

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ABOUT PATIENTS' SATISFACTION WITH DOCTORS IN GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL

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ABSTRACT

Patient satisfaction is a cornerstone of quality medical care. Engaging patients in their own treatment improves motivation and compliance. This study aimed to assess patient satisfaction with doctor's behavior at the Nishtar Hospital Multan. A quantitative research approach was employed, collecting data from 150 patients across various hospital departments using a structured questionnaire. Six different wards were purposively selected, and then patients were conveniently sampled from each. The results show that most patients were satisfied with their doctors' behavior. Statistical analysis revealed slight variations in satisfaction levels based on patient age, gender, and education. The study emphasizes the critical role of doctor-patient interpersonal relationships in improving healthcare outcomes. It recommends ongoing professional development programs to enhance doctors' soft skills in public hospitals, underscoring the need for continuous training and behavioral evaluation of medical staff to foster patient-centered care. This study contributes to the broader discussion on healthcare quality by focusing on the behavioral aspects of medical professionals at Nishtar Hospital Multan.

Keywords: Exploratory study, Patient satisfaction, Doctor behavior, South Punjab.

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INTRODUCTION

Healthcare services are critically important in every nation, including Pakistan, because they profoundly impact human lives worldwide. Their consequences span medicine, society, morality, finance, business, and politics. Health is the most vital aspect of life, transcending financial status, and a healthy populace directly contributes to a strong economy. Pakistan is one of the most populous countries globally,

with over 213 million people and a growth rate of 2.4% [1-5].

Patient satisfaction is a crucial metric for validating and adopting new medical service models. The patient's voice is the sole source of information regarding their treatment experience and whether the therapy met their expectations. Understanding which procedures and practices patients find satisfactory is essential. However,

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comparing and aggregating findings from multiple studies on patient satisfaction is challenging due to the variety of questionnaires used. Therefore, evaluating patient perspectives gives them a voice, enabling public health services to better respond to their desires and expectations. Patient satisfaction has also gained popularity and utility as it empowers managers and healthcare professionals to enhance public services [6-9].

Patient satisfaction is defined as a subjective response to the circumstances, procedures, and outcomes of a service experience. It directly correlates with how healthcare quality is measured. Patient satisfaction reflects the alignment between patients' expectations and their experiences with medical facilities. Patients are happy when these expectations are met, but discontent often arises when reality falls short.

Numerous researchers contend that a connection exists between patient happiness and their health outcomes. Several systematic studies have examined the factors influencing patient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction and the quality of health services are priorities for the service sector due to rising consumption, and both are vital for the long-term viability of health institutions. The experience and pleasure of patients largely determine the quality and efficacy of healthcare systems [10-12].

Patient satisfaction is frequently used as a gauge for the quality of medical treatment received. When patients express happiness with their healthcare experience, it typically indicates they received timely and appropriate care and achieved favorable results. Public hospitals must emphasize patient-centered care, including compassion, interaction, and patient participation in decision-making, because patient satisfaction reveals how successfully healthcare practitioners and institutions meet their patients' desires and requirements.

A doctor's conduct significantly influences patient satisfaction. In public hospitals, staff

members often have heavy workloads, and doctors can sometimes act rudely. Patients' incessant and sometimes absurd inquiries might be perceived as requiring common sense rather than medical expertise, leading physicians to respond rudely. However, a doctor's medical expertise is crucial for patient care, and a specialty's distinct clinical best practices are key in determining a patient's medical usage. Numerous studies have been conducted to gauge patient satisfaction with healthcare services in both developed and developing nations [13-16]. The objectives were 1. To understand the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents; 2. To identify the problems encountered by patients admitted to THQ; 3. To investigate factors influencing the satisfaction level of patients admitted to THQ; 4. To propose recommendations for addressing patient-reported problems.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this study, 150 patients were selected. In the first stage, six different wards were purposively selected. In the second stage, the patients were conveniently sampled from each selected ward. Patients over 20 years of age, admitted to THQ for more than two or three days, were selected using a convenient sampling technique. An interview schedule, developed based on the study objectives, was used to gather data. This instrument was pretested with the respondents to ensure its accuracy. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), and the results were used to provide suggestions for improving doctor-patient relationships and ultimately aiding patient rehabilitation [17-22].

Data gathering is arguably the most significant statistical task. The data collection instrument, a well-planned interview schedule, was designed based on the investigation's main objectives. A survey was conducted through personal interviews. This survey, which served as the investigation tool, included both closed-ended and open-ended multiple-choice

questions related to the study objectives. The researcher personally collected all data.

The purpose of data analysis is to evaluate the relative importance of each causative variable in the model or to ascertain whether multiple significant causal processes are involved in generating outcomes. To determine the link between two variables and to illustrate the direction of that relationship, bivariate analysis is used. Chi-square, gamma, and correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationship and correlation between the variables. To ascertain whether there was a significant difference between the SEI means of the several categories within a variable, the student's t-test and the evaluation of variance technique were also employed. Here is a quick description of the statistical methods used in the bivariate analysis [23-25].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data shows that the majority (62.6%) of respondents were male, while 37.4% were female. The age distribution among participants: 47.44% were up to 18-25 years old, 34.72% were 25-35 years old,

12.33% were 36-50 years old, and rest were of over 50. Finally, 63.71% of respondents were satisfied to a great extent with their doctor's behavior, while 25.12% were satisfied to some extent.

This study examines a statistically non-significant relationship ($p = 0.052$) between the variables using the Pearson Chi-square value (10.32). A positive correlation exists between the variables, as indicated by the Gamma value (0.36). Although it was a major objective, the association between patient satisfaction and other factors was deemed significant ($P = 0.2$). Based on the quantitative data from the hypothesis, the researcher concluded that patient happiness was a key consideration and a main objective.

The favorable correlation between healthcare services and patient happiness has been studied by numerous scholars. This study looked at how patient satisfaction with healthcare services is affected by doctor behavior, an area with little prior research. In addressing this disparity, the current study discovered that

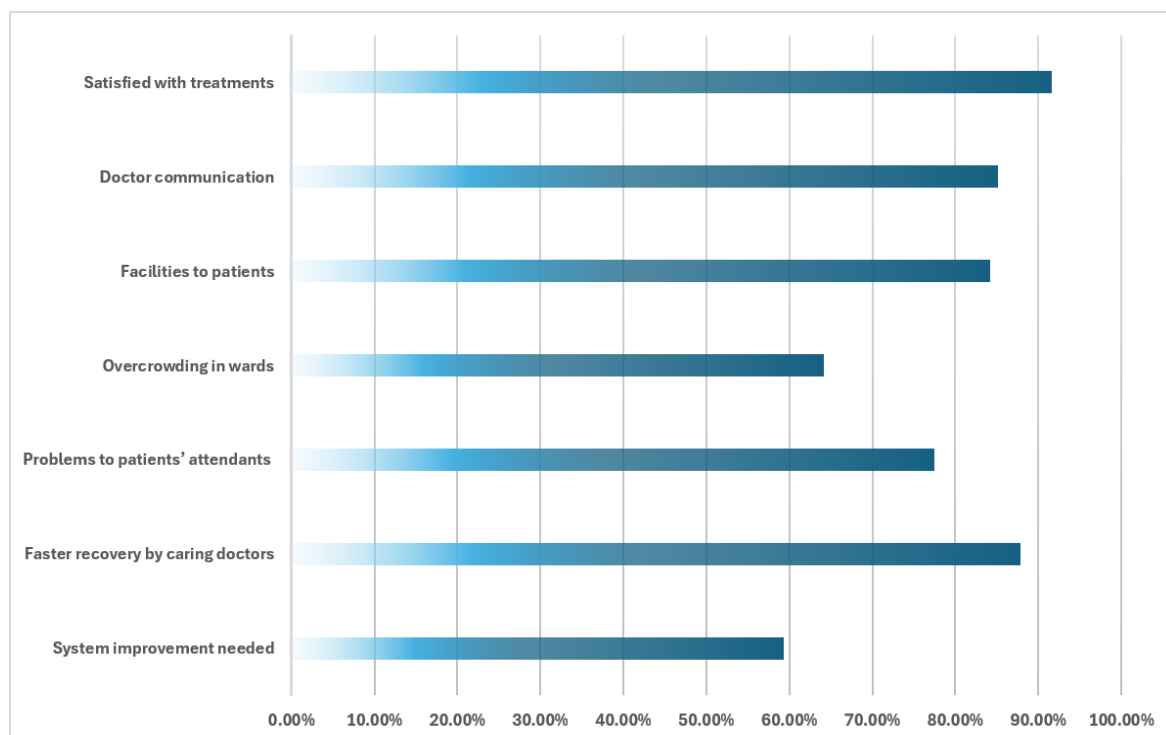


Figure 1: Indications of satisfaction and their prevalence.

the relationship between patient satisfaction and healthcare services (prenatal care, preventive healthcare, and laboratory and diagnostic care) is positively and moderately impacted by the doctor's behavior. Furthermore, the findings of the moderation analysis demonstrated the complete acceptability of the presumption assumptions [26-29].

The present work makes several theoretical contributions. First, by exploring the application of this concept in the healthcare industry, it contributes to the burgeoning field of healthcare services in developing nations. This study also addresses the understudied relationship between satisfaction and healthcare services. Second, a significant portion of the research on the relationship between patient satisfaction and healthcare services indicates that optimal services enhance patient well-being. The results suggest that delivering the best and fastest services is crucial for patient satisfaction, benefiting both doctors and hospitals, and ultimately improving patient happiness and health [30-34].

The practical contribution of the current study lies in understanding patient satisfaction with healthcare services—specifically, how to offer the finest services to increase patient happiness. Therefore, increasing patient satisfaction largely depends on providing superior health services. The study's findings encourage healthcare businesses to improve their service delivery. It is hoped that this study will contribute significantly to the body of literature in the healthcare industry. The government should also pay more attention to maintaining the nation's healthcare system [35, 36].

Like every study, this one has several limitations that raise a number of research questions. Initially, the outpatient department provided the key data for our investigation. Data from the inpatient care department (admitted patients) may be used in subsequent research. Second, the current

study includes only three hospitals in a single Pakistani province. Future research might be carried out at hospitals located in the remaining Pakistani provinces. Moreover, this research is restricted to a single developing nation. Future research is strongly advised for other developing and emerging nations. Four healthcare services were employed in the current investigation. Therefore, it is recommended that future research examine additional healthcare services, including transplantation, dentistry, and heart/cardiovascular services. Finally, the current study examines the questions from the patient's viewpoint. It is recommended that future research investigate whether doctors are satisfied with hospital amenities. Satisfaction is a manifestation of fulfilled expectations. A patient's level of contentment is considered a key element in their recuperation process and a measure of the standard of care offered by healthcare services. Patient satisfaction with the care they receive also depends on how well the doctor addresses their medical needs and concerns, which in turn strengthens the doctor-patient relationship. Patient happiness is the foundation of a doctor's care and medical therapy. It is well established that patients who actively participate in their own care are more motivated and adhere to their treatment plan [37, 38].

A majority believed patients should wait for their scheduled check-up time. A significant majority agreed that patient satisfaction plays an important role in careful treatment by doctors, and viewed it as a crucial goal for any health system. Some were pointing that patients' perceptions about healthcare systems were largely ignored by healthcare management. Caring doctors were believed patients recover faster when doctors are caring. Many felt doctors could focus on all patients during emergencies. Furthermore, it was stated doctors remain conscious due to the threat of emergencies, and 90%

believed staff also remain conscious under such threats. The majority believed patient satisfaction is equal to doctor satisfaction. It was reported that patients' families also face problems due to critical situations in the ward. The restlessness was attributed due to overcrowding in wards.

Many felt that doctors sometimes do not pay enough attention to what patients tell them. They agreed that doctors' behavior can be strict with patients during major incidents. It was agreed that hospital staff provides all facilities to patients. Many recognized the influence of doctor communication on patient behavior and health. A large number believed healthcare institutions need to focus more on patient satisfaction. It was agreed that doctor behavior should be polite with every patient. More than 40% considered patient satisfaction an important factor in recovery. More than half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that patient satisfaction is a crucial goal for any health system. A large majority agreed or strongly agreed that effective doctor-patient communication positively impacts patient health, and that doctors can motivate patients through inspiring communication. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that patients generally view their doctors positively [39-44]. Regarding hospital environments, a significant majority agreed or strongly agreed that some patients create disturbances. Similarly, most agreed or strongly agreed that the hospital environment improves when all patients demonstrate patience. Finally, the vast majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the government should hire more doctors and staff and provide better services for patient satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study investigated patient satisfaction with medical care in Nishtar Hospital. While numerous studies have explored patient satisfaction and healthcare services in industrialized nations, this area remains under-researched in developing

countries like Pakistan. This research specifically examined the relationship between patient satisfaction and healthcare services (prenatal, preventive, and laboratory/diagnostic care), with the doctor's conduct acting as a moderating variable.

The results show that healthcare services have a beneficial effect on patient satisfaction and that patients were satisfied with how well these services worked. Patient satisfaction and healthcare services (prenatal care, preventive healthcare, and laboratory and diagnostic care) were found to be positively and significantly correlated. Additionally, it was discovered that the doctor's actions moderated the association between healthcare services and patient happiness.

The study concludes that patient satisfaction is significantly influenced by the provision of high-quality and effective healthcare services. Therefore, it is essential for public hospitals and healthcare institutions in developing nations to upgrade their infrastructure and enhance service delivery. Since public hospitals serve a large impoverished population, their satisfaction is paramount. Physicians and other medical professionals must adopt a courteous, empathetic, and patient-centric approach, treating both patients and their attendants with respect and dignity. They should conduct thorough examinations and inspections. The study suggests that the often-observed rudeness of physicians is primarily a result of unhygienic working conditions, heavy workloads, and a high patient volume.

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