CLIENTS' SATISFACTION TOWARDS HEALTH CARE SERVICES AT OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT, PINLON HOSPITAL, YANGON, MYANMAR

Aung Htet Win[1,2,*] and Alessio Panza[1]

[1]College of Public Health Sciences, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10330, Thailand
[2]Pinlon Hospital, Yangon, Myanmar

ABSTRACT: A cross sectional study of 320 clients' satisfaction towards health care service at outpatient department of Pinlon Hospital, Yangon, Myanmar was undertaken to identify an association between independent variables (clients' socio-demographic characteristics, their perception towards the quality of OPD health care service, their accessibility to the service, type of client) and a dependent variable (clients' satisfaction). Data were collected by self-administered questionnaire. Descriptive statistics for general description and chi-square test of the association were used. The study revealed that 79.7% of OPD respondents were 'high satisfied' with the services. The clients (about 70%) 'Strongly agree' and 'agree' that the clinic is easy accessible for distance. Mainly less favorable statements were about "getting appointment for consultation" (54.7% disagree or not sure on goodness of those services). 67.2% were high perception for goodness of facilities and structure, 52.0% of respondents were high perception for the goodness of doctors and medical staff and 63.4% of respondents were high perception for goodness of other staff. The factors significantly related to the satisfaction were family income, number of OPD visits, perception about quality of OPD health care services and accessibility to the health care services ($P<0.05$).

Keywords: outpatient department, satisfaction, perception, accessibility

INTRODUCTION: Health care industries throughout the world are struggling with the challenges of setting up economic ways and means of satisfying the human wants for health care services. The hospital guarantees its quality of service to satisfy or to exceed the expectations and requirements of its external (patients) and internal (employees) customers[1]. Nowadays, there are numerous surveys that show that patients generally value medical results quality and accessibility to healthcare as the most important aspects on healthcare services. Health care facilities are established to provide satisfactory and quality health services to consumer[2]. Health care facility performance can be best assessed by measuring the level of patient's satisfaction.

A completely satisfied patient believes that the organization has potential in understanding patient needs and demands related to health care. A lot of stress has been made on investment in health, patient care and patient's right to delivery of quality health care leading to patient satisfaction[3]. Nowadays, private hospitals contribute as important part of healthcare services in all over the world. Client satisfaction is really a vital indicator of quality of medical care service. Moreover, it is an important outcome measure which can reflect strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of the healthcare system. Value in turn results in satisfaction of the clients. This feedback mechanism can be used systematically to choose alternative methods of organization or improving the services. So that implementation from the results of client's satisfaction can give

* To whom correspondence should be addressed.
E-mail: drahwin@gmail.com.

better healthcare outcome for our people. Moreover, it can turn the people health seeking behaviour indirectly into positive way, e.g. satisfied patients are more likely to listen to and follow health care advice from health professionals, adhere to treatment regimens, use referrals consume fewer resources and remain in a coordinated system of care.

This study aimed to evaluate clients' satisfaction at the outpatient department of Pinlon Hospital in Yangon, Myanmar because satisfaction is now an important outcome for health services and then formed a key criterion for the quality of health care services.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: This study was a cross-sectional descriptive study of clients' satisfaction towards OPD service and an analytical study of association between independent variables (clients' socio-demographic characteristics, their perception towards the quality of OPD health care service, their accessibility to the service, type of client) and a dependent variable (clients' satisfaction). It was undertaken at Pinlon Hospital, one of the largest private hospitals in Yangon, Myanmar. Study populations were all clients who exit all the specialties of the Pinlon outpatient department who were male or female patients, pregnant women and male or female caretakers of the children below 15 years and utilized OPD service at Pinlon Hospital from Monday to Sunday during February 1st, 2009 to February 28th, 2010. Age for the respondents was 15 years and above (both males and females) because respondents at this age were mature enough to answer questions independently. Patients with severe symptoms and non-self sufficient elderly people, unwilling customers who do not wish to participate in the study, returning outpatients who have already answered the questionnaire during the study period were excluded. Ultimately, the study populations included 320 clients.

Patient's satisfaction was measured by structured self-administered questionnaires. This questionnaire was based on PSQ-18 (D.Hays 1994)[4] With addition of other questions from (Ichwansyah 2001).[5] The original PSQ-18 was developed for research by Rand as a service to its professional staff.

Collected data of each patient included general information about respondents like age, sex, marital status, education, occupation, monthly family income, number of OPD visits, type of client, clients' perception about quality of OPD health care services, accessibility to the health care services, and clients' satisfaction to the services.

Scoring of perceptions, accessibility, clients' satisfaction were in accordance with 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The level of perception on the group item could be ranked using some appropriate cut-off points. Low level score would mean less favourable and high mean more favourable. Obtain scores were computed by summed up all individual recoded score. The median used as a cut point because data were not normally distributed.

Data were analyzed using SPSS software, version 16. Descriptive statistics was used for determining mean, median, mode, maximum, minimum and standard deviation for variables under study. To find the relationship between the dependent and independent variables according to the objectives already listed chi-square test was used.

RESULTS: In this study, highest proportions (53.2%) of respondents were from 21-40 yrs. Since the age distribution was not normal, having more frequencies in younger ages, median was used to measure central tendency of age and it was 39. Female (57.2%) were a little greater than the number of male respondents. More than two-third of the respondents was married (74.4%). Most of the respondents (59.4%) had the highest level of education (graduate and above). Regarding occupation about 37% of the respondents were unemployed (dependents, students, others) another 37% self-employed. (71.5%) of the respondents were more than one time of OPD visits. As far as family income, the majority (45.9%) had between 300,000-500,000 kyats (300-500 USD).

In the study, 67.2% were high perception for goodness of facilities and structure, 52.0% of respondents were high perception for the goodness of doctors and medical staff and 63.4% of respondents were high perception for goodness of other staff.

Table 1: Clients' overall perception at the OPD

Different type of perception	Frequency	Percent
Goodness of facilities and		
Low (<12.00)	105	32.8
High (≥12.00)	215	67.2
Goodness of doctor and medical staff		
Low (<35.00)	154	48.0
High (≥35.00)	166	52.0
Goodness of other staff		
Low (<27.00)	117	36.6
High (≥27.00)	203	63.4

During the computation of data analysis, it was found that 79.7% of the respondents were high satisfied to the services and 54.1% of the respondents were high satisfied to the accessibility of the services.

Table 2: Clients' overall satisfaction and accessibility at the OPD

Different type of perception	Frequency	Percent
Clients satisfaction		
Low (<16)	65	20.3
High (≥16.00)	255	79.7
Accessibility		
Low (<48)	147	45.9
High (≥48.00)	173	54.1

In socio-demographic factors the association was just of family income and number of OPD visits. The other variables had no association with satisfaction.

The study found that (87.4%) of clients with high level of perception of the goodness of facilities had high satisfaction. Among clients with low level of perception of the goodness of facilities 63.8% had high satisfaction. Overall the higher the perception of the goodness of facilities the higher the clients satisfaction statistically and this was significant at p value=0.000. About (91.0%) of clients with high level of perception of the goodness of doctors had high satisfaction. Among clients with low level of perception of the goodness of doctors (67.5%) had high satisfaction. Overall the higher the perception of the goodness of doctors the higher the clients satisfaction and this was statistically significant at p value=0.000. Similar statistically significant association was shown in table 3 for the relationship between the goodness of other staff and clients satisfaction.

Table 3: Association of perception towards health care services and clients' satisfaction to health care services of OPD respondents

Perception	Clients' satisfaction level						Chi Square	P value
	Low (<16.00)		High (≥16.00)		Total			
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Goodness of facilities and structure							24.341	**0.000** *
Low	38	36.2	67	63.8	105	100		
High	27	12.6	188	87.4	215	100		
Goodness of doctor and medical staff								
Low	50	32.5	104	67.5	154	100	27.097	**0.000**
High	15	9.0	151	91.0	166	100		*
Goodness of other staff								
Low	46	39.3	71	60.7	117	100	41.149	**0.000**
High	19	9.4	184	90.6	203	100		*

Table 4: Association of accessibility to the healthcare services and clients' satisfaction to health care services of OPD respondents

	Clients' satisfaction level						Chi Square	P value
	Low (<16.00)		High (≥16.00)		Total			
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Accessibility								
Low	52	35.4	95	64.6	147	100	38.108	**0.000***
High	13	7.5	160	92.5	173	100		

From the result, it was found that high level of accessibility 92.5% had high level of satisfaction while among those with low level of accessibility 64.6% had high level of satisfaction. This difference was statistically significant at p value = 0.000.

DISCUSSION: From this study, 79.7% of the respondents attending OPD were 'high satisfied' with the services measured as: 'received health care services', 'medical care available whenever needed', 'good medical care' and 'doctors skills'. A similar study of patient satisfaction with health care services at a local private hospital was conducted in Bangladesh which showed that 73% of the respondents were satisfied [6]. In the another study on patient satisfaction at OPD in a super specialty hospital in India, out of 200 patients surveyed, 90% of patients were satisfied with the service offered in the hospital [7]. It can be seen from these data that patient satisfaction varies in different health facilities and circumstances. This variation may be due to difference in quality of service provided or difference in expectations of the clients. Difference in expectations was supported by results in Thailand [8] and Pakistan [9] OPD in public hospitals were the satisfaction was 53 % and 54 % respectively. It was generally recognized that OPD clients have higher expectations from services in private than public hospitals.

In terms of general characteristics of the study population, there was no association between each variable of clients' age, gender, marital status, education, occupation and the level of satisfaction

But in terms of family income, there was a statistically significant association (p value=0.006) between the family monthly income and the degree of satisfaction. There was regular progressive satisfaction in every income group from 63.6% in

clients with the lowest income (<100,000 kyats approximately 100 USD) to 91.3% in clients with the highest income (> 500,000 kyats approximately 500 USD). The high income group might be able to pay more to get more and better services which would reflect on their levels of satisfaction. This result was similar with a study on patients' satisfaction at Public OPD in Indonesia[5].

Regarding the numbers of OPD visits of the respondents there was highly statistically significant association with satisfaction (p value 0.000). There was regular progressive satisfaction with the increased number of visits, from 62.6% in clients at the first visit to 87.9% in clients with three or more visits. It was likely that past experience of using the OPD services caused clients with history of more visits to be more familiar with doctors and the services provided and that frequent visitor clients are more confident than first visitors about the good quality of the doctors and the services.

In this study, the relationship between clients' satisfaction and socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents only showed significant association with the monthly family income and number of OPD visit. Similarly the study OPD patients' satisfaction at a Public hospital in Indonesia [5] showed that gender, age , marital status had no significant association with satisfaction.

Perception was assessed in terms of quality of infrastructure, quality of OPD services doctors and medical staff, quality of other OPD services staff. The perceptions on the services of OPD were generally favorable with few items needing improvements. In terms of clients' perception of quality of infrastructure and quality of doctors and medical staffs were generally favorable. The quality of other OPD services staff included: pharmacists, registration staff, and laboratory and radiology staff. In the laboratory and radiological services, more than half of the respondents agreed that lab staffs were kind and efficient compared with two third agreements for the X- ray staffs.

All items for perception were significantly associated with satisfaction with the higher level of perception, associated with the higher level of the satisfaction. There was a similar with a study conducted by quality of service and customer satisfaction at the Medical OPD in Bamrasnaradura institute in Thailand[10].

In terms of accessibility, main factors were physical accessibility, waiting time, economic accessibility and received preliminary information about hospital. Of all factors the least accessible were economic accessibility and physical accessibility. This study found highly significant association between accessibility and the level of satisfaction. Several studies confirmed the association between accessibility level and the satisfaction level. One of the study towards MCH services satisfaction among mothers attending the Maternal and Child Health Training Institute in Dhaka, Bangladesh [11] revealed that good accessibility was related to high satisfaction while poor accessibility was related to low satisfaction.

The suggestions and comments from the clients were almost all expressed to reduce the cost of services. Further suggestions for improvement were long waiting time for booking and registration section, instruction sign boards, hospitality of reception staff entertainment in waiting areas and toilets cleanliness. The most satisfying OPD aspects were medical counter, management, medical doctors' relationship.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The hospital should encourage the training programs for the young health providers, provide the continuing education for the experienced health provider to keep up work updated knowledge and technology, and conduct

some workshops to improve their professionalism in customer care. The hospital should improve the quality of infrastructure and accessibility such as edutainment in waiting area, placing sign boards to direct the patients to the different stations of the OPD patients flow, better cleaning and maintenance of toilets, separate waiting room for children. Future studies should include other OPD of the different Hospital (private or public hospital) in order to compare the differences in services delivery imparted by the identical and different institutions. Another effective way of knowing the level of patient satisfaction may be community based survey. The results will have less bias and will provide wide spread opinion of the community regarding the quality of care and hospital functioning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: The authors acknowledge Dr. Piyalamporn Havanont and Dr. Zaw Tun, Managing Director of Pinlon Hospital.

REFERENCES

1. Radharamanan, R. and L. P. Godoy 1996. Quality function deployment as applied to a health care system. Computers & Industrial Engineering 31(1-2): 443-446.

2. Arne Björnberg, P. D. a. M. U., M.A. 2008. Euro Health Consumer Index 2008 Report. Health Consumer Powerhouse AB, 2008. ISBN 978-91-9768 74-5-4.

3. Ny Net , S. S., Jiraporn Chompikul 2007. Patient Satisfaction with Health Services at the Out-Patient Department Clinic of Wangmamyen Community Hospital, Sakeao Province, Thailand. Journal of Public Health and Development 5(2): 33-42.

4. D.Hays, G. N. M. a. R. 1994. Patient satisfaction questionnaire Short-Form (PSQ-18). Santa Monica: RAND.

5. Ichwansyah, F. 2001. Patients' satisfaction to health care services at the outpatient department of Dr.Zainoel Abidn Hospital Banda Aceh, Indonesia. Master's thesis, Faculty of Public Health, Mahidol University.

6. Syed Saad Andaleeb, N. S. a. S. K. 2007. Patient satisfaction with health services in Bangladesh. Health Policy and Planning, 22(4):263-273. London: Oxford University Press.

7. Jawahar, D. S. K. 2007. A study of out patient satisfaction at a super specialty hospital in India. Internet Journal of Medical 2(2):13-7.

8. Pasaribu, S. I. 1996. Consumer satisfaction at BMA Health Center 3, Nakhon Pathom. Master's thesis, Faculty of Graduate Studies. Mahidol University.

9. Javed, A. 2005. Patient satisfaction towards outpatient department services in parkistan institute of medical sciences, Islamabad. Master's thesis, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Mahidol University.

10. Boonjun, M. P. 2002. Quality of service and customer satisfaction towards health care services at the medical outpatient department (OPD Med), Bamrasnaradura institute. Master's thesis, College of Public Health, Chulalongkorn University.

11. Asma Hasan, J. C., Shafi Ullah Bhuiyan 2007. Patient satisfaction towards MCH services among mothers attending the maternal and child health training institute in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Master's thesis, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Mahidol University.