

Patient satisfaction with regards to health care services provided in general surgery ward at PIMS, Islamabad

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess the patient's satisfaction about health care services in the general surgery ward at PIMS, Islamabad.

Methodology: This is a cross-sectional study done for three months at General Surgery ward PIMS, Islamabad. All patients admitted and discharged from General Surgery Unit-III from March to May 2018 were included in the study. After formal permission from the patients, a specially designed 30-item cross-sectional questionnaire pertaining to general patient satisfaction and convenience aspects, interpersonal relationships and the role of doctors and paramedic staff of the general surgery ward were noted. All data was collected, recorded and analyzed using SPSS 17 and Excel 2013.

Results: A total of 251 patients were incorporated in the study with an average age of 45 years with Male to Female ratio of 1:2. General convenience and satisfaction aspects pertaining to the general surgical ward were averagely rated by the patients. They agreed or strongly agreed by 82.8% patients, while 17.2% had uncertainties. Interpersonal relationships and the role of Doctors and the paramedic staff at the hospital were appreciated by 77.1% and 68.9% respectively, while 22.9% and 31.1% negated respectively. Patient's interviews were incorporated in data examination and deductions. Patient's satisfaction was evaluated to be 56.3% while overall care was 59.7%. 65.2% patients wished to recommend these services, to others in need.

Conclusion: Most of the patients admitted at General Surgery Ward were satisfied with overall care and behavior. Areas that need more attention are cleanliness, privacy, seeking patient views in their illness discussion, explaining them the prescription drugs and lab investigations.

Keywords: Patient Satisfaction, Health Care, Inpatients.

Introduction

Patient satisfaction forms the foundation of the health care system and is dependent on various factors. Gaining feedback from patients about the quality of healthcare provided is a powerful approach to develop more patient-centered management by the doctors.¹⁻⁵

Patient-centered clinical care is an important part of a high-quality health care system.^{2,6-8} The evaluation of patient satisfaction is an important tool for research, management and planning for improvement in patient care.⁵⁻⁹ The hospital environment is unusual for patients

when compared to hospital staff, as doctors interact with patients as a regular routine.⁷ Behavior and attitude of doctors and paramedical staff, the convenience of basic facilities and general hospital environment and reputation are some of the factors that build patient anticipations in overall satisfaction.^{1-3,7-10,12} Similar add to patients compliance towards the treatment recommended, thus, enabling early recovery and improving the patient health both physically and psychologically.^{7,13,14}

Over the years there have been numerous definitions of patient satisfaction. Susie Linder-Pelz, in her review of patient satisfaction literature, suggests; "Positive evaluations of distinct dimensions of the health care."⁴ The standard of care of any hospital is assessed by its patients, doctors, nursing and administration staff. All have their share but it is the patients who define the medical care standards of any setup.^{15,16} Multiple studies have been conducted in different countries regarding the assessment of patient satisfaction in different areas, however, limited local data exists pertaining to patient experiences with regards to overall patient satisfaction and care provided at the general surgical ward especially in our setup.^{1,9-16} Furthermore, the available evidence is a limited and optimistic picture only. Detailed questions about specific aspects of patients' experiences were included in our study as already suggested by others.^{3,14}

This can serve for monitoring the performance of various hospital departments and wards and could point to ways in which delivery of health care could be improved.¹⁴⁻¹⁶

Methodology

This is a cross-sectional study done for three months at General Surgery ward PIMS, Islamabad. PIMS is a tertiary care hospital that provides training to both undergraduate and postgraduate students. It has a diverse quantum of patients ranging from twin cities, Punjab, KPK and AJK.

All patients admitted and discharged from General Surgery Unit-III from March to May 2018 were included in the study. After formal permission from the patients, a specially designed 30-item cross-sectional questionnaire was used for the interview. Patients' demographical details were recorded and their personal satisfaction enquired in an unbiased way. The questionnaire reflected general patient satisfaction and convenience aspects, interpersonal relationships and the role of doctors and paramedic staff of the general surgery ward. All data was collected, recorded and analyzed using SPSS 17 and Excel 2013.

Results

A total of 251 patients were incorporated in the study with an average age of 45 years with a male to female ratio of 1:2. 30.9% patients had completed their secondary or higher secondary education. 15.3% were blue collar workers, 16.2% were undergraduates, 23.7% were jobless and 44.8% were housewives. Most of the patients were already registered at the general surgery department PIMS. 67% patients were admitted via emergency while resting electively via OPD.

In response to the questions regarding general convenience and satisfaction aspects pertaining to General Surgery ward average rating was received. Agree or strongly agree was polled by 82.8% patients, while 17.2% had uncertainties. (Table I) Comparing an overall performance of the doctors on duty and the paramedical staff available, the general conduct, the availability to address general concerns and the professionalism exhibited were satisfactory; doctors taking a lead (Figure 1, Table II). Repeated feedbacks and specific rectification with staff motivation will direct further improvement.

Interpersonal relationships and the role of Doctors and the paramedic staff at the hospital were appreciated by 77.1% and 68.9% respectively, while 22.9% and 31.1% negated respectively. Patients' interviews were incorporated into data examination and deductions. Patient's satisfaction was evaluated to be 56.3% while overall care was 59.7%. 65.2% patients wished to recommend services provided, to others in need. (Figure 2)

Table I: Strongly Agree and Agree Replies with respect to general satisfaction of the patients.

Comfort level of ward environment	47.5%
View about visitors' Policy	84.6%
Bedding arrangement	77.5%
Ward General Sanitation	59.8%
Cleanliness of toilets	53.24%
Privacy was respected	64.6%
Meal was provided timely	84%
Quality of the meal provided	77.2%
Frequency of having to purchase an article/ drug (not available in the hospital)	69.8%
Financial Burden of an article/ drug that you have to purchase (not available in the hospital)	72.2%
Shifting to and from the OT was well organized	89.3%
Follow up plan Adequately explained	91.4%
Discharge prescription is easy to understand	83.2%

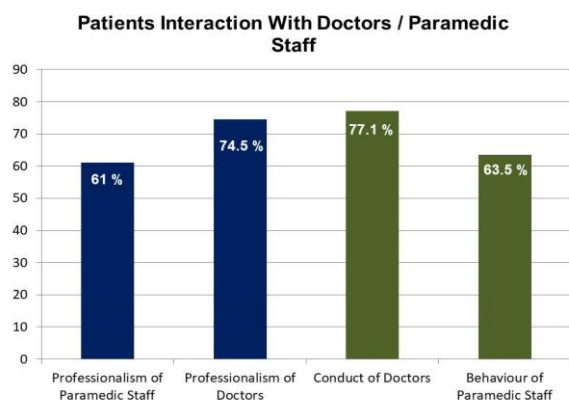


Figure 1. Comparative analysis of patients and Doctors / Paramedical Staff interaction.

Table II: Strongly Agree and Agree Replies with respect to patient interaction with Doctors and Paramedical Staff.

Interaction with Doctors	
The professionalism shown by the Doctor	74.5 %
Doctor's availability in the ward	95 %
Specialist's concern towards admitted patients	79.4 %
Time devoted by the doctor	68.7 %
General conduct of the doctor	77.1 %
Were you Informed about your illness	87.7%
Waiting time for Surgery after admission was acceptable	81.5 %
Need for Investigations was explained	87%
Any queries regarding management plan were addressed	85.5 %
Post-operative care	76.5 %
Interaction with Paramedical Staff	
Behavior of The Paramedical Staff	87.5 %
Drug administration is timely	83.1 %
Professionalism shown by the Nurses	79.25%
Problems and queries were adequately addressed	77.2%



Figure 2. Patient replies illustrating overall patient satisfaction at General Surgical

Discussion

Assessment of healthcare delivery is essential in the ongoing management and consequently quality improvement of medical services provided at the hospital.³ Patient satisfaction surveys can serve as tools for learning; they can give proportion to problematic areas and can be used as a reference point for making decisions regarding management. They can also be used to assess and measure specific initiatives or modifications in the delivery of health care services.⁴ Overall observation regarding admission services in a study conducted by Singh S et al, 72% patients were admitted through emergency and rest through outdoor.^{4,5} This is similar to our study with 67% admitted via emergency.

A study by Jalali S et al.; revealed that most of the patients were satisfied by the professional services rendered by the doctor. About 90% patients were satisfied regarding the time taken by the doctor to visit the patient.⁵ In our study, 68.7% were satisfied with the time devoted by the doctor which is almost similar to other studies. Although 95% were satisfied with their availability round the clock.

A study revealed satisfaction of 72% patients as their privacy was maintained by the doctor while examining and 74% were satisfied by information given by the doctor to a patient.⁵ While in our study 87.7% patients assured satisfactory communication of the information regarding the disease and condition of the patient. The need for investigation was adequately explained 87%. Queries regarding management plan were adequately addressed by doctors and nurses with a score of 4.3/5 and 3.9/5 respectively. However, only 64.6% score was given to maintenance of privacy.

Taking in account more from this aspect, Kumari et al.; found in her study that overall satisfaction regarding the doctor-patient communication was more than 60% at all the levels of health care facilities but that with the examination and consultation was less than 60% at the primary level as compared to more than 80% elsewhere.⁶ Our patients at general surgery ward PIMS reported a 74.5 % overall professionalism by the doctors and a 77.1% to their general conduct. The specialists' concern towards the admitted patients was averaged at 79.4%. This result is thus, encouraging.

In a study conducted in Karachi, patients' satisfaction with post-operative care was 100% and 4.5/5 score for explaining the home medication. The satisfaction of patients regarding counseling at the time of discharge was 98.6%.¹ Our results, however, highlight

the competing scores, with 91.4% (4.6/5) reporting an adequately explained follow up plan, and 83.2% understanding the discharge prescription easily.

The environment and the general aspects of satisfaction of our study were comparable to the satisfaction of these criteria in the region.^{1,5,6,12,13}

Most important motivating factor for the visit to the tertiary (48.2%) and secondary level (71.9%, 67.1%) of health facilities was the faith in doctors or health care facility.^{5,6} Our study did not cover this aspect, however, we found that most of the patients were already registered at this hospital and would utilize this facility whenever required. We also noticed how 65.2% of patient were satisfied enough to recommend this service to others.

A study by Anna Rosiek et al.; indicate that the expression of empathy, the competence of the medical staff, how they communicate with patients and share the information about the disease, treatment and patient's involvement in the healing process are the factors that may impact patient's satisfaction with treatment in the surgical ward.⁸ Various studies have depicted an overall satisfaction ranging from 55-90% scale.^{1-3,7,8,11,13,15,16} We have seen the overall care rated as 67.3% and 60% patients satisfied with the sum treatment at General surgery wards, PIMS, which is comparable to these studies.

Conclusion

Patients' satisfaction can guide via feedback and can markedly support improvements in healthcare services. Doctors' attitude, consultation, availability, and counseling are vital to overall patient satisfaction. Most of the patients admitted at General Surgery Ward were satisfied with overall care and behavior. Areas that need more attention are cleanliness, privacy, seeking patient views in their illness discussion, explaining them the prescription drugs and lab investigations.

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