



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Anesthesiology

ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION OF PATIENTS ATTENDING A PREOPERATIVE ASSESSMENT CLINIC IN A RURAL GOVERNMENT TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL

KEY WORDS: preoperative assessment clinic, patient attitude, satisfaction

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ABSTRACT
 Anaesthesiologists are rarely recognized by the general public because their place of work is limited to intraoperative and postoperative care apart from the brief encounter in the preoperative assessment clinic. Neither do the sedated patient recognizes the role of the anaesthesiologist nor their attenders know our role in the successful outcome of a surgical postoperative patient. Hence this study was designed as an interview based questionnaire to know the perception of the patients attending the preoperative assessment clinic. Another feedback questionnaire was also designed to know the patient satisfaction following the visit to the preoperative assessment clinic. The results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaires will help us to be better intraoperative physicians and develop our communication skills.

INTRODUCTION

The preoperative assessment clinic is the only place where the patients and their relatives can be provided with correct information about anaesthetic procedures, physician and patient's preparedness and to allay the anxiety of the patient and their relatives. Talking and answering their queries and being empathetic to the patients can enhance their confidence with the anaesthesiologists resulting in an extremely cooperative patient during the anaesthetic procedures.

METHODS:

STUDY DESIGN:

Prospective cross-sectional study using a closed ended questionnaire for assessing the perception and another one to analyse the feedback of the patients attending the preoperative assessment clinic

STUDY CENTRE: Government Villupuram medical college

SAMPLE SIZE: 482 patients attending the preoperative assessment clinic. The sample size was obtained by calculating the average number of patients who attended the assessment clinic during the same period in the last 3 years.

After obtaining approval from the institutional ethical committee and oral informed consent, the two questionnaires were filled through an interview by the medical interns posted in the assessment clinic before and after attending the clinic

INCLUSION CRITERIA:

- Age 18 to 70 years
- Both male and female

EXCLUSION CRITERIA:

- Age less than 18 years (not able to give consent)
- Refusal to participate
- Inability to speak
- Severe medical illness
- Psychiatric illness
- ASA III and ASA IV category of sick patient

STUDY POPULATION: 482 patients attending the preoperative assessment clinic were enrolled to answer the two questionnaires

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The demographic data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed frequencies and percentages. Correlations studies were performed by unpaired *t*-test and one-way analysis of variance using SPSS® version 16 (Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences) for Windows by IBM to study the effect of variables like age, sex, literacy level, and previous visit to PAC clinic on patient's knowledge and understanding of preanaesthesia check-up. *P* < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

A total of 482 patients aged 18–60 years, coming to preanesthesia clinic answered the questionnaire. 32.6% of the patients were <30 years of age while 27.5% were between 30 and 45 years of age and rest were between 45 and 60 years of age. 647 (64.7%) were males and remaining 353 (35.3%) were females. As far as literacy levels were concerned 29.8% of the patients were illiterates, 9.6% had studied up to primary school, 37.5% finished secondary school, 18.4% were graduates, and remaining 4.7% were postgraduates. When asked about a previous visit to PAC clinic, 36.8% of the patients had visited PAC clinic previously, the rest were coming for the 1st time.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study on analysis proved that the patients do not have an adequate knowledge about the assessment clinic, they are ignorant about the role of the anaesthesiologists in reducing the morbidity and mortality of surgical patients. They are also ignorant of the necessity to optimize their medical conditions. Many of the patients felt it was unnecessary for them to reveal their entire medical history to the anaesthesiologist in the assessment clinic. Hence adequate measures to educate and make them understand the role of anaesthesiologist in better patient outcomes have to be stressed. Organizing campaigns and delivering speeches in the public forum and in the social media can greatly increase the awareness among the patients about the importance of the preoperative assessment clinic and the anaesthesiologist in the well being of the patient.

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