

# PATIENTS' SATISFACTION FROM THE HEALTH CARE SERVICES

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The definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity has recently been improved to include the ability to lead a socially and economically productive life.<sup>1,2</sup> Healthcare is a comprehensive package of preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative health services to the people by the health professionals.<sup>3</sup> Healthcare includes both Clinical and Non-clinical care.<sup>4</sup> The function of health care services is to improve the health status of the population.<sup>5</sup> The stakeholders in health are conscious about the reforms in the healthcare system globally in order to enhance patient satisfaction from healthcare services.<sup>6</sup>

Satisfaction is a psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with consumer's prior feelings about the consumption experience.<sup>7</sup> While Patient satisfaction has been defined as the degree of congruency between a patient's expectations of ideal care and his /her perception of the real care him /her receives.<sup>8</sup>

Patient satisfaction represents a key marker for the quality of health care delivery and this internationally accepted factor needs to be studied repeatedly for smooth functioning of the health care systems.<sup>9-12</sup> A better appreciation of the factors pertaining to client satisfaction would result in implementation of custom made programs according to the requirements of the patients, as perceived by patients and service providers.<sup>13</sup> Patient is the best judge since he/she accurately assesses and his /her inputs help in the overall improvement of quality health care provision through the rectification of the system weaknesses by the concerned authorities.<sup>14</sup>

Involvement of the users in the health services leads to improved outcomes.<sup>15</sup> and satisfied patients show improved compliance, continuity of care and ultimately better health outcomes resulting from trustful & dependable contact with their physician.<sup>16</sup> Enhanced focus on improved patient care coupled with achieving high degree of patient satisfaction is due to increasing demand for better care among the public on one hand & the

competitive and hostile environment surrounding health care on the other.<sup>17</sup> Patient Satisfaction thus encompasses every aspect of the of health services, from system approach perspective.<sup>18</sup> People's use of health services is influenced by a range of psychological, social, cultural, economic and political forces. Much literature is available about different variables pertinent to the topic such as Cost, behavior, competence & communication skills of the care-providers, cleanliness, waiting time, consultation time etc. Cost is the foremost concern of service providers and an important impediment to overcome. Furthermore, other family members accompanying the patient contribute to multiply the costs.<sup>19</sup> Improved skills exhibited in the staff-patient communication about the condition of the patient, instructions for care, return visit, Prescription of medicines and pharmacy instructions, increase the faith and level of satisfaction of the patients. A clean and tidy premise has a very good impact.<sup>20</sup> The staff should be trained in every possible way in line with the patients needs.<sup>21</sup> Providers' behavior & attitude, especially respect and politeness, was as much important as the technical competence of the provider. Moreover a reduction in waiting time was more important to clients than a prolongation of the quite short consultation time with 75% of clients being satisfied.<sup>13</sup>

Patient satisfaction is reportedly a useful measure to provide a direct indicator of quality in healthcare, hence needs to be measured frequently so that a domesticated and localized healthcare plan could be developed.<sup>22</sup> User satisfaction is a very important part of any clinical practice therefore it is imperative to consistently undertake surveys in the community or facility to introduce better services.<sup>23,24</sup>

Thus, patient's satisfaction is an important issue both for evaluation and improvement of healthcare services.<sup>25</sup> User evaluations educate medical staff about their achievements as well as their failure, assisting them to be more responsive to their patients' needs. Patient's assessment, therefore, suggests guidelines for improving the attitudes of doctors and other paramedic staff in

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better serving the patients thereby improving the health services.<sup>26</sup> Patients' satisfaction is concerned with several factors, for example, they have to be happy with doctors, treatment, medicine and clinical conditions. Likewise, satisfaction of the patients is also affected by their awareness about the health services.

Research shows that survey approach to data collection is the most frequently used mode of observation in the social sciences.<sup>27</sup> Other approaches include experimental, case study, archival and historical data.<sup>28</sup> Research studies have come up with several solutions to address the patients' concerns about the healthcare facilities and services. Some of them include improved communication skills, counseling, staff accountability, time management, cleanliness, accessibility, and safety.<sup>29</sup>

**Conclusion:** Patients' satisfaction from healthcare decides the fate of healthcare providers and healthcare delivery system, and hence needs to be periodically measured to enhance the quality of services.

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