

# Satisfaction of Patients after Hospital Stay - A Study from Teaching Hospital of Pakistan

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** To assess the satisfaction level of patients and to see whether demographic variables have any effect on it

**Methods:** This cross-sectional survey was conducted at department of Medicine, Div. Head Quarters Teaching Hospital, Mirpur. A total of 86 patients being discharged from the department were included in the study. They were asked to fill a self-administered questionnaire which included their remarks regarding their satisfaction level in general and towards doctors, nurses and other healthcare staff. All the data were analyzed by using SPSS version 20.

**Results:** The mean age of participants was found to be  $45.73 \pm 2.60$  years. Among 86 participants, 49 were male (57%) and 37 were females (43%). The mean length of stay was  $95.941 \pm 57.31$  years. Overall 94.1% of patients were satisfied from ward. Also a high percentage of percentages of patients (88.3% and 94.1%) were satisfied from attitude of doctors and their expertise. However 75.5% were satisfied from attitude of nurses and remaining showed their concerns towards it. Satisfaction level was stratified for age, gender and length of hospital stay but it was found not significant for any of these variables ( $p$  value  $>0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** Although the satisfaction level of patients being discharged from our department was high but still we need to do some measures to teach our nurses, ancillary staff as well as our patients.

**Keywords:** Satisfaction, hospital stay, attitude

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## INTRODUCTION

The quality of healthcare system is very important and is the goal of every institution and health system. In order to assess the quality of a healthcare system, World Health Organization had proposed four dimensions to be assessed including patient's satisfaction, regulatory inspection, third party assessment and statistical indicators<sup>1</sup>. Patient's satisfaction is an important measure which needs a special attention. It is an important tool to predict whether patients will follow the treatment plan of the physicians and also whether they will come for follow up visits or not<sup>2,3,4</sup>. Also assessing the status of patients regarding their feedback may be used for improvement of healthcare delivery as well as behavior and expertise of whole of the hospital staff<sup>5</sup>.

Patient's satisfaction may be assessed by qualitative as well as quantitative studies. However survey format of studies for this purpose is the most commonly used tool. Patient's dissatisfaction may be due to many reasons including attitude of doctors and nurses, expertise of the staff, cleanliness, general

environment and care provided to the patients<sup>6,7</sup>. In resource constraints countries like Pakistan, many other factors related to the management and government may also lead to patient's dissatisfaction. Naz A and colleagues have documented that 93% of the patients presenting in hospital of Swat, Pakistan were unsatisfied because of general cleanliness, attitude of the staff and unavailability of the free medication<sup>8</sup>. Therefore we planned this study to assess the satisfaction level of our patients being discharged from our Medicine department and also to assess the demographic factors which may be a cause.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional survey was conducted at department of Medicine, Div. Head Quarters Teaching Hospital, Mirpur. After consent from Ethical board of the hospital, this study was planned. A total of 86 patients, being discharged for the Medicine department of the hospital were included in the study. They were asked to fill a self-designed questionnaire. The proforma asked about age, gender, length of hospital stay, and satisfaction level. Regarding their satisfaction, 5 questions were asked: are you satisfied from hospital; are you satisfied from attitude of doctors; are you satisfied from attitude of nurses; are you satisfied from attitude of healthcare workers;

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and are you satisfied from overall environment of ward. For all of these 5 questions, patients were supposed to choose one of the options: Satisfied, not satisfied and no comments. A verbal consent for inclusion in the study was sought from all of the participants. The proforma was in English language and those patients not understanding the English were helped by the researchers to fill in the questionnaire. Final statistical analysis was done by SPSS version 20. Frequency and percentages were calculated for quantitative variables and mean values were calculated for qualitative variables. Stratification of satisfaction of patients was done for age groups, gender and hospital stay, taking P-value <0.05 as significant.

Table 1: Overall response of patients in our study

	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Don't Know
Overall satisfaction from care provided to you	81 (94.1%)	5 (5.9%)	-
Attitude of doctors	76 (88.3%)	9 (10.4%)	1 (1.1%)
Expertise of doctors	81 (94.1%)	5 (5.8%)	-
Attitude of nurses	65 (75.5%)	20 (23.2%)	1 (1.1%)
Attitude of other workers	72 (83.7%)	13 (15.1%)	1 (1.1%)
Environment of ward	80 (93%)	6(7%)	-

Table 2: Stratification of patients' satisfaction response for other variables

	Satisfied	Not satisfied	P-Value
Age (years)			
<40	24	1	0.645
>40	57	4	
Gender			
Male	55	2	0.2
Female	26	3	
Length of stay			
<48 hours	16	2	0.280
>48 hours	65	3	

## DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to assess the satisfaction level of patients being discharged from our department. We found that 94.1% of the patients being discharged were overall satisfied from the care they had received. Almost similar results were found by Sultana A et al who conducted a recent survey at a teaching hospital of Pakistan and they found the overall satisfaction rate of 82.53%<sup>9</sup>. Different studies conducted in our country over the topic have revealed variable results<sup>10,11,12,13</sup>. This difference may be due to the level of education of patients and the difference in overall environment of teaching hospitals and rural hospitals.

Gavran et al found that long waiting time for patients for check up was significantly associated with the satisfaction level of the patients<sup>14</sup>. Wetmore et al found that the settings where ancillary staff was giving more attention towards the patients, patients were more satisfied with doctors. Also they have emphasized that patients with longer stay in hospital were more satisfied<sup>15</sup>. In this study we have found that the variables including age, hospital stay and

## RESULTS

The mean age of patients was calculated as 45.732±12.60 years. Among 86 participants, 49 were male and 37 were females. The mean length of stay was 95.941±57.31 years. Most of the patients were satisfied overall and with the expertise of doctors. However, some showed their concern towards nurses and other healthcare workers. All data is summarized in table 1.

Also stratification of satisfaction response of participants for age, gender and length of stay in hospital was done but was not found significant for any of these (table 2).

gender difference are not independent variables for patient's satisfaction.

In authors' opinion, a lot of changes are needed in our setting to improve patient's satisfaction. Sommers et al introduced a system of Moment-of-Truth (MOT) patient satisfaction system in their institute and they had found significant improvement in patient satisfaction level when they were engaged actively in the planning and management of their own treatment<sup>4</sup>. This was a very nice idea and particularly needs to be implemented in our setup, where most of the patients are illiterate and are not aware of their rights even. Tavor et al in their systematic review found that training of the staff regarding educating their patients upon arrival in the hospital and improved communication skills may improve the satisfaction level of the patients<sup>16</sup>.

Therefore on the basis of this study, we recommend that we must educate our staff nurses, doctors and other ancillary staff regarding patient care and their rights. Also we must plan in our setup a system, so that every patient gets educated about his/her disease and treatment plan.

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