

## Original Research Article

# Inpatient satisfaction level survey at a tertiary care hospital

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Patient satisfaction is an important measure of quality of services in a healthcare organization. Other than the medical care issues, the satisfaction and experience involves personal relationships, attention to pain and health education, and the status of hospital environment. Patient's opinion is an important because dissatisfaction suggests opportunities for improvement of health services in the hospital. This study was done with the aim to assess the satisfaction levels in inpatients of a tertiary care hospital and to compare interdepartmental satisfaction scores in the same hospital.

**Methods:** This cross-sectional survey was done in inpatients of the department of general medicine, general surgery and obstetrics & gynaecology wards of Mahatma Gandhi Medical College & Hospital, Jaipur for two consecutive days. A total of 150 adult female patients were included in the study. Structured questionnaire was developed from previously used survey tools, and validated in present patients group, and patient satisfaction was checked.

**Results:** The demographic data of patients showed that majority of respondents were belonged to age group 20-30 years (50.7%) followed by less than 20 years (20%), more than 40 years (15.3%) and 30-40 years (12%). About 29.33% respondents were uneducated followed by primary level (25.33%), senior secondary level (24%) and graduation (21.33%). 90% respondents belonged to Hindu religion. 36.6% of the respondents were either technicians or doing a clerical job. Almost equal numbers (33.3%) were unemployed and 30% belonged to the labour class. Only 15 patients (10%) were either professionals or on managerial posts.

**Conclusions:** This study highlighted overall patient satisfaction was good regarding the quality of health care services of Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Hospital. Areas where patient satisfaction was found to be lowest were patience shown by the nursing staff while communicating with patients and hospital ambiance in terms of peacefulness, both of these are important aspects of health care and there is imperative need to address these problems effectively and urgently in order to improve quality of care.

**Keywords:** Health services, Health education, Hospital environment, Patient satisfaction

## INTRODUCTION

Patient satisfaction is an important element in care of patient and its management.<sup>1,2</sup> So assessment of patient satisfaction related to the services provided by the hospital is an important determinant to take measures in improving health care. Outcome data of such studies help in planning strategies for the patient care by the hospital.

The quality of care given by any hospital can be assessed and monitored in a number of ways.<sup>3,4</sup> Major determinant of inpatients satisfaction are the physical comfort during admission, communication skills, courtesy and respect shown to them and timely care given by nursing staff and doctors.<sup>5</sup> An important and valid way is to ask the patient themselves about the quality and level of health care given to them, as assessment and perception of health

care services provided may often differ completely from the patient's perception of the same services.<sup>6</sup>

This study was done with an objective to assess in patient satisfaction level in our hospital and to know about the shortcomings of the care given by nursing staff and doctors, where we need to improve upon. This will also serve the purpose of providing information to the administrators, if there is some scope to adopt and implement some changes in policy in order to provide effective health care services.

### Aims and objectives of study

- To assess the satisfaction levels in inpatients of a tertiary care hospital.
- To compare interdepartmental satisfaction scores in the same hospital.

## METHODS

This cross-sectional survey was done in inpatients of the department of general medicine, general surgery and obstetrics and gynaecology wards of Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Hospital, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India for two consecutive days. A total of 150 adult female patients, who gave consent for the study and who were admitted for a minimum of 3 days, at the time of discharge from the hospital, were included in the study.

Structured questionnaire was developed from previously used survey tools, and validated in our patients group, and patient satisfaction was checked in different domains related to the communication skills, care given to them, hospital environment and cleanliness and patient's overall evaluation of the hospital.<sup>7</sup> Patients demographic details was also collected. In order to avoid bias in study, the survey was done inpatients at their time of discharge, the questionnaire was distributed and collected by a housekeeping staff and not by doctors or nursing staff or medical students. Also it was done in female patients only in order to remove the gender bias.

The data was then compiled. Data collected in the study was entered into Microsoft excel sheet specifically structure for this study and the data were further analyzed using appropriate tests. Descriptive statistics was carried out by calculating the mean and standard deviation for the continuous variables, and the number and percentage for the categorical variables.

## RESULTS

The demographic data of patients showed that majority of respondents were belonged to age group 20-30 years (50.7%) followed by less than 20 years (20%), more than 40 years (15.3%) and 30-40 years (12%). About 29.33% respondents were uneducated followed by primary level (25.33%), senior secondary level (24%) and graduation

(21.33%). 90% respondents belonged to Hindu religion. 36.6% of the respondents were either technicians or doing a clerical job. Almost equal numbers (33.3%) were unemployed and 30% belonged to the labour class. Only 15 patients (10%) were either professionals or on managerial posts (Table 1).

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characters.**

| Variable                   | Number | Percentage |
|----------------------------|--------|------------|
| <b>Age</b>                 |        |            |
| Less than 20               | 33     | 22%        |
| 20 to 30                   | 76     | 50.7%      |
| 30 to 40                   | 18     | 12%        |
| More than 40               | 23     | 15.3%      |
| <b>Literacy level</b>      |        |            |
| Uneducated                 | 44     | 29.33%     |
| Primary education          | 38     | 25.33%     |
| Senior secondary education | 36     | 24%        |
| Graduate                   | 32     | 21.33%     |
| <b>Religion</b>            |        |            |
| Hindu                      | 135    | 90%        |
| Muslim                     | 10     | 6.6%       |
| Other                      | 5      | 3.33%      |
| <b>Occupation</b>          |        |            |
| Professionals/Managers     | 15     | 10%        |
| Clerical/Technical Jobs    | 55     | 36.6%      |
| Labour class               | 30     | 20%        |
| Unemployed                 | 50     | 33.33%     |

**Table 2: Overall score (out of 4).**

| Domain of care                  | Mean (SD)   |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Satisfaction with nursing care  | 3.80 (0.44) |
| Satisfaction with doctor's care | 3.97 (0.17) |
| Hospital care                   | 3.79 (0.55) |
| Hospital experience             | 3.86 (0.39) |

The satisfaction score for doctors was higher for each question than the nurses. 88% of respondents were satisfied every time with hospital cleanliness while 66.67% were found hospital ambiances peaceful every time.

About 87% of respondents were got help every time when they called the staff for immediate washroom help, while 88.5% found support of hospital staff every time to relieve pain and 1005 respondents got relief from pain. For the mean score of all domains, the respondents were asked to grade their responses to the questions according to the following score: 1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=usually and 4 = every time (Table 2).

In other words, the higher the score, the higher the satisfaction. Patients were asked about satisfaction with nursing care (Mean 3.8), satisfaction with doctors care (Mean 3.97), hospital care (Mean 3.79) and hospital experience (Mean 3.86).

The satisfaction score for doctors was highest in all faculties. It was highest in Medicine followed by Surgery and Obstetrics. Similar pattern was observed for Nurses. Score for hospital environment was highest for Medicine followed by Obstetrics and Surgery. About 86% of respondents gave the overall score of 10 out of 10, while 10.6% gave score 9 and only 3.33% gave the score 8 out of 10. Table 3 shows the responses of each question in all domains. The satisfaction score for doctors was higher for each question than the nurses. 88% of respondents were satisfied every time with hospital cleanliness while

66.67 % were found hospital ambiances peaceful every time. About 87% of respondents were got help every time when they called the staff for immediate washroom help, while 88.5% found support of hospital staff every time to relieve pain and 1005 respondents got relief from pain.

As shown in Table 4 satisfaction score for doctors was highest in all faculties. It was highest in Medicine followed by Surgery and Obstetrics. Similar pattern was observed for Nurses. Score for hospital environment was highest for Medicine followed by Obstetrics and Surgery.

**Table 3: Scoring of satisfaction to each of the questions in the four domains.**

| Variables   | Mean Score | SD   | Never n (%) | Sometimes n (%) | Usually n (%) | Always n (%) |
|---|------------|------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Rating Nurses (N=150)   |            |      |             |                 |               |              |
| Courtesy and Respect  | 3.87       | 0.33 | 0 (0)       | 0 (0)           | 20 (13.33)    | 130 (86.67)  |
| Patience  | 3.70       | 0.53 | 0 (0)       | 5 (3.33)        | 35 (23.33)    | 110 (73.33)  |
| Communication with Patient in local language                            | 3.83       | 0.43 | 0 (0)       | 3 (2)           | 20 (13.33)    | 127 (84.67)  |
| Rating Doctors (N=150)  |            |      |             |                 |               |              |
| Courtesy and Respect  | 4          | 0    | 0 (0)       | 0 (0)           | 0 (0)         | 150 (100)    |
| Patience  | 4          | 0    | 0 (0)       | 0 (0)           | 0 (0)         | 150 (100)    |
| Communication with Patient in local language                            | 3.91       | 0.28 | 0 (0)       | 0 (0)           | 13 (8.67)     | 137 (91.3)   |
| Rating Hospital environment (N=150)                                     |            |      |             |                 |               |              |
| Hospital Cleanliness  | 3.88       | 0.33 | 0 (0)       | 0 (0)           | 18 (12)       | 132 (88)     |
| Peaceful hospital ambiances   | 3.57       | 0.67 | 0 (0)       | 15 (10)         | 35 (23.33)    | 100 (66.67)  |
| Rating Hospital experience  |            |      |             |                 |               |              |
| Was call for staff help for washroom use catered to immediately? (N=61) | 3.87       | 0.34 | 0 (0)       | 0 (0)           | 8 (13.11)     | 53 (86.89)   |
| Hospital staff support to relieve pain (N=113)                          | 3.86       | 0.42 | 0 (0)       | 3 (2.65)        | 10 (8.85)     | 100 (88.5)   |
| How often did you get relief from pain? (N=113)                         | 4          | 0    | 0 (0)       | 0 (0)           | 0 (0)         | 113 (100)    |

**Table 4: Faculty wise mean satisfaction scores (Score out of 4).**

|                                | Medicine    | Surgery     | Obstetrics  | Overall mean |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Score for Nurse                | 3.81 (0.46) | 3.81 (0.42) | 3.78 (0.45) | 3.80 (0.44)  |
| Score for Doctor               | 3.99 (0.11) | 3.97 (0.16) | 3.95 (0.21) | 3.97 (0.17)  |
| Score for Hospital environment | 3.84 (0.39) | 3.60 (0.58) | 3.73 (0.61) | 3.79 (0.55)  |

**Table 5: Hospital assessment (Score out of 10).**

| Score | Number (Percent) | Mean score (SD) |
|-------|------------------|-----------------|
| 8     | 5 (3.33)         | 9.83 (0.46)     |
| 9     | 16 (10.6)        |                 |
| 10    | 129 (86)         |                 |

About 86% of respondents gave the overall score of 10 out of 10, while 10.6% gave score 9 and only 3.33% gave the score 8 out of 10.

## DISCUSSION

Regarding the demographic characters in our study, the majority of respondent belonged to age group of 20-30 years and 90% of them were Hindus. About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of them were uneducated (29.3%), this might be because of the predominantly rural catchment area of the hospital. A study conducted by Sadjadian et al on evaluating nursing care and patient satisfaction in 2004 in one of the cancer center of Iran showed that 52.3% of respondents were male, 26.6% were age group between 45-54 and 60.9%

had enough income.<sup>8</sup> Nearly similar result was found in the study conducted by Subedi D, et al at a teaching hospital at Kathmandu, where almost half 52.7% of the respondent were male, 34.23% of respondents were age group between 46 to 60 years.<sup>9</sup>

Considering the determinants of good clinical governance, clinicians have to learn to improve skills of communication alongside their clinical skills. Study by Shahzadi et al. at a Peshawar Hospital showed that majority of patients were not satisfied with the way their doctor greeted them, only 5.90% were called by their names.<sup>8</sup> The other area of concern was lack of patient involvement in their management plan, only 2.27% were explained the reason for conducting medical tests. This highlights poor communication skills and requires training of doctors in this aspect.<sup>8</sup> One related study in India reported 60% satisfaction with patient doctor communication.<sup>10,11</sup>

In this study satisfaction regarding listening to patients regarding their problem was 57%, it was similar to that recorded by Kersnik, while lower than Lerttrakarnnon, who found it to be 56.9% and 69.1% respectively.<sup>12,13</sup> In the study by Subedi D, et al at Kathmandu Hospital regarding doctor's advice, 86.4% were fairly satisfied. Study by Acharya et al 93.2% of the subjects were satisfied with the examination by the doctor, and it was simple and easy to understand in 60% of the cases.<sup>14</sup> In present study courtesy and respect shown by the doctors was found to be fairly good and 100% of the respondents found the doctors to be patient enough while treating them. There was a bit of language problem in doctors while communicating in local language.

Our study shows that the nursing staff needs to be more patient while dealing with the patient, as only 73% reported that the nursing staff behaved patiently, though they talk and behave in a respectful and courteous manner with most of them (86%). Subedi D, et al at Kathmandu Hospital study reveals that 54.1% of respondents answered that they were fairly satisfied with communication with nurse, 71.6% were often satisfied with answer of respondents questions, 68.5% mentioned that nurses often treat them in a friendly way, 49% mentioned that doctor explained about ongoing treatment and they were often satisfied with it.<sup>9</sup> In a study from the outpatient department of a private medical college hospital at Mangalore on consumer satisfaction, it was shown that 66.7% mentioned that they were fairly satisfied with respect given by other staff of the hospital, and 58.1% answered that they were occasionally satisfied with receptionists answer about their query.<sup>15</sup> One of the study conducted by Sadjadian et al, 'Patient satisfaction: a descriptive study of a breast care clinic in Iran' reported that majority of the respondents were satisfied with skill of nurses and doctor. Of 425 respondents, 87% of respondent mentioned that nurses were polite in communication and 89% said that the nurses were kind and helpful.<sup>8</sup> Improvement of the skills of doctor-patient

communication and other relevant areas would go a long way to enhance the level of satisfaction of the patients, considering the fact that most of the patients were drawn to the health facility because of their faith.<sup>16</sup>

Cleanliness promotes satisfaction among consumers in hospital and distinguishes the hospital from its competitors. In the study by Shazadi et al. at Peshawar Hospital, 20.95% were satisfied with cleanliness in hospital, in another study conducted in Peshawar it was 13%, while it was reported as 31% by Kumari and Idris.<sup>17</sup> Cleanliness is major problem in government hospitals in Pakistan and requires proper measures to tackle this problem.<sup>11,18,19</sup> Study conducted by Jawahar SK, at a super specialty hospital in India, 50% of the patients were satisfied with regards to the cleanliness of the hospital.<sup>20</sup> In present study most of the respondents were satisfied with the cleanliness observed in the hospital (88%) but only 66% observed the hospital ambiance peaceful.

The overall satisfaction with the hospital services in our study was found to be good (90%) which matches with the study by Shahzadi et al. Peshawar Hospital, which showed that overall satisfaction with treatment was 90% which is similar to 89.1% as reported by Qadri.<sup>17</sup> The rating for the overall services of the King Abdulaziz University of Health Sciences, Saudi Arabia was high (94%) with 71.8% of the respondents rating it as excellent and almost 99% saying they would recommend it to others and would use it again even if they had the resources to seek treatment anywhere else inside or outside the country.

Regarding the satisfaction score in different departments, in the study by Salih A et al, at a hospital of Saudi Arabia, the obstetrics service scored the highest followed by medicine. Surgical services scored the lowest in all three domains, but reached significant level for center score only. The high score for obstetrics may simply be a reflection of the higher scores given by females in general that we observed. In present study satisfaction score for doctors was highest in medicine, followed by surgery and obstetrics, similar pattern was observed for nurses. Score for hospital environment was highest for medicine followed by obstetrics and surgery.

## CONCLUSION

Patient satisfaction is valid indicator for measurement of service quality. Patient's opinions are important because dissatisfaction suggests opportunities for improvement of health services in the hospital.

This study highlighted overall patient satisfaction was good regarding the quality of health care services of Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Hospital. The important and major shortcomings observed was the lack of information given to the patient related to their medicine intake. Major improvement is needed for patient education related to drugs used. Patients need to



be told about the dose schedule, and most important is about any side effects expected to be informed immediately. Hospital management might put some policies for improving communication skills of the nursing staff focusing on this aspect.

Areas where patient satisfaction was found to be lowest were patience shown by the nursing staff while communicating with patients and hospital ambiance in terms of peacefulness, both of these are important aspects of health care and there is imperative need to address these problems effectively and urgently in order to improve quality of care.

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