



Original Article

Patient Satisfaction in a Multispeciality Hospital of North East India: A Cross Sectional Study

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A B S T R A C T

Introduction: As the Healthcare service scenario is evolving day by day, more focus and emphasis has been given to the patient satisfaction and it is considered as an important yardstick to measure the quality of services provided by the hospital. **Objectives:** To access the satisfaction level of patients attending Sanjevani Hospital, Guwahati, Assam. **Materials & Methods:** It is a cross sectional study including 70 patients willing to fill up the pre designed questionnaire. The level of satisfaction was determined by analyzing the responses (satisfactory/ unsatisfactory, adequate/inadequate, yes/no, necessary/ unnecessary). **Results:** Out of 70 respondents, 47 were males and 23 were females. Majority of the patients belonged to 37-47 yrs age group (37.1%). Majority of the respondents in the present study were from medicine Department (35.7%) followed by patients from ENT Department (20%). The study highlighted that overall the patient satisfaction was good regarding the quality of health care services like clinical care, physical facilities, and diagnostic facilities, behavior of doctors and nurses and cost of treatment. The major concern was the low level of patient's satisfaction (38.6%) towards behavior of ward boys, sweepers and ayas. **Conclusion:** Providing quality service is a continuous process and every Hospital should initiate to conduct more studies like this to assess the quality of their healthcare delivery process.

Key words: Patient satisfaction, multispeciality hospital.

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality improvement in health care industry has gained momentum since 1990 and according to Donabedian's declaration for incorporating patient perception into quality assessment, most of the healthcare setups are now focus on patient centered care as a major component in the healthcare delivery mission.¹As the

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hospital serves patients from a diverse background of the society, the expectations of the patients differ from one individual to another; hence the exact determination of patient's satisfaction from the hospital is very difficult.² Client or patient's satisfaction with health care is important for various reasons. First, patients who are satisfied with the services are more likely to maintain a consistent relationship with that hospital. Secondly, by identifying the areas of dissatisfaction of the patients regarding the hospital services, a hospital can address the improvement of those areas of weak management. Third, the satisfied patients are more likely to follow the treatment regimens and thereby maintain better compliance with the treatment process. Finally, patient satisfaction measurement gives a better idea of total quality management of the hospital.³

Research on patient satisfaction with medical care can be traced back to the late 1960s. In India also various studies have been done to assess the patient's satisfaction towards healthcare services for last many years. But patient satisfaction studies done in Hospitals of North East India are rare. Keeping in mind this present scenario and the importance of patient's satisfaction in Healthcare system, the present study was done in Sanjevani Hospital which is a 50 bedded ISO 9001-2008 Certified Private Hospital Located on A.T Road of Guwahati City, Assam. The Hospital gives multispeciality care in the field of medicine, Cardiology, Pediatrics, Ear, nose & throat (ENT), Orthopedics, Obstetrics & Gynaecology (O & G), Dental Surgery, Psychiatry and various laboratory services. The Hospital serves patients from Guwahati city as well as referred patients from various neighboring areas of Guwahati. Therefore, the quality service to this huge population of patients attending this hospital is of utmost importance.

The present study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To assess the satisfaction level of patients after their interaction with the system in different phases of services like clinical care, physical facilities, diagnostic services, interaction of doctors and other staff, waiting time and the cost of overall services.
2. To identify key factors that affect patient satisfaction regarding various services provided by the Hospital.
3. To formulate recommendations in those areas of services, where the patients were not satisfied to make the services better.

2. MATERIALS & METHODS

Study design: The study is cross sectional study done for a period of one month. A total of 70 patients who received healthcare services from Sanjevani Hospital, Guwahati for their illness, fulfilling the below mentioned inclusion criteria were selected randomly for the present study.

Inclusion criteria

1. Age of the patients more than 18 years.
2. Willing to provide the answer to the questions related to the study
3. Patients who have made at least 1 visit (including the present visit)

Exclusion criteria

1. Patients cannot speak (mute) or listen (deaf).
2. Patients in the intensive care unit (ICU)
3. Patients attending hospital for psychiatric consultation

Formulation of the Questionnaire: The structured questionnaire used in this study was designed in such a way to assess the satisfaction of the patients towards six dimensions of services provided by the hospital

1. Waiting time and Admission procedure
2. Clinical care
3. Physical facilities

4. Diagnostic services

5. Behavior of Hospital staff

6. Cost of treatment

Data Collection process: Prior to filling of questionnaire, clear instruction was given regarding the allocation of answers. Care was taken to give privacy to the patients for unbiased and independent views. The questionnaire was collected back after one hour.

Methodology for Data Analysis: The questionnaires included in this study can be replied in choices like satisfactory/ unsatisfactory, adequate/inadequate, yes/no, necessary/ unnecessary. For each type of responses for each question the percentage was calculated using Microsoft excel and the data were analyzed.

Limitation of the study:

- The duration of the study is restricted to two months.
- The study depends on the perceptions of patients from diverse background ; so the results obtained may not be strictly generalized.

3. RESULTS

The study group comprised of 70 patients who were willing to respond to the questionnaire. Out of 70 respondents, 47 were males and 23 were females belonging to the age group of 18 to 69 yrs and above. Majority of the patients belonged to 37-47 yrs age group (37.1%). Most of the patients (45.7%) had education up to higher secondary level. 37.2% of the respondents were service holders. Majority of the respondents in the present study were from medicine Department (35.7%) followed by patients from ENT Department (20%). Most of the respondents were satisfied with the time required to locate the hospital (77.1%), time required to do registration process and admission procedure(81.4%), time gap between coming to the hospital and consult the doctor(70%). Regarding approach of the doctor, majority (91.4%) of respondents was satisfied and 95.7% respondents

showed satisfaction with the communication of the doctor with them. The patients were satisfied with the physical facilities such as wheel chair services (82.9%), finding bed in the hospital (90%), cleanliness (87.4%) and comfort of the ward and rooms (92.8%). Majority of the respondents were satisfied (91.4%) with overall services provided by the diagnostic department of the Hospital. The percentage of patients satisfied with the behavior of doctor and nurses was 97.1% and 68.6% respectively. Satisfaction towards behavior of ward boys, sweepers and ayas were comparatively low i.e. 38.6% only, whereas 70% of the respondents were satisfied with the behavior of other staff of the hospital (staff at the pharmacy, reception desk and management). 75.8% of respondents agreed with the fact that the overall cost of treatment in this hospital is less than the other hospitals providing same kind of facilities.

4. DISCUSSION

Quality care is one of the central dimensions of public health. Good quality care needs to be delivered at the earliest and at the proper time which is a basic right of consumers. 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.

The present study was conducted in Sanjevani Hospital, Guwahati, Assam, to estimate the satisfaction level of patients admitted for treatment in this hospital which is giving multispeciality care to a huge population of Guwahati as well as nearby areas of Guwahati city.

The study group comprised of 70 patients who were willing to respond to the questionnaire. Out of 70 respondents, 47 were males and 23 were females. Majority of the patients belonged to 37-47 yrs age group (37.1%). Most of the patients (45.7%) had education up to higher secondary level.

Most of the patients that have participated in the study were from medicine department (35.7%). Al Sharif⁴ 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. Joshi et al⁵ also had the same finding in their study in Gujrat i.e. 36% of total study population was from medicine department. As the ENT and Head & Neck Surgery Department of Sanjevani hospital is well equipped with modern state of the art facilities, there is a considerable number of patients taking services in this department which is reflected in the present study i.e. 20 % of study population was from ENT department.

In today's busy world, the patients also want to get their treatment process start as early as possible once they come to the hospital. Therefore, the waiting time to avail various services in the hospital also plays an important role in patient's satisfaction with hospital services. Sanjevani hospital is situated on A.T road in Maligaon area of Guwhati which is a convenient location with good accessibility from any part of Guwahati city and was reflected in the present study as most of the patient (77.1%) were satisfied with the time required to locate the hospital. 81.4% patients were satisfied with time required to do the registration process & admission procedure. Majority (70%) of patients were agreed with the fact that the time gap between registration process and seeing the doctor is not too long. Similar findings were also observed study by Joshi et al⁵ Contrary to these similarity, study done by Sreenivas et al⁶ found that majority (66%) of patients were dissatisfied with the registration process. This difference may be because of the fact that Sreenivas et al, s⁶ study was done in a Government hospital dealing with large number of patient population compared to Private Hospital where the

present study was conducted. Tasneem A et al⁷ in their study at Lahore, Pakistan, found that location of hospital was convenient in 38% of patients for teaching hospitals and 42% of patients for District Head Quarter (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. Study by Akoijam et al⁸ in Manipur, India found that the waiting time during admission procedure was acceptable for 43.9% patients which is low compared to the result of our study (81.4%).

In the presented study it was found that 91.4% patient were satisfied with the approach of the doctor and felt that it was personal, 95.7% respondents were satisfied with the communication of the doctor with them and 94.2% of patients were satisfied with the explanation given to them by the doctor regarding their illness. Acharya et al⁹ also found that majority of respondents in their study i.e. 82.8 %, showed that the approach of the doctor is personal, 93.2% of the subjects were satisfied with the examination by the doctor. A large study conducted by Krishna et al¹⁰ in Uttar Pradesh, India found that 48% respondents were agreeing with the fact that the attending doctor explained the disease condition to the patient properly. This low level of satisfaction compared to our study can be again attributed to the fact that in Krishna et al¹⁰ study they have included a total of 117 facilities from 28 districts which are basically District hospitals and community health centers dealing with large patient load from different strata of community which gave a variable patient satisfaction levels with respect to the different facilities available in different health centers. Present study shows that 87.4% respondents felt that the investigations prescribed by their doctor was necessary to diagnose their illness and majority(92.7%) were satisfied with the explanation of the investigation results by their doctor to them. 12.6% of

patients in the present study felt that doctor prescribed them some unnecessary investigations. On enquiry, it was found that those patients were having chronic health problems and it was necessary from the doctor's part to prescribe detail investigations to rule out many differential diagnosis related to the patient's health condition. In the present study it was also found that 7.2% respondents were not satisfied with the explanation given by their doctor regarding the interpretation of test results. It may be because of the fact that those investigations had complex scientific explanations (e.g.: HbE, Bone marrow density scan, color Doppler etc.) which were difficult for the patients to understand completely. Joshi et al⁵ found similar results in their study that 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. Study by Mohamed et al¹¹ (Trichy, India) found that 73% respondents had moderate, 24% respondents had good and 3% had low level of satisfaction regarding explanation of their medical condition by the doctor. But study by Singh et al¹² Sonipat, India, found that only 22%(11/50) respondents agreed to the fact that doctors explained them the reasons for medical investigations to be done. Regarding the nature of prescription, 94.2% in the present study felt that it was simple and easy to understand. Joshi et al⁵ and Mohamed NS¹¹ also had similar finding i.e. 96% & 83% respondents respectively, replied that the nature of prescription was simple and easy to understand. In the present study 65.7% respondents were satisfied with the nursing care. Akoijam et al⁸ on the other hand reported that 58.7% had average satisfaction and 12.8% had total satisfaction regarding nursing care. 87.4 % respondents in the present study is satisfied with the availability of medical specialist in the time

need and 88.6% respondents were satisfied with the number of rounds given by the doctors in a day. Singh et al¹² also mentioned in their study that 76% (38 out of 50 respondents) respondents were satisfied regarding availability of medical specialist in the time of need.

Regarding the physical facilities available in the hospital, 82.9% respondents felt that the wheel chair and trolley services are satisfactory and 90% of the respondents did not find any difficulty in finding a bed in the hospital. But in the study of Sreenivas et al⁶, only 18.3% respondents agreed that the wheel chair and trolley facilities are good in the hospital premise and 67.5% respondents found it difficult to find a bed in the hospital. This difference may be again because of huge patient load and lack of infrastructure in the GGH hospital, Guntur which was one of the study centers in Sreenivas et al⁶ study. In the present study, 87.4% respondents were satisfied with the cleanliness of rooms and wards in the hospital. Jawahar SK¹³ reported that, as much as 50% of the patients were satisfied with regard to the cleanliness of the hospital. In Joshi K et al⁵ study 95% respondents were satisfied regarding cleanliness in the hospital. On the other hand 79.1 % respondents did not agree with the fact that the cleanliness in the rooms and wards are good in the study by Sreenivas et al⁶. In the present study 81.4% respondents found the toilet facility satisfactory. Arshad et al¹⁴ in their study done in Srinagar, India reported that the 54.25% respondents found the toilets available but dirty and only 29.25% respondents agreed that the toilets were available and clean which is quite low compared to the findings of our study.

Most (91.4%) of the respondents in the present study is satisfied with the diagnostic services offered by the Hospital. Similar finding was noted in Sreenivas et al⁶ study where in SJGH Hospital 80% of the respondents were satisfied with the diagnostic services of the hospital. But in their study the satisfaction level

towards diagnostic services in GGH Hospital is low i.e. 12.5% only.

In the present study 97.1% respondents were satisfied with the behavior of doctor towards them, 68.6% were satisfied with the attitude, attention and behavior of nursing staff, 70% were satisfied with the behavior of other staff (reception, pharmacy) and but only 38.6% respondents were satisfied with the behavior of ward boys, sweepers and ayahs. Arshad et al¹⁴ found the satisfaction level towards doctor's behavior to be 66.75% and 57.25% respondents were satisfied with behavior of other staff. In Singh S¹² study similar finding was noted i.e. 82% of respondents agreed that the doctors were friendly and courteous. Samina et al¹⁵ in the study regarding patient satisfaction towards nursing care in Srinagar, India found a relatively higher percentage of patients with poor perception regarding 'explanation and information', and 'caring attitude' aspects of nursing care (31.6% and 11.5% respectively). However more than 95% patients had good perception of 'responsiveness', 'availability' and 'ward organization' capability of the nurse. A very low level (9.17%) of patient's satisfaction towards behavior of ward boys, sweepers and ayahs were noted in the Sreenivas et al⁶ study. In the present study also the satisfaction level towards behavior of these staff were low compared to satisfaction level towards behavior of doctors (38.6% and 97.1% respectively).

Regarding cost of treatment 91.4% respondents were satisfied with the cost of registration in the OPD, 72.9% were satisfied with the cost of room/ bed charge, 75.7% were satisfied with the cost of investigations, 68.6% found the cost of medicines satisfactory and 75.8% felt that the overall cost of treatment in the hospital is lower than other hospitals of this standard. Similar finding was noted in Joshi K et al⁵ study where 94% respondents were satisfied with the cost of registration in OPD, 68% of them felt that

the cost of investigation was low and 100% were satisfied with the cost of medicines. Mohamed NS¹¹ in his study also found that 100% respondents were satisfied with the cost of registration, 73% felt that the cost of investigation was moderate and 80% felt that the cost of medicines was satisfactory.

5. RECOMMENDATION & CONCLUSION

Following are recommendations formulated after the completion of study for further improvement of quality services provided by the hospital.

1. The Hospital can set up more number of sign boards showing the way to the Hospital in the major traffic signals and entry point to Guwahati from the neighboring areas in local language which will help the patients to locate the Hospital easily.
2. Some of the patients were not satisfied regarding the registration and admission procedures of the Hospital. It was because of the fact that they were the patients with acute health conditions who wanted a prompt care. Therefore, the Hospital management should review the policy of registration and admission of these type patients who need prompt care.
3. The hospital management should arrange Refresher training for nurses in regular interval to improve their skills as well as improving their attitude and behavior towards patients.
4. The Hospital management should encourage proper monitoring of ward boys, sweepers and ayahs regarding their interaction with patients and their attendants. The management should have regular interaction with them listening to the problem and their issues related to their work. Appointment of more number of these group of worker and improve their work attitude.
5. Feedback from the patients in the form of "feedback forms" should be regularly collected and

analyze to identify the area that need improvement so as to maximize the patient's satisfaction.

6. Patient's rights and responsibilities chart can be displayed clearly in local language in different areas of hospital premise; mainly in the wards.

Limitation of the study:

- The duration of the study is restricted to one months.
- The study depends on the perceptions of patients from diverse background ; so the results obtained may not be strictly generalized.

Assessing satisfaction of patients is simple and cost effective way for evaluation of hospital services. It is to keep in mind that the providing quality service is a continuous process and every Hospitals should initiate more studies like this, including more number of patients in near future to get an idea about the actual satisfaction level of the patients towards the services provided by the Healthcare facilities.

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