

Assessment of Patients' Satisfaction Regarding Health Care Services in a Tertiary Care Hospital

Seema Hasnain,¹ Zarabia Pervaiz,² Javed Iqbal,³ Abdullah Saleem,⁴ Taha Alam,⁵ Mahnoor Alam⁶

Abstract

Objective: To find out the satisfaction level of the patients regarding the quality of OPD services and its relationship with the sociodemographic factors

Material and Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted between June to December 2021 in Outpatient Department (OPD) of Fatima Memorial Hospital. After taking approval from Institutional Review Board, 385 patients fulfilling the inclusion criteria were recruited by using non-probability purposive sampling. Following informed consent, a structured pretested questionnaire was used to solicit information from respondents regarding reception area, patient doctor interaction, and overall level of services provided in the OPD. Patient satisfaction was measured on five-point Likert scale. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 27. Simple frequency tables were generated for the qualitative variables. Chi-square test was applied to find out any statistically significant relationship of various sociodemographic factors with patient satisfaction. The p-value of ≤ 0.05 was defined as significant.

Results: The mean age of participants was 36.59 ± 14.59 years. Overall 86.5% patients were satisfied with the OPD services. When satisfaction regarding separate domains of OPD was analyzed, it was found that 76.1% of the respondents were highly satisfied with OPD reception services, and majority (87%) patients were highly satisfied with health care provider services. Around 88.8% patients agreed to come again in order to seek service provision and 87.6% patients supported recommending the hospital to others. No statistically significant relationship between various sociodemographic factors and patient satisfaction.

Conclusion: Majority of patients expressed high satisfaction level with various domains of OPD services and supported recommending the hospital to others based on their experience.

Keywords: patient satisfaction, OPD services, Health care provider services, Health Service readiness, patient doctor interaction

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Introduction

Patient satisfaction is an important and widely used indicator for measuring service quality in health

care. It provides valuable insights into patients' perception and experiences with the health care services they receive.¹ Perception of the beneficiaries, which refers to how patients and healthcare service users perceive and experience the healthcare system, is indeed crucial for refining and improving the system.² Patient satisfaction has become a crucial component of the present-day health care delivery system. Conducting a patient satisfaction survey to examine the areas impacting satisfaction levels, as well as to find out the causes for discontent, is an established method for improving the quality of care in hospitals.³ Worldwide several studies have repor-

1,3,4,6. FMH College of Medicine & Dentistry, Lahore

2. Fatima Jinnah Medical University, Lahore

5. Ameer-ud-din Medical College, Lahore

Correspondence:

Dr. Abdullah Saleem, Demonstrator, Department of Community Medicine, FMH College of Medicine & Dentistry, Lahore, Pakistan
E-mail: asmalik12@gmail.com

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ted variable patient satisfaction estimates, ranging from 55 to 99.6%.⁴ The evaluation of patient satisfaction takes into account both client- and provider-focused factors. Client-focused aspects are concentrated on how much patients feel their wants and expectations are being met during the provision of health care services, as opposed to provider-focused aspects, which refer to the provision of sound medical facilities.⁵ Both provider- and patient-related factors can have an impact on patient satisfaction.⁴ It has been found that satisfied patients are generally more compliant with their treatment and follow-up advice.⁶ This sequentially translates into better health outcomes, which further reinforces their trust in the health care system and providers, leading to further satisfaction and potentially positive word of mouth recommendations.

Pakistan has a mixed health care system comprising of both governmental and private sectors. Approximately 70% of the population is served by the private sector.⁷ According to metrics like overall healthcare quality and patient satisfaction, private hospitals and healthcare facilities routinely perform better than their public equivalents.^{8,9} As an important milestone Pakistan established the Punjab healthcare commission in 2010 with the objectives to enhance patient satisfaction levels and complaints that catered to professional accountability.¹⁰

Outpatient department is an important area of a tertiary hospital where first contact occurs between the clients and the hospital staff. According to research the care offered at the OPD services indicates the overall quality of services of a hospital.¹¹ This study was conducted to find out the satisfaction level of the patients regarding the quality of OPD services and the relationship of sociodemographic factors with the satisfaction level of the patients. The findings will help health care professionals and administrators to gain insight regarding areas that need further upgrading to enhance patients satisfaction levels. This is of paramount importance as patient satisfaction has been linked to better clinical outcomes and improving patient retention and compliance.

Material and Methods

It was a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in Outpatient Department (OPD) of Fatima Memorial Hospital. After approval from ethical committee IRB No.FMH-21/03/2024 IRB-1374. The study was conducted between the time period June-December 2021. The calculated sample size was 385 by considering the prevalence of patient satisfaction at

50%. The sampling technique was non-probability purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria for the patients were adults aged 16-80 years, both sexes, ready to give consent and patients who were able to communicate in Urdu. Patients who were not able to participate were excluded. After approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the data was collected from the Outpatient Department of the hospital after taking informed verbal consent from the willing patients on a structured pretested questionnaire. The questionnaire had two sections. First section had questions related to sociodemographic profile and section II had three subsections having questions regarding services provided in the reception area, waiting area, patient doctor interaction, pharmacy services and overall level of services provided in the General OPD. The patient satisfaction was assessed separately for afore mentioned domains. The responses were captured on a likert scale from one to five. For each question, strongly agree & agree were clubbed as satisfied and similarly disagree and strongly disagree were clubbed as non-satisfied. Data was entered and analyzed using SPSS version 27. The quantitative variables were summarized as mean and standard deviation. Whereas the qualitative variables were summarized as frequency (%). Overall satisfaction for reception, waiting area, pharmacy and care provider was graded as poor (0-40%), Satisfactory (41-60%) and High (61-100%). Chi-square test was applied to find out whether there was any statistically significant effect of sociodemographic factors regarding patient satisfaction. The p value of ≤ 0.05 was defined as significant.

Results

Out of 385 patients, 212 (55.1%) were new cases. Most of the respondents 163 (42.3%) were of the age group ranging from 18-30 years and mean age of sample was 36.59 ± 14.59 years. Majority respondents 257 (66.8%) were females. Among 385 patients who visited the OPDs 289(75.1%) were married. Regarding educational status, most of the sampled OPD cases 216 (53%) were in primary -FA/FSc category and only 48 (12.5%) were illiterate. Around 306 respondents (79.5%) had monthly incomes between 20000 to 40000 rupees. Overall satisfaction with the OPD reception services was reported high by 293 (76.1%) respondents, (Fig-1). Out of 385 respondents, 311 (80.8%) were satisfied that the reception area was easy to find, 255(66.2%) agreed that there were adequate signboards, 289(75.1%) were satisfied with guidance provided by the receptionist but only

253(65.7%) were satisfied with the waiting time at the reception. (Table 1) The overall satisfaction for the waiting area was rated as high by 278(72.2%) patients. (Fig-1). It was found that while 264(68.5%) patients agreed that the waiting area was comfortable, only 229(59.4%) patients were satisfied with the waiting time in waiting area and the required time was not acceptable for 21.5% patients. Regarding cleanliness of the toilets, out of 145 patients who availed this facility, 101(69.6%) were satisfied with their functionality but only 66(45.5%) were satisfied with the cleanliness. (Table 1) Around 335 (87%) patients were highly satisfied with Health care provider services and this domain had highest percentage of exceedingly satisfied clients as compared with other three domains. (Fig-1). Most patients (75.6%) were satisfied with behavior of nurses. It was reported by 338(87.8%) that health care provider listened to their problems in an attentive manner and majority (91.7%) patients reported that doctor treated them with respect and courtesy. Similarly 82.6% patients were satisfied with consent taken before examination, however 8% expressed dissatisfaction regarding this. Regarding privacy maintenance during examination (83.1%) patients

were satisfied. (Table 2) Regarding OPD Pharmacy services only 169 patients availed them. Among them Overall satisfaction was rated as high by 125 (74%) respondents. (Fig-1). Only 109 (64.5%) were satisfied with the waiting time at the pharmacy and 37 (22%) remained neutral. According to 126 (75.1%) patients the pharmacist was courteous and helpful whereas 7.7% patients disagreed to this. Out of 385 patients surveyed regarding their general satisfaction with the OPD services it was found that satisfaction level was high for 35.6% patients, satisfactory for 50.9% patients and poor for only 13.5% patients. A vast majority 337(87.6%) strongly supported recommending the hospital to others and 88.8% were willing to re visit to seek treatment in future.

Table 1: Patients' satisfaction regarding reception and waiting area of OPD (n = 385)

Satisfaction regarding reception of OPDs	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
1. Was the reception easy to locate?	311 (80.8%)	38 (9.9%)	36 (9.3%)
2. Were there adequate signboards for guidance?	255 (66.2%)	70 (18.2%)	60 (15.6%)
3. Was the reception well organized and attractive?	282 (73.3%)	67 (17.4%)	36 (9.3%)
4. Was the receptionist courteous and helpful?	294 (76.3%)	60 (15.6%)	31 (8.05%)
5. Is waiting time for getting the OPD ok?	253 (65.7%)	61 (15.8%)	71 (18.4%)
6. Did you get proper guidance at the reception?	289 (75.1%)	52 (13.5%)	44 (11.4%)
7. Was there an efficient Queue system available?	266 (69.1%)	71 (18.4%)	48 (12.5%)
Satisfaction regarding waiting area of OPDs	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
1. Cleanliness of waiting area	284 (73.7%)	66 (17.1%)	35 (9.09%)
2. Waiting area comfortable and well ventilated	264 (68.5%)	64 (16.6%)	57 (14.8%)
3. Waiting time acceptable	229 (59.5%)	73 (19.0%)	83 (21.5%)
4. Availability of drinking water	185 (48.0%)	104 (27.0%)	96 (25%)

Table 2: Patient satisfaction related to interaction with health care provider and pharmacy services (n = 385)

Satisfaction related to health care provider	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
1. Nurse was courteous and helpful	291 (75.6%)	50 (13.0%)	44 (11.4%)
2. Doctor's office well organized and comfortable	328 (85.1%)	40 (10.4%)	17 (4.5%)
3. Listened to the your problems	338 (87.8%)	21 (5.5%)	26 (6.7%)
4. Treat the patient with respect and courtesy	353 (91.7%)	22 (5.7%)	10 (2.6%)
5. Doctor spend enough time for consultation	334 (86.8%)	37 (9.6%)	14 (3.6%)
6. Response of physician to queries	335 (87%)	31 (8.1%)	19 (4.9%)
7. Proper instructions given by the doctor for medicines	330 (85.7%)	37 (9.6%)	18 (4.7%)
8. Consent taken by the physician for physical examination	318 (82.6%)	36 (9.4%)	31 (8.0%)
9. Maintenance of privacy during examination	320 (83.1%)	35 (9.1%)	30 (7.8%)
10. Advice given for follow up visits	325 (84.4%)	35 (9.1%)	25 (6.5%)
Satisfaction related to pharmacy (n = 169)	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
1. Waiting time convenient to you	109 (64.5%)	37 (21.9%)	23 (13.6%)
2. A time-efficient on-site payment system	123 (72.8%)	28 (16.6%)	18 (10.6%)
3. Pharmacist courteous and helpful	127 (75.1%)	29 (17.2%)	13 (7.7%)
4. Medicine required available	126 (74.6%)	19 (11.2%)	24 (14.2%)

There was no statistically significant association of age (P=0.69), gender (P=0.29), education (P=0.28), marital

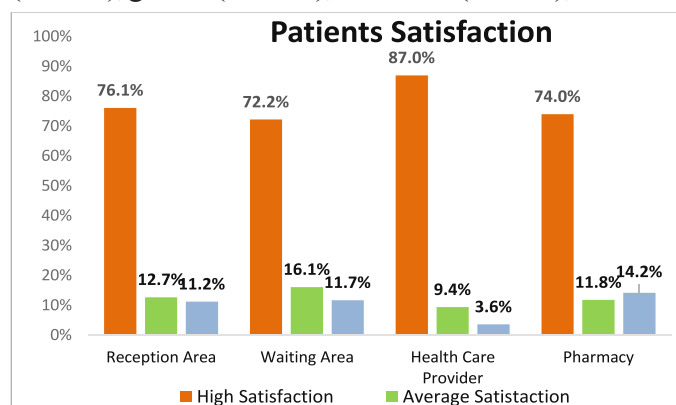


Figure 1: Overall satisfaction of patients regarding reception area, waiting area, Health care provider and pharmacy.

status (P=0.77) and monthly income (P=0.24) with the level of satisfaction in current study. (Table 3)

Discussion

Patient satisfaction is at the center of the patient-centered care and is also one of the indicators of the quality of care. The current study was conducted to determine satisfaction level of patients with OPD services of a private sector tertiary care hospital in order to identify the potential areas for improving the health care services and their delivery.

In the current study out of 385 respondents around 86.5% patients were satisfied with the overall OPD services of a private tertiary level hospital. This is in accordance with results of another study where 86.69% patients were satisfied with the overall quality of healthcare they received.⁴ However the level is higher than that reported by two studies conducted in India where overall satisfaction level reported by the patients presenting in OPD was 72.8%⁶ and 84%¹² respectively. Various studies conducted on similar topic in Pakistan have reported much lower patient satisfaction. A study found that only 31% participants reported good satisfaction in a tertiary hospital of Karachi.¹³ Contrastingly another

Table 3: Cross tabulation of various socio demographic variables of patients presenting in OPD of a private tertiary care hospital. (n = 385)

Variables	Patients' satisfaction level				Chi- square test & P-value
	Poor satisfaction	Average satisfaction	Good satisfaction	Total	
Age in years					
18-30	21 (40.4%)	85 (43.4%)	57 (41.6%)	163 (42.3%)	Chi-square=2.165 P-value=0.705
31-56	23 (44.2%)	88 (44.9%)	68 (49.6%)	179 (46.5%)	
57 and above	8(15.4%)	23 (11.7%)	12(8.8%)	43(11.2%)	
Total	52 (100%)	196 (100%)	137 (100%)	385 (100%)	
Gender					
Male	22 (42.3%)	66 (33.7%)	40 (29.2%)	128 (33.2%)	Chi-square=2.952 P-value=0.229
Female	30 (57.7%)	130 (66.3%)	97 (70.8%)	257 (66.8%)	
Total	52 (100%)	196 (100%)	137 (100%)	385 (100%)	
Marital status					
Married	37 (71.2%)	148 (75.5%)	104 (75.9%)	289 (75.1%)	Chi-square=0.489 P-value=0.779
Unmarried	15 (28.8%)	48 (24.5%)	33 (24.1%)	96 (24.9%)	
Total	52 (100%)	196 (100%)	137 (100%)	385 (100%)	
Education					
Illiterate	6 (11.5%)	26 (13.3%)	16 (11.7%)	48 (12.5%)	Chi-square=2.739 P-value=0.602
Primary – FA/FS.C	30 (57.7%)	115 (58.7%)	71 (51.8%)	216(56.1%)	
Graduation and above	16 (30.8%)	55 (28.0%)	50(36.5%)	121(31.4%)	
Total	52 (100%)	196 (100%)	137 (100%)	385 (100%)	
Family income					
20000 – 60000	46 (88.5%)	157 (80.1%)	103 (75.2%)	306 (79.5%)	Chi-square=4.17 P-value=0.124
61000 and above	6 (11.5%)	39 (19.9%)	34 (24.8%)	79(20.5%)	
Total	52 (100%)	196 (100%)	137 (100%)	385 (100%)	

study reported much higher % of satisfied clients with OPD as 97.2%.¹⁴ The difference in results may be due to a variety of factors such as different study setting, type of set up (Govt. vs Private), administrative set up, attitude of healthcare providers, ease and adequacy of service provision and differing sociodemographic characteristics of the patients presenting to the hospitals. All of the aforementioned factors can vary the satisfaction level of patients. However research has shown that apart from these major dimensions relatively minor issues may also influence satisfaction of patients. These may include the length of waiting in the out-patient department, or ease of getting a slip, adequate sitting arrangement and availability of other basic amenities like drinking water and toilets.¹⁵

The findings regarding satisfaction with reception services are in agreement with results of various studies done in Pakistan and India, where most of the patients were satisfied with registration process and other aspects of the reception area.^{6,12,16} However Other studies have reported lower satisfaction including one conducted in Rahim Yaar Khan which showed that 73% of the patients reported over-crowding at the registration counter.¹⁷ According to the second study conducted at Karachi most of the patients left OPD without even getting checkup due to frustration with set up.¹⁸ The lower satisfaction levels in OPD should be controlled by efficient administration to make patient experience hassle free and convenient. The various areas needing focus and where lapses should be prevented include: display of signboards, proper queue system at reception, staff helpfulness and comfort of sitting area.

Regarding the waiting area 73.7% patients were satisfied with its cleanliness. Moreover of those individuals who used toilets only 45.5% were satisfied with their cleanliness and around 25% respondents were not satisfied with the availability of drinking water in waiting area. These results are in accordance with a research conducted in OPD of a tertiary care hospital where 54% were not satisfied with the conditions of the toilets and 30% patients were not satisfied with the availability of drinking water facility.¹⁹ Research shows that having good basic amenities in hospitals is paramount for enhancing the quality of healthcare and improving patient satisfaction and health outcomes. The ease and convenience of patient should be ensured through clean, comfortable waiting areas, a pleasant atmosphere with thoughtfully designed interiors having greenery and natural lighting, easily available safe drinking water and properly main-

tained hygiene and sanitation facilities.

Another area highlighted by our research was that waiting time was not acceptable for 21.5% patients. This is in contrast to developed countries where most patients are satisfied with the waiting time duration at hospital.⁴ The administrative processes should be optimized with efficient appointment scheduling systems and streamlined workflows. Moreover patients should be engaged through informative materials in waiting areas. This will also have additional effect of empowering them with knowledge about their health conditions and treatment options.

A very important component of the OPD services involves interaction of patient with the health care provider. Patients entrust their health and welfare to the doctors, expecting not just technical skill but also empathy and respect. In current study 91.7 % patients reported that the health care provider treated them with respect and courtesy, 86.8% were satisfied with the time given to them during consultation and 85.7% were satisfied with the instructions given to them regarding medication. These levels are bit lower than a study conducted in Peshawar where 90% respondents were satisfied with the time given to them by consultants and 92.5% were content with the conduct of doctors.⁴ However the satisfaction levels are higher as compared to another study in Pakistan where high satisfaction with doctors' consultation was reported by 56.4% of respondents only.¹³ The difference may be due to different profile of patients shaping their expectations from healthcare providers and different emphasis on this aspect by administrations in various settings.

In this study no relationship was found between various sociodemographic variables and overall satisfaction of patients regarding OPD services. The results are supported by a study in which Patients' satisfaction was reported to be weakly correlated with patient-related characteristics.¹² Similarly other studies reported that there was no statistically significant association between demographic characteristics like age and gender with patient's satisfaction^{4,19}. However the findings were in contrast to other studies. Two studies conducted in China and Saudi Arabia reported that satisfaction level of patients was significantly related to age, gender and educational level of the patients.^{20,21}

The current study explored the satisfaction of patients with OPD services in detail however more multicenter studies involving a variety of hospitals and catering to patients with diverse background should be conducted

to shed more light on the cardinal predictors of patient satisfaction. It is also recommended that administrators and Healthcare workers should acknowledge patients as partners in their own care journey, respecting their perspectives, and involving them in decision-making processes.

Conclusion

The study revealed that majority of patients expressed high satisfaction level with various domains of OPD services, however waiting time and quality of basic amenities as a part of health services readiness were identified as areas needing further enhancement to ensure maximum patient satisfaction and resultant quality of care in these domains as well. The need for improvement in health services presents a complex task for intellectuals, policymakers, therapeutic experts and hospital administrators to create an environment where patient feels heard, valued and empowered to actively participate in their own health and well-being. This will not only improve satisfaction but also lead to better clinical outcomes in longer run.

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Authors Contribution

SH: Conceptualization of Project

AS, MA: Data Collection

SH, AS, TA: Literature Search

SH, ZP, JI: Statistical Analysis

ZP, JI: Drafting, Revision

SH, ZP: Writing of Manuscript