

Enhancing Care Standard at Public Healthcare Facilities through Patient Satisfaction Assessment – A Review

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Abstract:- This review paper provides a comprehensive analysis of research on enhancing care standard at public healthcare facilities through patient satisfaction assessment. By synthesizing findings from peer-reviewed studies, this review aims to identify trends, gaps, and best practices in this critical area of healthcare. Through rigorous search and selection criteria, a total of 15 relevant articles were identified and analyzed. The review explores various dimensions of patient satisfaction assessment, including factors influencing satisfaction, methods of assessment, and the impact on healthcare delivery. Key findings highlight the importance of effective communication, staff attitudes, waiting times, and facility cleanliness in shaping patient satisfaction. Additionally, the review examines the role of different assessment tools, such as surveys, interviews, and online platforms, in capturing patient experiences. Furthermore, it discusses the implications of patient satisfaction assessment on healthcare outcomes, provider-patient relationships, and organizational performance. The review also identifies challenges and opportunities for future research and practice, including the need for standardized assessment tools, resource allocation, and cultural sensitivity. Overall, this review paper contributes to the understanding of how patient satisfaction assessment can be leveraged to improve the care standard at public healthcare facilities.

Keywords: Patient Satisfaction; Quality Improvement; Healthcare

I. INTRODUCTION

Ensuring patient satisfaction stands as a key objective for any healthcare system, measuring patient satisfaction and assessing the readiness of health systems is challenging because it's not just about clinical outcomes, non-clinical aspects of care also play a significant role in influencing patient satisfaction. ^(1,6)

Patient satisfaction is a sentiment of contentment or dissatisfaction that arises from an individual's assessment of a service's perceived level of performance or outcomes concerning their anticipated expectations. This satisfaction is contingent upon the perceived performance and the individual's expectations. Ensuring top-notch service quality is

vital to meeting patients' expectations and fulfilling their needs.

Patient satisfaction is defined as “It's the degree of alignment between a patient's expectations for their healthcare encounter and their knowledge of the actual care they experience prompt and efficient service .” (Babu, 2012)

There are many factors on which patient satisfaction depends including- The caliber of medical care delivered , hospital infrastructure, accessibility of medicine, cost of services, , physical comfort, attitude of doctors and other health staff supportive presence, and respect for patient choices. ⁽²⁾

Patient satisfaction is a crucial measure of healthcare quality because it indicates how adequate healthcare providers meet patients' expectations, which significantly influences patients' intentions and behaviors regarding their healthcare. ^(3,4)

Patient satisfaction is a key measure of the effectiveness and success of healthcare services provided in medical facilities. A patient's overall experience is shaped by various interactions and encounters throughout their journey. This includes everything from accessing the website to visiting the facility, going through admission procedures, meeting healthcare professionals, and even factors like room cleanliness, staff attitude, discharge process, facility appearance, waiting times, communication clarity, treatment outcomes, cost, and food quality. All these elements collectively influence how patients perceive the care they receive in their public health facility. ⁽¹⁸⁾ Patient satisfaction serves as a crucial and frequently employed measure for assessing the quality and outcomes of healthcare.

II. SERVICE QUALITY

The quality of standard care services plays a vital role in achieving patient satisfaction. Conventionally, service quality was mainly assessed using measures like morbidity or mortality rates. However, in recent years, patients' perceptions of their care have become increasingly important. Patients' perceptions of service quality greatly contribute to their overall satisfaction. ⁽²⁰⁾ While service quality and patient

satisfaction are often used interchangeably, they represent different aspects of care. Service quality focuses on more specific judgments, while satisfaction reflects broader feelings about the care received.

Patient satisfaction is essentially the positive or negative attitude a patient holds regarding the care they receive. It's important to note that satisfaction is based on the patient's emotional response to their experience, while service quality involves cognitive judgments about the care provided⁽¹⁷⁾. Research has shown a clear link between service quality and patient satisfaction, with higher service quality generally leading to increased satisfaction.

Understanding which aspects of service quality are most important to patients is crucial for healthcare managers. This knowledge helps them allocate resources effectively, implement better management practices, and ensure high levels of patient satisfaction. Identifying the key dimensions of service quality that influence patient satisfaction guides future actions and decisions within healthcare facilities.

Service quality is a widely used scale for evaluating service quality in various sectors, including healthcare. It comprises attributes like reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles, and credibility. These attributes are crucial for improving patient satisfaction in healthcare settings.

- **Reliability:** Patients should receive timely and appropriate treatment according to their needs.
- **Responsiveness:** All patients, regardless of background, should be promptly attended to with courtesy and consultation on treatment options.
- **Assurance:** Patients should feel confident in the qualifications and competence of healthcare providers.
- **Empathy:** Healthcare providers should show individualized attention, address patients by their preferred names, and demonstrate a caring attitude.
- **Tangibles** – tangibles refer to the physical aspects of the health facility, like cleanliness, the use of clean tools, following standard procedures, and ensuring prescriptions are clear and easy for patients to understand.

III. METHODOLOGY AND SEARCH STRATEGY

Two methods were used to find research articles: keywords and the snowball search method. Only studies published in English in the last 25 years, from 2001 to 2024, were selected. These studies focused on patient satisfaction surveys in various hospitals and clinics, medical care facilities, or public healthcare facilities. Databases like Google Scholar, Medline, Emerald, PubMed, Academia, and Science Direct were searched using keywords such as "patient satisfaction assessment," "quality improvement," "healthcare," and "patient satisfaction measurement."

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Leisen Pollack,2008; Bakan et al.2014 Research has proven that relationship between healthcare-perceived service quality and patient satisfaction, showing a direct relationship that expresses; that better healthcare service quality leads to higher patient satisfaction.

Badri et al. (2009) acknowledging patients and their satisfaction is considered fundamental in organizing, delivering, and evaluating service delivery. Moreover, meeting the needs of patients and adhering to healthcare standards is crucial for achieving high-quality care.

Yellen et al. (2002) and Kilbourne et al. (2004) while there are numerous standardized and validated patient satisfaction surveys tailored to assess specific aspects of care, their validity and reliability may not necessarily extend to other care settings.^(7,8)

Irfan et al. (2012) Establish that in Pakistan's public hospitals, patient satisfaction, and service quality are crucial for assessing organizational performance, emphasizing that quality is a fundamental measure of product or service performance.⁽⁹⁾

Amin et al. (2013) discovered that in hospital settings, focusing on perceived service quality and customer satisfaction can help managers develop strategies to enhance customer loyalty among existing patients.⁽¹⁰⁾

Aljoudimi et al. (2015) found that in public hospitals in Tripoli, Libya that study suggests that the amount of time and effort put into providing healthcare services doesn't necessarily affect how satisfied patients are. Instead, it emphasizes the importance of factors like service quality and perceived value in determining patient satisfaction in healthcare settings.)

Mohan et al. found that there's a strong link between measuring patient satisfaction and the continuity of care. When patients are satisfied with their healthcare experience, they're more likely to follow their treatment plans and stick with the same healthcare providers for future care

Rao et al. (2006) This study highlights the importance of a patient-centered approach, effective communication, and adequate resources in delivering high-quality healthcare services. By understanding patient perceptions and expectations, healthcare providers can make targeted improvements to enhance patient satisfaction and overall healthcare outcomes.

V. PATIENT SATISFACTION EVALUATION IN PUBLIC HEALTH FACILITY

The healthcare sector has shifted its approach to viewing patients as valuable customers due to advancements in the medical field and heightened competition. This shift has led healthcare organizations to prioritize patient-centered care, where the patient is placed at the core of the care process. (Sajid & Ali, n.d.)⁽⁶⁾

Patient satisfaction is a primary means of measuring the effectiveness of the healthcare delivery system hence, of great importance. Understanding whether patients are generally satisfied or dissatisfied can significantly influence healthcare practices. The key to utilizing this knowledge effectively is to address any issues identified through surveys and take steps to improve patient satisfaction.

Patient satisfaction is important in evaluating the public health facility by Increasing Patient Retention Rates, Improve Patient Experience, Improving the Performance of the Hospital, Staff Map and tracking patients' Journeys, and Enhance Quality of Care.

Patient satisfaction may be affected by a range of factors, including Communication with physician and staff, Expectations of care, Responsiveness of physician and staff, Pain management, Timeliness of phone calls, Cleanliness, appointments and results, and Attire.

A. Contributing Factors for Patient Satisfaction

Contributing factors for patient satisfaction encompass various aspects of healthcare delivery, including Communication, Quality of care, Staff attitude and behavior, Access to care, Environment, and amenities, Patient involvement in decision-making, Coordination of care, and Outcome of care.

The quality of healthcare results from collaboration between patients and healthcare providers within a supportive environment. It's influenced by the personal factors of both parties, organizational factors, and broader environmental factors. Variances in resource availability, provider collaboration, and patient-provider cooperation impact the quality of care and patient outcomes¹⁴

➤ Determinants in Patient Satisfaction

- Helpfulness
- Attentiveness
- Responsiveness

B. Patient Satisfaction in Enhancing Quality Care Service in Public Health Facilities

Patient satisfaction plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of care services provided in public health facilities. When patients feel satisfied with the care they receive, it signifies that their needs, preferences, and expectations have been met or exceeded. Patient satisfaction promotes a patient-centered approach to healthcare delivery^(21,19). Positive experiences and satisfaction with services encourage patients to seek care when needed, leading to improved access to healthcare services. When patients feel satisfied with their care experiences, they are more likely to trust the expertise of healthcare providers and adhere to recommended treatments and follow-up care. Patient satisfaction in public health facilities contributes to a culture of quality care, and patient engagement, and ultimately leads to better health outcomes for individuals and communities. Patient satisfaction can be enhanced by Patient-Centered Care and enhanced Access to Care.

C. The Importance of Patient Satisfaction Assessment

Patient satisfaction assessments are important as they can identify and resolve potential problems before they even break into major issues in any healthcare facility or public health facility. Patient satisfaction is a critical measure and a primary method for assessing how effectively healthcare services are delivered.

The focus on patient satisfaction survey assessment has prompted hospitals to introduce creative initiatives aimed at improving patient satisfaction. However, some of these initiatives, such as providing designer gowns and valet parking, may not necessarily translate into positive health benefits⁽²²⁾. Critics argue that these efforts divert resources from proven measures that directly enhance the quality of patient care. Patient satisfaction assessment may be required for regulatory compliance or accreditation purposes, ensuring adherence to quality standards.

D. Enhancing patient satisfaction in healthcare settings includes

- Communication: Establish rapport with patients, encourage discussions, and ask open-ended questions to address their concerns effectively.
- Reducing Wait Times: Minimize waiting periods by promptly providing test results and regularly checking on patients to alleviate anxiety.
- Leveraging Technology: Offer patients access to communication devices and interactive education systems to improve comfort and engagement.
- Providing Patient Satisfaction Surveys: Allow patients to provide feedback through satisfaction surveys to demonstrate care and gather valuable insights for improving care quality.

VI. CONCLUSION

Assessing the satisfaction of patients is a simple, easy, and cost-effective way for the evaluation of hospital services or public health services⁽²⁴⁾. For enhancing public health facilities patient satisfaction is required and patient satisfaction can be enhanced by decreasing patient load at referral-level facilities to allow healthcare providers to dedicate more time to each patient, Implementing measures to reduce wait times, such as introducing an appointment-based system for outpatient department (OPD) visits, Enhance the overall quality of care, Provide regular training for healthcare workers on attitude, behavior, and communication skills, Alleviate the financial burden on patients, Increasing awareness about government health schemes.

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