

ARTICLE AFTER Grammar corrections: -

Assessment of Patient Satisfaction in IPD Settings of AVBRH and Designing Strategies for providing Patient-Centric Care.

Abstract:

Background: Health industry is changing and growing at a very rapid phase. The patient is the most important stakeholder in healthcare now. The Healthcare industry is a service industry where patient satisfaction is of paramount importance for the success of any organization. Healthcare is becoming more and more customer-centric. Patient satisfaction encompasses patients' expectations, perceptions, and overall experience of healthcare services. Patient feedback helps a lot in improving services to patient satisfaction. This study aims to assess the satisfaction level and causes of dissatisfaction in AVBR Hospital and take steps to provide patient-centric healthcare.

Methodology: This will be a descriptive cross-sectional study. Patient satisfaction survey questionnaires will be administered and personal interviews will be conducted with 50 randomly selected patients admitted to AVBRH. The qualitative and quantitative data will be analyzed using appropriate statistical tools.

Results: Key reflections are expected about patient satisfaction level regarding healthcare services at AVBRH which can guide frame policies for patient-centric care.

Conclusion: Patient perception and feedback should be taken into account for formulating quality improvement strategic decisions. Patients as the end-user of service can judge the organizational and environmental dimension, empathetic work culture if not clinical aspect. **Keywords:** Hospital, Healthcare, Patient satisfaction survey, Feedback, Patient-Centric Care, Quality management, Designing Strategies.

Introduction:

The health industry is changing and growing at a very rapid phase. The patient is the most important stakeholder in healthcare now. The Healthcare industry is a service industry where patient are customers and customer satisfaction are of paramount importance for the success of any organization. Healthcare is becoming more and more customer-centric (patient-centric)(1). Now the patient is better informed and demands the best quality services. Patient-centered -care emphasizes customized care that is respectful and responsive to individual patient preferences and needs and which ensures patient participation in clinical decisions(1). Therefore, patient feedback ensures good quality healthcare that resonates with patient need. Patient satisfaction must be the ultimate goal of an organization.

Increased competition in the healthcare industry causes healthcare providers to enhance their quality of service, upgrade their technology and improve patient experience in healthcare(2). Improving patient satisfaction in healthcare surely gain patient loyalty, help in creating a positive patient experience, and maintains a good reputation and goodwill.

Although patient perception and expectation from healthcare can be subjective and can vary from time to time. Still, it can be used to access the quality and efficiency of health care. As it reflects the customer and provider gap. It helps to identify the strength and weaknesses of different services provided. To enhance the quality of care and improve patient satisfaction. (3) It is the measure of administrative and managerial efficiency along with giving a fair idea about clinical practice followed. It may also reflect coordination among various clinical, non-clinical,

administrative, and support services in a healthcare setting. Patient satisfaction surveys can be used as a tool for quality management in Healthcare.

Aim:

To access patient satisfaction with the service provided in the hospital and inpatient ward in AVBRH.

Objectives:

- To identify problems in the inpatient ward causing dissatisfaction to patients. Provide suggestions to overcome the problems and improve patient satisfaction. For quality assessment in IPD ward.
- To understand the strength and weaknesses of the hospital. Patient satisfaction will be accessed in each service area like registration, billing, physicians, nursing, dietary, housekeeping, pathology, radiology, etc.

Methodology:

Descriptive Cross-sectional study conducted in two phases: first phase: patient satisfaction survey questionnaire. second phase: patient interview. Random sampling will be used as a sampling technique.

The patient satisfaction survey questionnaire can be based on registration and admission process, billing nursing, quality of medical care, accommodation, dietary services, housekeeping, and overall hospital atmosphere. A patient will be asked a survey questioner and interviewed while they are still hospitalized to reduce recall bias. It is also a cost-effective and quick method. As the setting of research is a rural hospital most patients are uneducated telephone follow-up interviews and mailing and receiving of questionnaires are not feasible.

Face-to-face interviews with a patient about their experience in the IPD ward can provide rich qualitative data. In the interview, open-ended questions will be asked to patients related to their stay in the In-patient ward. A patient will be encouraged to express their opinions and views freely and fairly. Before the survey and interview patients will be explained the purpose of the survey and verbal consent will be obtained from the patient. The questionnaire shall be read to a patient in simple language they can understand and their response shall be noted. Patient confidentiality shall be maintained(2). Sufficient time shall be given to each face-to-face interview so that the patient's point of view regarding hospitalization is noted. A sample of 50 patients was selected using systemic random sampling. By all means, patient wellbeing and comfort shall be maintained and considered during the survey.

Study design: Descriptive cross-sectional study.

Sample collection: Random sampling technique.

Sample size: 50

Duration of study: 30 days

Place of study: Acharya Vinoba Bhave Rural Hospital (AVBRH)

Participants: Patient admitted in Inpatient ward of AVBRH.

Inclusion criteria: Patient admitted to IPD ward for at least two days. Patient giving consent for survey and interview. Patient fit and comfortable to participate in survey and interview.

Exclusion criteria: Patient admitted to the emergency ward. Patient not giving consent. Patient critically ill.

Bias: To reduce recall bias survey shall be conducted while the patient is still admitted to the In-patient ward. Patients with severe pain, critically ill with life-threatening complications, chronic

diseases and prolong hospitalization harm patient satisfaction. Therefore, patients in the emergency ward or other patients critically ill are excluded from the survey (4).

Background of the study: AVBRH Acharya Vinoba Bhave Rural Hospital is a 1525 bedded multi-specialty teaching hospital in Sawangi Wardha which is attached to deemed university Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Science (DMIMS). Its motto is “cure with care” and it is certainly living up the same with its state of art facilities and highly qualified and dedicated workforce. AVBRH has 25 years of experience in the healthcare sector. It provides much-needed healthcare facilities to a rural area of Wardha. AVBRH is impaneled with Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana (MJPJAY) launched by the government of Maharashtra providing free quality critical care for low-income families.

Expected outcome/ Results: Survey and a face-to-face interview will provide data to access the level of patient satisfaction and identify the problem and provide suggestions for rectification. It helps to enhance positive and patient-centric care.

Discussion:

During the past few decades, the hospital care system has shifted from a provider-based system to a patient (receiver)based system(3). Patient expectation has changed greatly in recent year and to keep up with their expectation and earn customer loyalty organization uses various strategies (2). Quality management and improvement is a continuous process. Timely patient feedback gives direction to the management to improve patient experience in healthcare and to gain a competitive advantage.

The health industry in the recent decade has changed to a great extend with many corporate hospitals coming up, increased competition, and technological advances.

Patient now is more aware and well informed; therefore, their expectation has increased(5). Along with treatment, the patient wants quality services and a good experience which has changed the healthcare scenario completely. Patients now can choose the healthcare which suits their needs and budget causing increased competition among healthcare organizations.

The reason for choosing particular healthcare by a patient can be a distance of healthcare, recommendation, and referral, low cost, health schemes, insurance policy, hospital facility, amenities, specialization, and technology, or even particular physicians' preferences(3). Strategies to gain a new customer and retain old customers are made keeping patient preference in view.

Patients expectations from a healthcare facility are timely and adequate treatment along with empathy and emotional support, respect of privacy and consent, proper information regarding treatment and procedure, transparency in billing and cost, better communication between patient and staff, physical comfort and amenities, updated technology and equipment, sanitation and clean safe environment(6).

Patient satisfaction is the outcome of perceived needs of a patient, patient expectations, and actual patient experiences during hospitalization therefore it is a relative phenomenon(7). While Patient experience is the mix of both subjective and objective experiences of the patient during hospitalization and treatment. It can vary greatly from patient to patient. Still, it can highlight the weakness in the management of healthcare and allow rectification. Satisfied patients not only comply with treatment and appointments but also recommend them to others. Word-of-mouth Marketing helps to retain customers, attract new customers, and also establish goodwill.

Generally, the physician's domain gains the highest satisfaction score, nursing and pathology second(3). A physician's interpersonal skills and good communication with patients positively affect patient well-being. When physicians gave sufficient time to resolve patient quarries and

provide information, patient anxiety is greatly reduced and helps in creating a positive image of an organization. Well-informed and educated patients are more likely to adhere to treatment and follow-ups(3).

Secondly, Nursing plays a very important role in patient satisfaction as they are involved in every aspect of patient care. Compassion, good communication, prompt answering the call, and attention provided by nurse goes a long way in patient satisfaction, good clinical outcome, and creating a positive image of the hospital(8).

The main domain for dissatisfaction is registration billing, dietary, and housekeeping departments. Long waiting time, high hospital charges, lack of recovery, lack of communication and information about treatment, procedure and lack of sanitation, rude and unsympathetic behavior of staff are some of the causes of dissatisfaction. Even navigation is a big hospital can be frustrating for an uneducated, elderly, or new patient. There must be a proper flow between various services in healthcare so the patient can easily navigate their way and patient time is not wasted.

In recent years patients have had an active part in their healthcare whereas earlier patients wanted to be just directed by their physicians. Therefore, communication and interaction with staff and physicians now have become an important part of patient satisfaction. Interpersonal skill and behavior of clinical, non-clinical, administrative, clerical, support, and even housekeeping staff has a direct impact on patient satisfaction. Warm, polite, empathetic, and compassionate staff help to ease patients and their relative anxiety and create trust and a positive outlook towards health care.

A patient has an altogether different outlook on the hospital and services provided, they make a judgment based on convience, amenities, physical appearance, timely appointment, cost, and courteous staff. As the user of the service, they have first-hand experience to judge it. Also, as customers, they have the right to demand service that corresponds to their needs and perception.

Importance of patient satisfaction:

1. Patient satisfaction surveys performed regularly update the management with changing expectations and needs of the patient, hence gaining competitive advantage.
2. It creates constructive competition among organizations resulting in quality improvement.
3. Help in patient retention and gaining patient loyalty.
4. Increase organizational productivity and profitability.
5. Better clinical outcome and prevention of malpractice.
6. Compliant with various accreditation regulating agencies like NABH, NABL, JCI, ISO, etc as these are based on standard and quality of service provided.
7. Goodwill, positive image, and reputation of the organization.
8. Higher professional satisfaction and employee retention. Boost the morale of employees.
9. Good word of mouth marketing. Satisfied patient recommends healthcare to others also.
10. Creating a work culture that reflects quality, compassion, and empathy(5).

Scope or benefit: A patient satisfaction survey has proven to be a quick, easy, and cost-effective tool to access quality management or its efficiency. It also reduces bias. A patient satisfaction survey is widely used to access the quality of care provided. Firstly, as the service user, they are the best judge to access aspects of care like accommodation, dietary, billing, and registration time have taken or interaction with a health care provider. Secondly, healthcare has now become

a service-oriented industry so feedback from patients is valuable for the success of the organization (4).

Patient needs and satisfaction fulfillment not only earn a good name in the market but also gain customer loyalty. And as a service user-patient have to right to have a part in decision making and factors affecting their needs. The survey is to access the patient's needs and expectations, give the service user a voice.

It cannot be used to judge clinical and technical quality but it represents humanitarian and empathetic care provided. The increasing competition in the healthcare industry causes the organization to get excellent patient feedback ratings. It also highlights the importance of the interpersonal, social, ethical, and humanitarian aspects of service(9). Several related articles and studies were reviewed (10-21).

Limitation: Inpatient experience can be difficult to access as it can be very subjective. There can be responder bias. Patients with poor health status or recovery can find inpatient care highly dissatisfactory. To eliminate responder biases study, exclude critically ill patients and patients with special needs and care from the survey (4).

The prospective of Quality of care can be different for the healthcare provider and that of patients. This study only considers patients' experience during the inpatient ward and patients' perception of the care provided. Although patient satisfaction is an important tool for quality management it cannot be used to measure clinical quality. The study focuses on the patient's point of view and does not include healthcare provider, structural, and end health outcomes. (22-23)

Conclusion: Many times a gap between patient expectation and patient experience causes dissatisfaction, timely patient satisfaction survey helps to bridge the gap between patient expectation and that of service provider and management. Patient feedback can act as a driving force for improving organizational efficiency and work culture. It helps to strengthen the interdisciplinary coordination and teamwork where administrative, clinical and other support services work in unison to provide patient-centric services. It also helps to identify the strength and weaknesses of different services provided and administrative efficiency.

Patient perception and feedback should be taken into account for formulating quality improvement strategic decisions. Patients as the end-user of service can judge the organizational and environmental dimension, empathetic work culture if not clinical aspect. While negative feedback indicates room for improvement likewise positive feedback gives a morale boost to thrive for excellence.