



A STUDY ON QUALITY OF SERVICES IN THE OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT OF A MULTISPECIALTY TEACHING HOSPITAL

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ABSTRACT

Quality of patient care in Outpatient Department (OPD) is as important as other clinical health measures and is a means of measuring the effectiveness of health care delivery system. A study was conducted to evaluate the facilities, infrastructure, services and staffing in the Outpatient Department in multispecialty teaching hospital. The study type is descriptive. Sample sizes of 120 patients were selected using convenience sampling technique. Questionnaire method was used to collect data from patients. The findings showed that majority of the patients agreed that there were adequate facilities, infrastructure and services in the Outpatient Department. They also said that there were adequate number of nurses, doctors and supportive staff available to manage patients in OPD. The majority of patients were satisfied with the quality of services provided by the staff in OPD. The study findings revealed some of the areas which can be improved such as cleanliness, communication skills of staff and pharmacy services to improve the overall quality of service provided.

KEYWORDS : Outpatient Department, OPD, Quality of Services

INTRODUCTION

An Outpatient Department is one of the important services in the hospital. It is the patient's initial point of contact with the hospital and therefore has significant influence on patient's perceived quality of care in the hospital. The level of care given in the OPD is considered to represent a hospital's overall service quality and hence affects patients' satisfaction with the services provided. The patients usually decide to whether to continue their treatment in the hospital depending on their experience of services in the Outpatient Department. Therefore, it is often referred to as the "shop window" of the hospital.

The experiences of patients while in the hospital are an integral part of providing high-quality care. Assessing patient satisfaction helps the hospital management to improve the quality of care in the hospital. The patient satisfaction is usually an interaction of two factors, namely patient hope and the experience of actual services. The patient is dissatisfied if the health care provided does not meet their expectations, and vice versa if it meets their expectations. Thus the regular assessment of patient perception of quality of services will help in the improvement of patient care

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The OPD is also called Ambulatory Care Services and served as the mirror glass of the hospital. In fact, it is the eye of every health facility and patients judge care received at this department as the standard of care offer by the hospital. (Lyngkhai, 2015). This is the reason why, healthcare professionals and non-clinical staffs working at the Outpatient Department of the hospital need to be polite, cheerful and efficient to meet patient's expectations. (Jain et al., 2016) Quality of health care is defined as a degree of performance in relation to a defined standard of interventions known to be safe and have the capacity to improve health within available resources. (Murray, 2000) The patient satisfaction perspective of hospital care had gained more attention in recent years and studies have shown that patients are most satisfied with interpersonal interactions, such as staff-patient relationships. (Olusina et al., 2002)

What is also clear from research is that, satisfaction of patients about healthcare system is not only dependent on the quality of clinical services provided but other factors such as, behavior of doctors and good relationship, availability of medicine, and other health professionals, cost of the services, hospital environment and infrastructure, physical comfort,

emotional support, and respect for patient needs and preferences and the overall perceptions of how these elements are executed. (Sodani et al., 2010) Healthcare professionals and nurses regardless of the setting need to promote good and therapeutic relationships with patients. (Nurses Association of New Brunswick, 2000)

In the healthcare environment, communication not only relies on sharing information in respect to problems, causes and possible treatments but also recognizes the patients' emotional needs. Patients who recognize and perceive that their healthcare providers are in all conscience concerned about them will be more satisfied with their medical consultations. (Azmaniza, Khadijah, 2015) Healthcare administrators and managers must be interested in identifying and evaluating the gaps that exist in quality delivery at the Outpatient Department of the hospitals. (Al-Momani, 2016)

Thus, healthcare managers need a thorough understanding of the ways to improve the quality of care in practical terms. (Mohebifar, 2016). In fact, the poor nature and state of infrastructure in the healthcare sector in Ghana is challenging to quality health care delivery to meet the needs and expectations of its clients. (Seth et al., 2015)

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the quality of services with regard to physical facilities, infrastructure and services in the Outpatient Department.
2. To assess the quality of services with regard to staff in Outpatient Department.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study type is descriptive. A sample size of 120 patients was selected using convenience sampling technique. Questionnaire method was used to collect data from patients. Questionnaire had 2 parts. Part I had 10 items on quality of service with regard to physical facilities, infrastructure and services in the Outpatient Department. Part II consisted of 16 items on Quality of services with regard to staff in Outpatient Department. Every question had two options "Yes" and "No". Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used for data analysis. Frequency and percentage values were calculated.

RESULTS

This part consists of the responses and tabulation of the data collected from 120 patients through Questionnaire.

Table 1: Quality of services with regard to physical facilities, infrastructure and services in the Outpatient Department

Sl No	OPD Facilities and services	Yes		No	
		Frequency (n=120)	Percentage %	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage %
1	Adequate ventilation inside OPD.	94	78	26	22
2	Enough lighting in the OPD area.	97	81	23	19
3	Enough sitting facility in waiting area.	110	92	10	8
4	The diagnostic room having adequate space and equipments.	100	83	20	17
5	Adequate drinking water facility in waiting area.	103	86	17	14
6	Clean waiting area.	104	87	16	13
7	Regularly cleaned toilets.	82	68	38	32
8	Efficient pharmacy services	77	64	43	36
9	The waiting time for receiving drugs is adequate.	79	66	41	34
10	All medicines required were present in pharmacy.	86	72	34	28

Table 1 shows that majority (92%) patients agreed that there was enough sitting facility in waiting area of the OPD. 87 % agreed that the waiting area was clean. 86 % patients said that there was adequate drinking water facility in waiting area. 83% said that the diagnostic room had adequate space and equipments. 81 % agreed that there was enough lighting in the OPD area. 78 % of the patients said that there was adequate ventilation inside OPD. 72% said that all medicines required were present in pharmacy and 68 % patients said that the toilets were regularly cleaned. 64% said that the pharmacy services were efficient and only 66% found the waiting time for receiving drugs was adequate.

Table 2: Quality of services with regard to staff in Outpatient Department

Sl No	OPD Facilities	Yes		No	
		Frequency (n=120)	Percentage %	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage %
1	Adequate staff in registration counter	101	84	19	16
2	Registration counter staff was courteous.	85	71	35	29
3	Registration staff had good communication skill	82	68	38	32
4	Registration staff provided adequate and relevant information.	79	66	41	34
5	Services provided by nurses were efficient.	94	78	26	22
6	Nurses showed good communication skills with patients.	86	72	34	28

7	Nurse listened to health problem and explains to you any treatment you required.	89	74	31	26
8	There were adequate number of doctors to manage patients in the OPD	112	93	8	7
9	Services provided by doctors were efficient.	89	74	31	26
10	Doctors showed respect and dignity.	100	83	20	17
11	Doctors spent enough time with the patients.	77	64	43	36
12	Doctor listened carefully to what patient said and understood the concern.	94	78	26	22
13	Doctor gave opportunity to patient to discuss his/her disease and condition with him.	86	72	34	28
14	There was enough staff in pharmacy to dispatch medicines.	98	82	22	18
15	Pharmacist explained the use of medicine in detail.	76	63	44	37
15	Pharmacist had good communication skill.	71	59	49	41
16	Adequate number of housekeeping staff was posted in the OPD to maintain cleanliness.	86	72	34	28

Table 2 shows that majority of the patients agreed that there were adequate number of staff to manage patients in the OPD i.e. enough doctors (93%), Registration Staff (83%) were available and 82 % said that there were enough pharmacy staff available to dispatch medicines. 72% also said that adequate number of housekeeping staff was posted in the OPD to maintain cleanliness.

The majority (71 %) of the patients surveyed agreed that the registration staff were courteous, 68 % said that registration staff had good communication skill. 66% said that registration staff provided adequate and relevant information. With regard to services provided by Nurses, 78 % agreed that the nurses services were efficient, 74 % patients said that the nurses listened to their health problem and explained them about the treatment required and 72 % nurses showed good communication skills while handling patients.

With regard to services provided by Doctors, out of the 120 patients 74 % said that the doctor's services were efficient, 83% patients said that doctors showed respect and dignity, 78 % agreed that doctor listened carefully to what patient said and understood the concern and 72% patients agreed that doctors gave enough opportunity to discuss about their disease and condition with them. The majority 63 % of the patients said that pharmacist explained the use of medicine in detail and 59% agreed that pharmacist showed good enough communication skill.

DISCUSSION

The studies showed that majority of the patients were satisfied with overall quality of services with regard to physical facilities, infrastructure and services in the Outpatient Department. About 92% patients agreed that there was

enough sitting facility in waiting area of the OPD. 87 % agreed that the waiting area was clean. 86 % patients said that there was adequate drinking water facility in waiting area. 83% said that the diagnostic room had adequate space and equipments. 81 % agreed that there was enough lighting in the OPD area. 78 % of the patients said that there was adequate ventilation inside OPD. 72% said that all medicines required were present in pharmacy. The study showed some of the areas which required improvement. Only 68 % patients said that the toilets were regularly cleaned, 64% said that the pharmacy services were efficient and only 66% found the waiting time for receiving drugs was adequate.

Similarly, majority of the patient were satisfied with quality of services with regard to staff in the Outpatient Department. The majority agreed that there were adequate doctors, nurses, registration staff, pharmacy staff and housekeeping staff was available. With regard to services provided by Nurses, 78 % agreed that the nurse's services were efficient and 74 % said that the doctor's services were efficient. Some areas of improvement were improvement is required in the registration counter and in the pharmacy. Since only 63 % of the patients said that pharmacist explained the use of medicine in detail and 59% agreed that pharmacist showed good enough communication skill. Also only 68 % said that registration staff had good communication skill. 66% said that registration staff provided adequate and relevant information.

Similar findings were observed in the study conducted by Galhotra in which the respondents were satisfied with the basic amenities. (Galhotra, 2013) Bamidele AR, Hoque ME & Van der Heever H in which overall, participants were quite satisfied with the services provided by the different service providers but the pharmacy received the highest satisfaction level. (Bamidele, 2011)

A study was conducted to explore patients' satisfactions by determining the discrepancy between patients' expectations and perceptions and established that patients are highly satisfied with all elements of quality of service; precisely, enough and satisfactory information about their care or operation and suitable friendliness and courtesy elements. (Mohd, 2014) According to Zarei (2015), physician consultation, information provided to the patient, and the physical environment of the clinic were the three determinants of Outpatient Department quality. Physician consultation and perceived waiting time dimensions were the highest and lowest perceptions respectively

This is why Neelu P et al. (2012) study indicated that healthcare institutions should encourage good doctor and patient interaction and relationship as it has emerged as the key factor associated with patient satisfaction. (Neelu, 2012) , because patients are the ultimate consumers of the hospital and also because they are mostly in distress or emotionally stressed, patients often expect hospital staffs to give them utmost comfort, care and cure and this must be seen efficiently executed at the OPD during which patients are in need. In this case, healthcare facilities are devising strategies to meet patients' expectations. (Fraihl et al., 2016)

CONCLUSION

Assessment of quality of patient care must be a continuous process, in order to know the changing need of the patients and to ensure that the health care organization is moving on the right path. The study evaluated the quality of services in terms of the facilities, infrastructure, services provided and staffing in the Outpatient Department. The majority of the respondents in this study were satisfied with the overall quality of services provided in the OPD. The study showed there was adequate staffing in the OPD. The majority of the patients responded that the service provided by doctors and

nurses was adequate. The study reveals that some more efforts have to be made in order to improve the quality of patient care in the Outpatient Department. Key areas of concern includes: improvement on communication skills, pharmacy services and regular cleaning.

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