

Patients' Satisfaction from Hospital Services after Implementation of the Health Sector Transformation Plan in the Selected Hospitals of Faculty of Medical Sciences of Abadan, 2017

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The topic of health is one of the main priorities of people's lives and their satisfaction from the quality of health care services is an important issue. Consequently, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education as a health care provider in the country has started the implementation of the health sector transformation plan since 2014 and in the current research, the hospitalized patients' satisfaction from hospital services has been investigated after implementation of this project. **Method:** In this descriptive-analytic research, 385 hospitalized patients' satisfaction in a different section with health sector transformation plan was analyzed by means of Gudarzian et al. satisfaction questionnaire. **Findings:** In the results of the current research, the mean score of patients' satisfaction from the health sector transformation plan was reported as 19.25 ± 2.21 . In this study, patients' level of satisfaction from the medical services was 83.6%, nursing services was 85.7%, hoteling services was 51.2%, and acceptance and discharge services was 67.36%. There was a statistically significant relationship between age, gender and occupation, type of residence and the reason for selecting a hospital with overall satisfaction from the hospital services ($p < 0/05$). **Conclusion:** Due to this fact that most of the participants were satisfied with the health sector transformation plan, it is recommended that the level of satisfaction be investigated in other groups such as nurses, doctors, and other healthcare personnel, since the most significant supporter of the optimal implementation of the health sector transformation plan is paying attention to domestic customers, i.e. healthcare providers.

Keywords: Satisfaction, patient, health sector transformation plan

Introduction

The subject of health is one of the leading priorities of individuals' lives and their satisfaction with the quality of provided health services is an important issue ^[1, 2]. In each health system, patients naturally expect to receive the required services at the right quality and time ^[3]. Responding to people in need of healthcare as one of the main goals of the health system for legislators and managers is a very significant issue. Henceforth, health systems around the world are

searching the ways to make the way of delivery of services to patients and society more responsive ^[4]. Patient's satisfaction is considered as one of the healthcare quality indicators in health centers of all countries; consequently, the satisfaction of referrals has been a top priority to hospital administrators ^[5, 6], and lack of patients' satisfaction and ignoring their comments challenge the patient's recovery and the desired therapeutic outcome ^[7]. Though in recent years, by means of the primary health care strategy the health system has been able to achieve substantial progress in the overall health of the population and enhancing its related indicators, still, the establishment of justice in health and access to health services are of the legislators' main concerns. The Ministry of Health and Medical Education, as a healthcare provider in the country, has started the Health Development Plan after a six-month study phase since April 2014. The aim of performing the health transformation plan is to establish justice in financing and to benefit from the health care system, to improve the quality of services, to preserve the patients' dignity, and ultimately to reduce the share of people in paying for health care services

Access this article online

Website: www.japer.in

E-ISSN: 2249-3379

How to cite this article: Saeedeh Elhami, Mohsen Maleki. Patients' Satisfaction from Hospital Services after Implementation of the Health Sector Transformation Plan in the Selected Hospitals of Faculty of Medical Sciences of Abadan, 2017. *J Adv Pharm Edu Res* 2019;9(S2):109-120.
Source of Support: Nil, Conflict of Interest: None declared.

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directly^[8]. Providing community health is one of the goals of hospitals, and it is likely by means of optimal quality provision and its extent is measured with regard to the degree of patients' satisfaction^[9, 10]. In Yu et al. (2013) research, in line with assessing the patients' satisfaction and the nursing care quality, it was concluded that increased satisfaction will enhance the patients' sense of security and comfort, which is the cause of the patient's more and better recovery^[11]. Karimi expressed teaching the communication skills to health workers as an effective way to progress the care quality^[12]. Likewise, Faridfar et al. (2015) scrutinized the consequence of health transformation plan on clinical, paraclinical, surgical indicators, and patient satisfaction levels in Rasoul-e-Akram (PBUH) complex that the study results indicated that the enactment of the health transformation plan has increased the reception of clinics, para clinics and patient satisfaction^[13]. Health system performance assessing can provide timely and relevant information in line with the health system performance to decision-makers, this information will lead to program managers' and policymakers' awareness and will provide conditions that can monitor the way of reaching national goals and assess relevant policies. Timely monitoring and evaluating of the reforms can provide evidence for [re]directing reform application^[14]. About four years after the implementation of the health sector transformation plan, one has to observe the response of the health system from the perspective of the health care consumer in a hospital, since, so far, there has not been enough research in this field, also with regard to the importance of the issue of the health sector transformation plan in Iran, we have tried to assess the patients' satisfaction from hospital services after health sector transformation plan implementation in the selected hospitals of faculty of Medical Sciences of Abadan and giving its feedback to the senior managers of the university and policymakers of the health system to review health interventions and healthcare reform, and management of health system programs.

Method:

In this descriptive-analytic research, patients admitted to the selected hospitals of Faculty of Medical Sciences of Abadan entered this study. From each hospital sector (including oncology, internal, surgical, emergency and emergency care units), available patients to enter the study were selected according to inclusion criteria (being hospitalized for at least 24 hours, sound psychological health, and patient's full consent to be studied) and exclusion criteria (open heart surgery patients due to special conditions and other acute cases). With 95% confidence level and 0.05 error level, the sample size is 385 participants.

After being present at the mentioned sections, the questioner first explained the purpose and necessity of the research implementation to the patient and then gave the informed consent form with a satisfaction questionnaire to the patients.

The data collection instrument in this research was a demographic information questionnaire (including age, gender, marital status, occupation, educational level and adequacy of the economic situation) and patient's satisfaction questionnaire from health sector transformation plan. The patient satisfaction questionnaire was based on Gudarzian et al. (2015) questionnaire^[15]. The validity of this questionnaire was approved and its reliability was evaluated by the test-retest method and had a correlation coefficient of 0.96. Questionnaire items consist of 10 questions based on a Likert scale of 1 to 3 (respectively low, moderate, and high), and 5 questions in the range 1 to 2 (respectively yes and no), which assess topics such as satisfaction with amenities, medical staff, nursing staff, the rate of payment, the quality of hospital food, the way of receiving medicines and normal delivery. The total range of scores varies from 10 to 25, and these scores represent a poor (score of 10-13), moderate (14-17), good (18-21) and excellent (score 22-25) level of satisfaction. The mean scores of patients' satisfaction from health sector transformation plan in different groups were measured by ANOVA and independent t-test. Likewise, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine the correlation between patients' age and satisfaction score from the health sector transformation plan. Statistical analysis was done by SPSS 21 software.

Findings:

In the demographic data of the studied units, it was found that 50.9% of the patients were male and 49.1% were female with an average age of 11.22 ± 34.45 years ($CI_{95} = 35.34-35.75$), in terms of marital status, 64.9% of the patients were single, 33.6% were married, 1.5% were widow, from occupational status, 34.6% were employed, 35.4% were unemployed, 24.7% were housekeepers, 5% of the patients were retired, in terms of education level, 5.1% of the patients were illiterate, 8.7% of the patients were in the elementary level, 23.9% of the patients in the secondary level, 43.8% of the patients had diplomas and 18.6% of the patients were at undergraduate level and in terms of the economic condition, 12% of patients were in poor, 37.7% were in moderate, 37.7% were in good and 12.7% of patients were in excellent condition.

The mean score of patients' satisfaction from the health sector transformation plan was 19.25 ± 2.21 years ($CI_{95}: 19.04-19.48$). Among the participants, 0.5% had low satisfaction, 20.9% had moderate satisfaction, 62.3% had a good satisfaction and 16.3% had an excellent level of satisfaction. The highest level of satisfaction was related to nursing staff with 42.5% and the satisfaction rate with amenities was 42.2%.

The satisfaction rate from the hospital's facilities is 2.32%, which is between average and high scores. The satisfaction rate of the hospital's medical staff is 2.18% which is between medium and high. The satisfaction rate of the nursing staff is 2.30%, which is between medium and high rating, the level of

satisfaction with other hospital staff is 2.14% that is between medium and high, and the satisfaction with the quality of hospital food is 2.17% that is between medium and high.

The results of the Pearson test showed that there is no correlation between age and score of patients' satisfaction from the health sector transformation plan ($p=0.246$). According to Table 3, it was found that the mean score of satisfaction from the health sector transformation plan was statistically significant in terms of gender ($p = 0.275$), marital status ($p = 0.231$), education level ($p = 0.488$), occupation ($p = 0.321$) and economic condition ($p = 0.065$).

Discussion and Conclusion

In the results of the current study, the average score of patients' satisfaction from the health sector transforming plan was reported as 19.25 ± 2.21 , which was roughly equal to the mean score of satisfaction 18.73 ± 2.53 in Gudarzi et al. research^[15]. 78.6% of the participants were satisfied with the provided services; these findings were consistent with similar studies^[7, 10].

Despite the educational nature of the understudy hospitals, the highest level of satisfaction was from nursing staff (42.5%), which was probably due to suitable clinical performance, diagnosis and treatment follow-up, adorned appearance work attire and preserving Islamic affairs by nurses. Similarly, satisfaction with amenities was high (42.2%) that it can be indicated that implementing actions such as increasing the green space of hospitals, restoring and increasing the hospitalization sectors and increasing the quality of hospitals hoteling after the employment of the health sector transformation plan has had a momentous effect on patient satisfaction with welfare. On the other hand, Hashemi and Bratlou's results indicated that the least level of satisfaction was with the delivery of nursing services and nurses' behavior in emergency departments^[16], which is probably due to the increased nursing staff workload and the lack of suitable communication skills. In a study conducted in North Carolina in the United States, a questionnaire was designed to assess the satisfaction of emergency referrals in terms of service quality, waiting time and behavior of employees. After conducting the study, researchers have indicated that nurses, by instituting promising relationships with patients and having appropriate behavior, can play an important role in improving the emergency department patients' satisfaction of^[17]. Of course, the nurses' long and continuous shift has a significant impact on the quality of patient care^[18].

Though satisfaction with the quality of hospitals food was in the medium and high range, as Gudarzi's study, it had the lowest satisfaction among others^[15]. In Emami and Montiou's study, the patients were very satisfied with the hospital food quality. Factors such as: the suitable taste and appearance of the food, the quality and diversity of the food menu, the proper behavior of the staff, increasing the number of meals to more than three times a day, and communication and

continuing education of nutrition experts with patients were the main reasons for this satisfaction^[5, 19]; consequently, following up and implementing the mentioned factors in hospitals in the country are suggested to enhance patients' satisfaction.

In the current research, the participants reported satisfaction with the five main topics of amenities, medical and nursing personnel, other personnel and food quality of hospitals between the middle and high range. Of course, it should be noted that dissatisfied people do not normally participate in the study and do not fill out the questionnaires which will lead to the higher participation of satisfied people and consequently lead to increased satisfaction. On the other hand, it should be considered that the cultural circumstances of the society affect the satisfaction of the community and the results of the high satisfaction may be due to this fact that the Iranian people are not critic in line with evaluating the systems and having the proper and polite relationships is the most important concern of the Iranian people^[20]. This subject is also partly evident in this study so that the studied patients had a significant reaction to the treatment of nurses, doctors and hospital staff. It means that the way of health care providers' behaving is very important for patients, and improving the communication skills of caregivers will increase satisfaction, and consequently, improve the patient's condition^[11]. Dyerson and Karimi also highlighted the effect of communication skills on patient satisfaction^[12, 21]. So, it is necessary to take special measures and attention to improve this skill.

Of the limitations of this study was the lack of appropriate environment in the understudy hospitals in order to interview with patients, thus in subsequent research, it is suggested that relevant authorities take the necessary measures to allocate appropriate space.

Generally, the patients' satisfaction with the delivered health care was favorable in the studied hospitals. Of course, based on various researches, several factors can be attributed to patient satisfaction. For example, in Mousavi's study which was done in educational and therapeutic centers of Urmia University of Medical Sciences, the hospitalized patients' satisfaction rate in this study from medical services was 83.6%, nursing services (85.7%), hoteling services (51.2%), and acceptance and discharge services (67.36%)^[7]. According to the Hashemi and Bratlou's study results, after implementing a health sector transformation plan, the satisfaction of providing pre-discharge training, the status of hospital rooms, cleaning toilets, timely visits by doctors, spending precision and time for visiting, recommendations for recovery and the patients' well-being, the status of financial affairs, as well as the observance of religious standards and ethics were significantly reduced^[16]. The results of Faridfar et al. research indicated that the implementation of the health sector transformation plan has increased the acceptance of clinics, para clinics, and patients' satisfaction enhancement^[13]. The results of the study conducted in Ilam province indicated that the satisfaction with nursing services was at the optimum level

and more dissatisfaction was related to the physical environment of the hospital. In this study, there was a significant relationship between gender and the overall satisfaction of the hospital services ($p = 0.001$), so that women were more satisfied with the level of service. There was a significant relationship between age, occupation, and type of residence and the reason for hospital selection with overall satisfaction of hospital services ($p < 0.05$)^[10].

Based on the similar studies conducted in line with satisfaction, various factors are effective on this index and by increasing the satisfaction level in this study, the result of this research will be consistent with the results of documentary studies in most of the mentioned researches. Since most of the participants were satisfied with the health sector transformation plan, it is suggested that in other groups such as nurses, doctors, and other healthcare personnel, the satisfaction level from health sector transformation plan be investigated, because the most significant supporter of the proper implementation of the health sector transformation plan is paying attention to domestic customers, i.e. health care providers^[22].

Author contributions:

Saeedeh Elhami: Administrative coordination with treatment deputy units and monitoring the process of drafting paper

Mohsen Maleki: Data Collection and the corresponding author

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the Deputy of research of the Abadan school of Medical Sciences for funding this approved plan. We also thank all of the patients who spent their time to complete the questionnaire and all the collaborators who helped the researcher.

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Table 1: Frequency and Frequency percentage of Three-choice questions of Satisfaction with Health Sector Transformation Plan

	Low	Moderate	High	(SD) Mean
What is the satisfaction rate of hospitals amenities?	41 (10.4)	186 (47.3)	166 (42.2)	2.23 (0.5631)
What is the degree of satisfaction with the hospital medical staff?	78 (19.8)	167 (42.5)	148 (37.7)	2.18 (0.7380)
What is the degree of satisfaction with the hospital nursing staff?	46 (11.7)	180 (45.8)	167 (42.5)	2.30 (0.6696)
What is the satisfaction rate from other hospital staff?	89 (23.6)	161 (41.0)	143 (36.4)	2.14 (0.7569)
What is the satisfaction rate from the quality of hospital food?	85 (21.6)	157 (39.9)	151 (38.4)	2.17 (0.7575)

Table 2: Frequency and Frequency percentage of Two-choice Questions of Satisfaction with Health Sector Transformation Plan

	Yes	No
Is your payment 5-10% of the total hospital costs?	148 (37.7)	245 (62.3)
Are you guided out of the hospital to buy medicine?	90 (22.9)	303 (77.1)
Have you paid any money outside the hospital?	1 (0.3)	392 (99.7)
Do high-quality specialists visit the patients and are they are present in departments on time??	213 (54.2)	180 (45.8)
Did you pay for normal delivery?	211 (53.7)	182 (46.3)

Table 3: Comparing the Satisfaction Score with Health Sector Transformation Plan in Hospitalized Patients Based on Demographic Variables

	(SD) Mean	Sig. level
Gender	Male 19.14 (2.20)	0.275
	Female 19.38 (2.21)	
Marital status	Single 19.14 (2.19)	0.231
	Married 19.51 (2.24)	
	Wife's death 18.67 (1.97)	
Job	Employed 19.04 (2.40)	0.321
	Unemployed 19.45 (2.22)	
	Housewife 19.39 (1.95)	
	Retired 18.81 (1.89)	
Education	Illiterate 19.50 (1.99)	0.488
	Elementary 18.88 (1.92)	
	High school 19.05 (2.19)	
	Diploma 19.29 (2.29)	
	B.A 19.56 (2.21)	
	Weak 19.40 (1.98)	
The economic situation	Moderate 19.07 (2.22)	0.065
	Good 19.58 (2.14)	
	Excellent 19.26 (2.46)	