of health care to improve the quality of health services.

The study highlighted that overall the patient satisfaction was good regarding the quality of health care services except in some era like waiting time, availability of specialists, and communication of doctors with patients and cost of investigation.

## Recommendations

- It needs to appoint more doctors, specialists and paramedical staff to decrease the waiting time of patients in the OPD as well as to improve the standard of health care.
- The waiting period of patients for the time of arrival to the time of examination by the doctor must be reduced as far as possible by making the hospital procedure more simpler and by guiding them with a signboard for different departments.
- The cost of investigation can be decreased to a level, so that the poor patients can also afford it by liasoning with private laboratories.

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