



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Dental Science

ASSESSMENT OF PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH DENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AND SAGORE DUTTA HOSPITAL OF WEST BENGAL

KEY WORDS: Patient Complaint, Patient dentist relationship, Patients' satisfaction, Quality of Dental Care.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Quality is a major concern of health care agencies all over the world. Patients' satisfaction has been investigated in many colleges of dentistry in various countries.

The Objective of this study is to determine patients' satisfaction regarding the quality of dental care at dental clinics.

Methods: A cross sectional observational study was conducted at the dental clinics of the College of Medicine and Sagore Dutta Hospital. A systematic random sampling technique was employed over a three month period from 1st January 2017 to 31st March 2017. A self administered questionnaire was used.

Results: A total of 75 patients qualified for the study. Ninety two percent opined that dental staff was concentrating on their work. 92.0% of the patients agreed with that dentists were friendly with them. More than seventy four percent agreed that dentist explained the procedure before start of treatment. More than sixty six percent of the patients agreed that dentist gave them advices after treatment which was significantly higher. Most patients opined that they had received good quality of treatment. Few patients opined that dental instruments used were clean. Half of the patients agreed that working hours of the clinic were suitable for the patients. Most of the patients agreed that patients did not wait for long time to have an appointment and waiting time was short to get the treatment.

Conclusion: The majority of patients were satisfied with the patient–dentist interaction, technical competency, administrative efficiency and clinic set up environment at the dental clinics.

INTRODUCTION:

Patient satisfaction is easy to understand but difficult to define. Patient satisfaction can be explained that it will reflect the total experience of health care. Satisfactions involve many factor such as intellectual, emotional, psychological, previous experience and expectation of the patient. q

According to Kotler satisfaction is a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance or outcome, in relation to his or her expectations. 2

Now a day's oral health of patients has major impact on the quality of life. Maintenance of good oral health is an very important for well being and good quality of life. So when the oral health of the patient is altered, it is the responsibility of the dental health provider to restore the oral health of patient to the better level to satisfy them. l

Satisfaction of the patient with dental treatment provided is an important aspect of quality of treatment and determined the future utilization of services.

Feedback on satisfaction regarding dental care service is vital for continuous improvement of the service delivery process and outcome. 4,5 Now a day's dental treatment complaints made by patients may cause a great deal of anxiety and stress among dental care providers. 6,7

Dissatisfaction and complaints may result in patients' changing their dentist, which might have spread to the family and friends' perceptions of the dental practice. 8,9 It is very important for the profession to promote high standards of professional conduct among dentists. 10 In an era of clinical governance and patient partnership in delivering high quality oral healthcare, it is necessary that patients' concerns are deal with appropriately. 11

Health care quality is a global issue. Patient satisfaction is one of the important goals of any health care system.

As medical teaching institutions, dental clinic of College of Medicine and Sagore Dutta Hospital usually strive to find a balance between meeting the needs of patients and students. Patients' satisfaction with the dental care they receive is crucial because it will influence their pattern for service utilization. It has been shown

that patients who were more satisfied with dental care had better compliance, fewer un-attended appointments, less anxiety, pain and perception. Dentist–patient interactions during dental treatment have been demonstrated to affect patients' compliance with clinical advice and commitment to scheduled visits. Therefore, information on patients' feedback and satisfaction is necessary to properly evaluate the service being given. 8,13,14

This study aimed to determine the levels of satisfaction regarding the quality of dental care among patients at the dental clinic of the College of Medicine and Sagore Dutta Hospital. However, what patients want from the services may differ from what the provider thinks is best for them. Therefore, their opinion should be incorporated to provide a holistic view in enhancing the understanding of the factors affecting patients' satisfaction with the health care setting. These include disciplines such as patient–personnel interaction, technical competency, administrative efficiency and clinic setup/environment. Hence, this study attempts to quantify the level of satisfaction with the dental services provided by the College of Medicine and Sagore Dutta Hospital, specifically with reference to these disciplines of interest.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

A cross sectional analytical **observational study** was conducted at the dental clinics of the College of Medicine and Sagore Dutta Hospital. A **systematic random sampling technique** over a three-month period was employed starting over a three-month period **from 1st January 2017 to 31st March 2017. Respondents were interviewed** when they last visited the dentist to ensure that they received the full dental care to be offered.

A self-administered modified questionnaire was used to assess patients satisfaction with the dental service provided in the dental clinic of College of Medicine and Sagore Dutta Hospital. In addition to the socio-demographic characteristics (**age, gender, and nationality**), the questionnaire consisted of 4 sections: **patient–personnel interaction** (9 items); **technical competency** (4 items); **system/administrative efficiency** (4 items) and **clinic setup/environment** (2 items).

The questionnaire was drafted in the Bengali and English with a **5-point Likert response scale** ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was **validated and pretested** prior to data collection.

Ethical consideration:

The Institutional Ethics Committee of the College of Medicine and Sagore Dutta Hospital approved this study.

Statistical analysis:

Statistical Analysis was performed with help of Epi Info (TM) 7.2.2.2 which is a trademark of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Descriptive statistical analysis was performed to calculate the means with corresponding standard deviations (SD). Test of proportion was used to find the Standard Normal Deviate (Z) to compare the difference of proportions and

Chi-square (2χ) test was performed to find the associations. $p < 0.05$ was taken to be statistically significant.

RESULTS:

A total number of 75 patients were included in this study. The mean age (mean \pm SD) of the patients was 34.51 ± 13.52 years with range 18-69 years and the median age was 34.0 years. 42 (56.0%) and 33 (44.0%) were males and females with the ratio of male and female as 1.3:1.0. Most of the respondents were student 27 (36.0%) followed by homemakers 17(22.7%).

Table1: Distribution of answers to different questions

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neutral	p-value
Dental staff did not talk with each other while during treatment.	2 (2.7%)	29 (38.7%)	2 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)	42 (56.0%)	<0.0001*
Dental staff was concentrating on their own work.	0 (0.0%)	69 (92.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (4.0%)	3 (4.0%)	<0.0001*
Dentists were friendly with them.	0 (0.0%)	69 (92.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (8.0%)	<0.0001*
Dentist explained the full procedure before start of treatment.	17 (22.7%)	50 (74.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.7%)	<0.0001*
Dentist gave them advices after treatment.	50(66.7%)	23 (30.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.7%)	<0.0001*
Dentist facial's expression was cheerful with a smile.	0 (0.0%)	40 (53.3%)	3 (4.0%)	0 (0.0%)	32 (42.7%)	<0.0001*
Dentist did not criticize their oral health condition.	3 (4.0%)	51 (68.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	21 (28.0%)	<0.0001*
Dentist did not ask personal questions during treatment.	4 (5.3%)	54 (72.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (22.7%)	<0.0001*
The patient was obliged to receive dental care by a house staff	0 (0.0%)	46 (61.3%)	2 (2.7%)	1 (1.3%)	26 (34.7%)	<0.0001*
Treatment offered was not painful	3 (4.0%)	36 (48.0%)	4 (5.3%)	1 (1.3%)	31 (41.3%)	<0.0001*
Thorough dental examination	7 (9.3%)	63 (84.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.3%)	5 (6.7%)	<0.0001*
Good quality of treatment	2 (2.7%)	46 (61.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	27 (36.0%)	<0.0001*
Dental instrument used were clean	30 (40.0%)	36 (48.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	9 (12.0%)	<0.0001*
Working hours of the clinic were suitable for the patients	1 (1.3%)	38 (50.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	36 (48.0%)	<0.0001*
Patients did not wait for long time to have an appointment	1 (1.3%)	60 (80.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	14 (18.7%)	<0.0001*
Short waiting time to get the treatment	1 (1.3%)	60 (80.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	14 (18.7%)	<0.0001*
Complete dental treatment	3 (4.0%)	56 (74.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (21.3%)	<0.0001*
Comfortable waiting area	0 (0.0%)	21 (28.0%)	6 (8.0%)	1 (1.3%)	47 (62.7%)	>0.05
Privacy of treatment was insured	2 (2.7%)	28 (37.3%)	4 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	41 (54.7%)	<0.0001*

Table2: Distribution of Suggestion

Suggestions	Number	%
House surgeons should be under supervision of Senior Doctors at the time of examination/ treatment.	3	4.0%
More dental chairs are required for the patients	1	1.3%
More sitting arrangement is required for the patients	8	10.8%
Need of more dentists	1	1.3%
No comment	62	82.6%
Total	75	100.0%

Most of the patients (82.6%) had no comment regarding suggestions for the improvement of services. Rest of the patients suggested for more sitting arrangement for patient, activities of house surgeons to be supervised by senior doctors, more dental chairs for patients and more dentists for better services from the dental OPD.

Fifty six percent of the patients agreed that dental staff did not talk with each other while providing treatment. Most of them (92.0%) opined that dental staff was concentrating on their work. Similar number of the patients agreed with that dentists were friendly with them. Majority of the patients (74.7%) agreed that dentists explained the procedure before start of treatment. More number of the patients (66.7%) agreed that dentists gave them advices after treatment which was significantly higher ($p < 0.0001$). Majority of the patients (61.3%) were in the opinion that they had received good quality of treatment. About half of the patients (48.0%) opined that dental instruments used were clean. Half of the patients (50.7%) agreed that working hours of the clinic were suitable for the patients ($Z = 8.16$; $p < 0.0001$). Most of the patients (80.0%) agreed that patients did not wait for long time to have an appointment. Most of the patients (80.0%) agreed that waiting time was short to get the treatment.

Dental treatment was complete which was significant higher ($Z = 12.28$; $p < 0.0001$). In Clinic setup environment in this study

found 28.0% of the patients agreed that there is a need of comfortable waiting area and also other 8.0% disagreed about that but there was no significant difference between them. However, most of the patients (62.7%) remained neutral [Table-1] and 54.7% of the patients agreed that privacy of treatment was insured which was significant higher.

DISCUSSION:

Quality assessment of the health care is necessary and also compulsory for all health services. It plays very important role in such evaluation the participation of patients and their experience as well as their review.¹⁵

Patients' satisfaction has been investigated in many Colleges of Dentistry in various countries.

The purpose of this study is to assess patient satisfaction and the problem associated with the dental health care provided. A good number of patients were actively involved in this study and they reflected their experience with dental care, their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with quality of dental care. The study revealed that satisfaction with dental care was high and this was in harmony with many studies.^{16,17}

In this study used a self administered questionnaire that required less than 5 minutes to be completed and which has been shown to

be an effective and efficient tool for collecting information.

To measure the level of patient satisfaction and quality of dental health care, attempt was made with the questionnaire. In this study results obtained showed the reflection of the service quality. Patients gave different levels of importance to different aspects of the services.

Dentists explained the full procedures before the treatment, which is a very important aspect in the patient–dentist satisfaction domain and it was demonstrated by a good number of the studied population. Majority of the patients were in the opinion that dentist explained the procedure before start of treatment which was significant higher ($p < 0.0001$). A very low number of them remained neutral. None of them disagreed with the question which was contrary to what was found by Othman and Abdel Razak (45.6%)² and this could be due to implementing this study in an educational setting, which put high priorities on educating the house staff and ideal way of communication and patient–dentist interaction. Rankin and Haris reported that patients dislike when dentist, begins the treatment without any explanation.¹⁸

It was found that the explanation the treatment procedure given by a dentist was an important aspect and received satisfaction. This is conforming to several studies which indicated that the doctor's explanation of illness and treatment options to the patient received an evaluation.¹⁹ On the other hand, where the mannerism of dental surgeons, initial examination, accurate diagnosis and explanation of the treatment received “good” score in patient satisfaction.²⁰ With further explanation of their treatment options should be highlighted by the dentist to achieve high level of satisfaction with dental service, providing by the patient.²¹

Dentist should not only be focused on explanation of the treatment as well as finishing the treatment as fast as possible just to minimize the waiting time, but also concentrate on the treatment options to the patient to their satisfaction.

Unlike what was found by Othman and Abdel Razzak regarding the personality of the dentists who were cheerful, smiling and friendly, patients of this study were more satisfied with a 46.0% level of satisfaction compared to 53.3%.²² Geboy stated that the patients' first impression, in particular, was influenced by appearance, including clothing, and often has a lasting impact, although additional contact may change this initial interpersonal perceptions.²¹

Majority of the study sample reported that they were obliged to receive dental treatment by a student. This left almost 4.0% of them remained neutral and dissatisfied feeling regarding this issue. This can also be explained that the facility offering the service is at an academic interest mainly for the purpose of educating its student–dentists (house staff) and providing dental care services to the community. Satisfaction was observed due to thorough dental examination and painless treatment offered. Thorough dental examination was significantly high. Good quality of treatment was enjoyed by the patients in significantly higher level ($Z = 8.81$; $p < 0.0001$). Dental instruments used were clean to the patients. New satisfaction questionnaire may be adopted to see other issues.²³

The question was related to whether working hours of the clinic were suitable for the patients, in administrative efficiency. Working hours of the clinic were suitable for the patients which was significantly higher. Similar findings were observed by some other study also.²² As waiting time is found important in health care services,²⁴ most of the patients did not wait for long time to have an appointment in this set-up.

Dental treatment was complete which was significantly higher. People prefer comprehensive dental care. Similar observations were found in some other study.²⁵

This study will act as a guide for dental staff members on both doctor and house staff to ensure patient satisfaction as an

indicator for the quality of dental services, being part of the total quality management policy of the college and the dental health care service.

CONCLUSION:

Patient attending each hospital are responsible for spreading the good image of hospital and therefore satisfaction of patients attending the hospital is equally important for hospital management. Patient satisfaction is the key indicator that can reflect the health service quality at any level of health care facilities. Evaluation of patient's satisfaction should be done regularly by the organization or the hospitals by conducting such survey for the purpose of continuous improvement. By conducting such study one will be able to understand the difference between patients' demands and patients' satisfaction. Providing the dental care with physical comfort, emotional support, respecting the patient's preferences, with communication, information, education the service will result in a high quality of treatment and patient satisfaction.

Measures should be taken to reduce and eliminate any source of dissatisfaction.

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