

Patients' satisfaction study in the out-patient departments of the two tertiary government hospitals in Manipur

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Abstract:

Background: Patients' satisfaction is one of the most important factors in the provision of health care delivery. Despite the advancement in science and technology, patients' satisfaction is a must for a successful health care delivery. The present study was conducted in the Out Patient Departments of the two tertiary government hospitals in Manipur to assess the level of satisfaction among the patients attending different out-patient departments and also to determine the association between levels of satisfaction with variables of interest.

Materials and Methods: A cross sectional study was carried out among 440 out-patients who attended the two tertiary care hospitals during September 2012 to October 2014. Based on the average daily patient attendance, 285 patients from RIMS and 155 from JNIMS were taken by probability proportionate to size.

Results: Majority belonged to the age group 20-29 years and Hindu religion. The study found overall satisfaction to be 54.5%. There was no significant difference between level of satisfaction with sex, income, religion, education and marital status. Those who visited on Monday were less satisfied as compared to other working days. Those who waited less than half an hour to get registration and who waited less than half an hour before they were examined by the doctor were more satisfied.

Conclusion: Most of the patients were not satisfied with basic amenities but satisfied with the behaviour, treatment, time taken for examination by the doctor.

Key words: Patients' satisfaction; OPD services; Tertiary care hospital.

Date of Submission: 20-01-2020

Date of Acceptance: 10-02-2020

I. Introduction

Patients' satisfaction has now become the most important and measurable aspect for assessing the quality of patient care services. For evaluating the performance of any health system, there is a need to assess patients' satisfaction as often as possible. For any improvement in the health care delivery, patients' satisfaction plays a very important role¹. In the context of Manipur, India, very few studies in connection with patients' satisfaction has been carried out. Therefore, the present study was done on patients' satisfaction in the Out Patient Departments (OPDs) of the two tertiary government hospitals in Manipur with the objectives to assess the level of satisfaction among the patients attending OPDs of the two hospitals and also to determine the association between levels of satisfaction with variables of interest.

II. Materials And Methods

The present study was conducted among the patients attending the outpatient departments (OPDs) of the two tertiary Government hospitals in Manipur namely Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal and Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS), Imphal.

Study Design: Cross sectional study

Study Location: Study was conducted in the OPDs of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Medicine and allied and Surgery and allied departments of the two tertiary care teaching hospitals.

Study Duration: September 2012 to October 2014.

Sample Size: 440 patients

Sample size calculation: Considering a prevalence of 51% ¹ sample size was calculated to be 440 taking into account a non-response rate of 10%.

Subjects & selection method: The two hospitals were considered as two strata and samples were taken through PPS (probability proportionate to size) based on the average daily OPD attendance of patients in the two respective hospitals. Again in each of the hospitals, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Medicine and Allied and

Surgery and Allied departments were taken as three strata and samples were taken through PPS from the respective allied departments.

Inclusion criteria: Patients of both sexes and age 18 years and above were included in the study. **Exclusion criteria:** Those who were very sick, attending psychiatry OPD and age above 65 years were excluded from the study.

Procedure methodology: Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee, RIMS, Imphal and JNIMS, Imphal. Written permission from the Medical Superintendents of RIMS and JNIMS, Head of departments of all concerned departments were taken. Informed consent was taken from all the study participants before each interview. Confidentiality was maintained.

Every third patient was interviewed with the justification that it took about 15-20 minutes to interview each individual. A pre-tested, pre-designed semi-structured questionnaire was used for interviewing the study participants. The questionnaire was designed covering seven main domains regarding patients' socio-demographic characteristics, registration process, perception towards availability of basic amenities, behaviour of doctors and staff, perception about the examination room and suggestions regarding the improvement of the hospital. In this study, satisfaction score was measured using a total of 26 questions. A score of one was given to every satisfied answers and zero to every dissatisfied or undecided answers. The maximum obtainable score was 26 and minimum was 0. The median score was calculated and those getting less than median score was considered dissatisfied and more than or equal to median score were taken as satisfied. Interview of the respondents was carried out at a suitable place where privacy was maintained after getting informed consent.

Statistical analysis:

Data were entered and analyzed using appropriate statistical software. Analysis was done using descriptive statistics like mean, median and percentages. Chi-square test was used to see the association between satisfaction and selected variables of interest. A p-value of <0.05 was taken as significant.

III. Results

The study included 440 patients attending various OPDs. Majority (64%) were females. Maximum of the patients belong to the age group of 20-29 years. Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the patients attending various OPDs. About half (51.1%) of the respondents were self employed and only 3.2% were Government employees. Majority were having income in the social class II (55.9%), followed by social class III (32.0 %) of GB Prasad's scale². Type of visit was follow-up for about half (54.3%) of the respondents and it was the first visit for 45% of them. Maximum (42.0%) were interviewed between 11am to 12 noon and 32.7% of the patients were interviewed on Wednesday. Those interviewed during summer months (May-July) was 36.8%. The overall satisfaction level found in this study was 54.5%.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the patients attending OPD

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentages
Age in years		
18-19	12	2.7
20-29	160	36.4
30-39	123	28.4
40-49	90	20.5
50-59	48	10.9
60 and above	7	1.6
Gender		
Male	159	36.0
Female	281	64.0
Marital status		
Single	54	12.3
Married	378	85.9
Divorced	1	0.2
Widowed	6	1.9
Separated	1	0.2
Religion		
Hindu	297	67.5
Islam	71	16.1
Christian	71	16.1
Others	1	0.3
Education		
Illiterate	17	3.9
Primary	72	16.4
Class –X	180	40.9
Secondary	106	24.1
Graduate	63	14.3
Postgraduate	2	0.5

Occupation		
Unemployed	135	30.7
Student	17	3.9
Self employed	225	51.1
Employed	63	14.3
Type of visit		
First time	198	45.0
Follow-up	239	54.3
Referral	3	0.3

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents towards various OPD services. It was found that 94.1% of the patients could easily find the registration counter and majority (92.7%) of them found the behaviour of the registration counter to be cordial. Most (64.1%) of those who waited less than 30 minutes to get registration was satisfied. Only about one-third of the respondents were satisfied with the basic amenities like seating arrangement, cleanliness of the waiting area, lighting and ventilation, availability and cleanliness of the toilets. Most of the respondents were satisfied with the behaviour of the clinical assistants/nurses and available number was thought to be adequate.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents towards various OPD services (n=440)

Various services in the hospital	Yes (Number)	Percentage
Could easily find the registration counter	414	94.1
Behaviour of registration clerk is cordial	408	92.7
Proper guidance given in locating OPD	407	92.5
Were you able to find the concerned OPD	437	99.3
Did you get seats in OPD waiting area	276	62.7
Do you think seats available are adequate	149	33.9
Do you find the waiting area comfortable	125	28.5
Do you think the space in waiting area sufficient	106	24.1
Satisfied with the cleanliness of the waiting area	123	28.0
Satisfied with the ventilation of the waiting area	90	20.5
Satisfied with the lighting of the waiting area	115	26.1
Did you find drinking water facility in waiting area	0	0.0
Do you think drinking water be available in OPD	426	96.8
Do you think toilets are adequate in number	129	29.3
Do you find the number of doctors available as adequate	127	28.9
Did the doctors listen to your complaints attentively	429	97.5
Are you satisfied with the treatment given by doctor	412	93.6
Are you satisfied with the doctor's explanation about your treatment	410	93.2
Are you satisfied with the time taken for examination	403	91.6
Are you satisfied with the privacy maintained by the doctor	335	76.1
Did you find the doctor's behaviour to be cordial	397	90.2
Do you think the nurses/clinical assistants available in OPD are adequate	360	81.8
Are you satisfied with the behaviour of the nurses/clinical assistants	432	98.2
Are you satisfied with the cleanliness of the examination room	397	90.2
Are you satisfied with the ventilation of the examination room	426	96.8
Are you satisfied with the lighting of the examination room	430	97.7

Table 3 shows that occupation was significantly associated with patient satisfaction where students and those who had some form of employment were more satisfied as compared to those who were unemployed. Those who waited less than half an hour before they were examined by doctor were more satisfied than those who waited 30 minutes or more (p=0.00). The study also showed that those patients who were interviewed during the month of August to October had maximum level of satisfaction as compared to those interviewed during other months and it was found to be significant.

Table 3: Association between satisfaction and various determinants

Various determinants	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	P-value
Gender			
Male	93 (58.5)	66 (41.5)	0.125
Female	147 (52.3)	134 (47.7)	
Age in years			
18-29	81 (47.1)	91 (52.9)	0.076
30-39	71 (57.7)	52 (42.3)	
40-49	53 (58.9)	37 (41.1)	

50 and above	35 (63.6)	20 (36.4)	
Marital status			
Currently married	212 (56.1)	166 (43.9)	
Single	28 (45.2)	34 (54.8)	0.072
Religion			
Hindu and others	171 (57.4)	127 (42.6)	
Islam	36 (50.7)	35 (49.3)	0.197
Christian	33 (46.5)	38 (53.5)	
Education			
Illiterate	6 (35.3)	11 (64.7)	
Primary	44 (61.1)	28 (38.9)	0.209
Class-X	101 (56.1)	79 (43.9)	
Secondary	59 (55.7)	47 (44.3)	
Graduate and above	30 (46.2)	35 (53.8)	
Occupation			
Unemployed	57 (42.2)	78 (57.8)	
Student	13 (76.5)	4 (23.5)	
Self-employed	128 (56.9)	97 (43.1)	0.003*
Private employee	33 (67.3)	16 (32.7)	
Government employee	9 (64.3)	5 (35.7)	
Type of visit			
First	113 (57.1)	85 (42.9)	
Follow-up & Referral	127 (52.4)	115 (47.5)	0.55
Social class			
Class I-II	129 (50.6)	125 (49.4)	0.41
Class III+IV+V	111 (60.2)	75 (39.8)	
Day of visit			
Monday	16 (36.4)	28 (63.6)	
Tuesday	36 (61.0)	23 (39.0)	
Wednesday	73 (50.7)	71 (49.3)	
Thursday	38 (64.4)	21 (35.6)	0.035*
Friday	52 (54.2)	44 (45.8)	
Saturday	25 (65.8)	13 (34.2)	
Month of visit			
Nov-Jan	52 (37.7)	86 (62.3)	
Feb- April	18 (46.2)	21 (53.8)	0.00*
May -July	96 (59.3)	66 (40.7)	
Aug -Oct	74 (73.3)	27 (26.7)	

*Statistically significant

IV. Discussion

The overall satisfaction found in this study was 54.5%. Patavegar BN et al¹, Illia L et al³ and Chetwynd J⁴ found the total satisfaction as 51%, 54% and 49%, respectively, which were similar with our study. In a study conducted in Germany⁵, 96.4% of the patients were satisfied and in another study conducted in England⁶ it was 95%. This might be because developed countries like Germany and England have better improved health care delivery system with enormous human and material resources.

In this study, 94.1% of the patients could easily find the registration counter and majority (92.7%) of them found the behaviour of the registration counter to be cordial. Most (64.1%) of those who waited less than 30 minutes to get registration were satisfied. This was consistent with other studies.⁷⁻¹⁰ In this study, there was no significant association between gender and patients' satisfaction. Similar results were reported by other studies.^{11,12} It was also observed that most (63.6%) of the respondents who belonged to the age group 50 years and above were more satisfied as compared to the younger age groups but it was not statistically significant. Other studies¹³⁻¹⁵ also reported the same. This finding may reflect that older patients may be more accepting than younger patients and older patients may have lower expectations based on their previous experiences.

In this study, patients belonging to high social class were less satisfied (50.6%) as compared to low socio-economic status. Similar findings were reported in other studies^{16,17} too.

Those who waited less than half an hour before they were examined by doctor were more satisfied than those who waited 30 minutes or more and it was found to be significant (p=0.00). This finding was consistent with other studies.^{7,8,18,19,20} Patients are usually in pain and discomfort and they wanted to get rid of their sufferings as soon possible. So, naturally, longer waiting time will lower the satisfaction level of the patients.

The study also showed that those patients who were interviewed during the month of August to October had maximum level of satisfaction as compared to those interviewed during other months and it was found to be significant. The reason might be because of the fine weather and also the festive mood among the patients during these months. Studies with similar results for comparison could not be found. Also those interviewed on Mondays were less satisfied as compared to those who were interviewed on other working days and it was found to be statistically significant. The reason might be because the previous day being

Sunday/holiday patient load is usually higher leading to long queue for registration and increase waiting time and less time taken for examination by the doctor.

Regarding the suggestions/opinions to improve the hospital, majority (47.7%) suggested to increase the seats in OPD waiting area followed by to increase the number of registration counter and to provide clean and comfortable waiting area. A few of the patients suggested that the number of toilets should be increased, provision of clean toilets and clean hospital surroundings.

V. Conclusion

The study showed overall satisfaction of 54.5%. Higher level of satisfaction was associated with being employed, waiting time less than 30 minutes and those interviewed between the months of August to October. There is a need for health care facilities and hospital administrators to bridge the gap in human resources, improve basic amenities, reduce waiting time and thereby ensuring effective health care delivery and improve patients' satisfaction.

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Y Niveda Devi, etal. "Patients' satisfaction study in the out-patient departments of the two tertiary government hospitals in Manipur." *IOSR Journal of Dental and Medical Sciences (IOSR-JDMS)*, 19(2), 2020, pp. 05-09.