



PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH THE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES IN GULHANE MILITARY MEDICAL FACULTY TRAINING HOSPITAL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the satisfaction level with the supportive services among patients in Gulhane Military Medical Faculty (GMMF) Training Hospital. The study population consisted of GMMF Training Hospital outpatients and inpatients. The "Patients Satisfaction Questionnaire" by Ministry of Health of the Republic of Turkey was used to gather data. Survey was completed with 587 outpatients and 218 inpatients, total 805 patients. The average level of general satisfaction of the patients in the study with regard to supportive services at hospital is 3.54 ± 0.75 . It was observed that the highest satisfaction rates in supportive services were obtained among outpatients in following criteria; "general appearance of polyclinics (cleaning, order and arrangement)". They were "general appearance of the clinic (cleaning, order and arrangement)", "cleaning of the room" and "security measures at entrances in terms of safety of the patient and the hospital" among inpatients. The least satisfactory services for outpatients were "noise level at polyclinics area" and "car park services" and for inpatients they were "hair dressing services at clinics" and "postal services". Statistically significant difference was obtained between the satisfaction levels from supportive services depending on the gender of the inpatients, ages and educational statuses of the outpatients. It was observed that improvement is required in especially "car park services", "noise level at the polyclinics area", "hair dressing services at clinics" and "postal services" that cause dissatisfaction or lower the satisfaction level at GMMF Training Hospital.

Keywords: Satisfaction, Supportive services, Training hospital.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding satisfaction and service quality has been recognized as critical to develop service improvement strategies.

The quality assurance work of Donabedian emphasized the importance of patient satisfaction in healthcare services [1].

Patient satisfaction has been accepted as an important indicator in evaluating health services quality for last two decades. Using patient perceptions as an indicator of service quality in health care goes parallel to the developments in other service sectors. It is also a known fact that using perception is a widely used approach in marketing researches [2]. Satisfied patients are more likely to follow medical advises compared to unsatisfied patients [3].

Any hospital renders two types of services: Medical care services and supportive services. Medical care goes to the care where the actual purpose of patient care, i.e., consultation, examination, treatment, diagnostic, curative, preventive measures is undertaken for a problem/disease etc. Whereas supportive services, as the name implies, renders supports to the medical care service. It smoothenes the overall job by monitoring the right flow of treatment right from the patient's entry into the hospital, till the exit stage. Thereby supportive services, identify the needs of the patients, offer a wide variety of additional service apart from diagnostic, curative measures and thereby providing effective and efficient delivery of quality patient care support and service [4].

A comprehensive literature review reveals that there are so many studies conducted on satisfaction in health care facilities as well as in other service providers, but the number of studies on the satisfaction with support services in health care facilities is relatively low. However, supportive service in a hospital is an important component of treatment process, since it affects the length of recovery and life quality [5].

Nowadays, the importance of supportive services in hospitals is becoming widely accepted all over the world. Today, a strong debate exists in defining the different types of supportive services provided by the hospitals. The following list enumerates the different types variety of supportive services offered by today's hospitals in general: Natarajan [4]

- Nutrition and dietary services
- Pharmacy
- Medical records services
- Electrical and water supply
- Medical gas and pipeline
- Plumbing and sanitation
- Air conditioning system
- Hot water and steam supply
- Communication system
- Maintenance and engineering department
- Laundry services

- Housekeeping services
- Energy conservation service
- Transportation service
- Mortuary service
- Hospital security and safety
- Disaster management
- Laboratories
- Radiology department
- Public relations and marketing
- Sterilization department
- Materials management department
- Volunteer department.

Supportive services serve the purpose of the patient, their families, and attendees in a number of ways and specifically in the following manner: [Natarajan \[4\]](#)

- Each of the individual needs is best served and makes it match with the specifications.
- Help in defining the mission, vision statements of the hospital, and aids in the accomplishments through policies, procedures and programmes.
- Supports in developing strategies to meet out the competition and to gain corporate governance by providing quality service at economic costs.
- Besides, giving them mere consultation, supportive services provide counselling and educate the patients in all means.
- The supportive services are planned in such a way, that the patients are fully provided with services both before and after the medical treatment.
- It enhances services and also encourages patient's participation with care and emotional support.
- It helps in preserving and maintaining the physical assets of the hospital campus facilities.
- Almost all the activities including instructional, research and public service are provided under this supportive service.
- In many ways, supportive services acts as a linking pin a liaison between the patient's family and the medical team.
- Helps in maintaining excellent inter-departmental relations.
- On a larger scale, it ensures a clean, healthy, safety and secured environment in the hospital.
- Provides expertise in the use of various machines and equipments.
- It plans all the activities, by grouping both inpatients and outpatients, thereby integrating teams inside hospital.
- Ensures easy and smooth access to all hospital resources to the service users provides.

- It plans, creates and acts in such a way that all the foreseeable and unforeseen risks and disasters are duly reported coped up and might be faced in future.
- Supports overall efforts to improve customer satisfaction and also help in meeting the expectations of customers and to meet the challenge for future growth.

The purpose of this study is to determine the satisfaction level with the supportive services among patients in Gulhane Military Medical Faculty (GMMF) Training Hospital.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

This study is a descriptive and cross-sectional study. The study population consisted of GMMF Training Hospital outpatients and inpatients. No sample group was selected; it was tried to reach all patients receiving services from the GMMF Training Hospital in May 2012.

The "Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire" implemented at the hospitals under the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Turkey was used as the data collection tool. The questionnaire was reconstructed to reflect the characteristics GMMF Training Hospital.

The questionnaire consists of two main parts. The first part of questionnaire consists of three statements to identify personality characteristics of participants and the second part of questionnaire consists of 16 expressions to determine the level of satisfaction of the patients about supportive services at GMMF Training Hospital. The questionnaire was implemented to all patients receiving services from GMMF Training Hospital on a voluntary basis through May 2 to 25, 2012.

Of the returned questionnaires, 46 were determined incorrect and incomplete and were excluded from evaluation. Survey was completed with 587 outpatients and 218 inpatients, 805 patients in total.

Satisfaction levels of inpatients and outpatients were evaluated over 5 points Likert Scale consisting of options from "1 = very poor" to "5 = very good". In addition, some supportive services which are not used by patients were rated as "0 = I did not use" and were not taken into consideration while determining satisfaction levels.

SPSS 18 package was used for the analyses of data obtained in the study, descriptive statistical methods, the significance control test between two compared means, and one-way ANOVA were used. The Bonferroni post-hoc test was also used in order to determine the source of differences in the case that a statistical difference was found in the analyses. Significance level for the post-hoc test was calculated using the " α / number of comparisons" (Bonferroni correction) formula. Results were evaluated with a confidence interval of 95% and a significance level of $p < 0.05$. The Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated as 0.829 in the reliability analysis of the scale.

3. RESULTS

Distribution of the patients who took part in the study by their socio-demographic characteristics is presented in Table 1. Ages of outpatients vary between 18 and 88 and of

inpatients between 14 and 88. Majority of both inpatients and outpatients are below 40. The number of male patients is higher than female patients. While 40% of outpatients have a university degree, 34.4% of the inpatients are primary/elementary school graduates.

Table-1. Patients' sociodemographic characteristics

Characteristic	Group	Outpatient		Inpatient	
		N	%	N	%
Age	≤ 20	33	5.6	20	8.4
	21-30	128	21.8	82	38.0
	31-40	165	28.0	42	19.4
	41-50	124	21.2	27	12.5
	51-60	61	10.4	23	10.6
	≥ 61	76	13.0	24	11.1
Gender	Male	297	50.6	142	65.1
	Female	290	49.4	76	34.9
Education Level	Primary / Elementary School	126	21.5	75	34.4
	High School	189	32.2	68	31.2
	University	235	40.0	66	30.3
	Holder's of master's	37	6.3	9	4.1
Total		587	100.0	218	100.0

The average level of general satisfaction of the outpatients in the study with regard to supportive services at hospital was 3.49 ± 0.75 . It was obtained that *highest satisfaction rates in supportive services were obtained among outpatients were* "general appearance of polyclinics (cleaning, order and arrangement) (4.25 ± 0.69)", the least *satisfaction rates* were "noise level at the polyclinics area (2.79 ± 0.85)" and "car park services (2.81 ± 1.70)" (Table 2).

Table-2. Outpatients' opinions about supportive services

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
General appearance of polyclinics (cleaning, order and arrangement)	4.25	0.690
The adequacy of the patient waiting areas	3.82	0.954
General cleaning of toilets	3.58	1.201
Bakery, canteens and cafeteria services	3.31	1.348
Car park services	2.81	1.698
In-hospital transport services	3.15	1.647
Postal services	3.03	1.963
Banking services	3.04	1.896
The adequacy of the information services and direction signs in the hospital campus	3.68	1.140
Landscaping of hospital (flowers and trees)	4.05	0.987
Polyclinics lighting	4.03	0.776
Ventilation in polyclinics	3.54	1.192
Noise level at the polyclinics area	2.79	0.848
Counseling services in polyclinics	3.70	1.082
Safety precautions for the patients and family in hospital's main entrance door.	3.61	1.266

The average level of general satisfaction for the inpatients in the study with regard to supportive services at hospital is 3.59 ± 0.77 . It was obtained that the highest satisfaction levels were "general appearance of polyclinics (cleaning, order and arrangement) (4.59 ± 0.61)" and "security measures at the hospital entrances in terms of safety of the patient and the hospital (4.59 ± 0.61)". The least *satisfaction rates* were "hair dressing services at the clinics (1.97 ± 2.14)" and "postal services (2.22 ± 2.19)" (Table 3).

Table-3. Inpatients' opinions about supportive services

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
General appearance of clinics (cleaning, order and arrangement)	4.59	0.610
Room cleaning	4.59	0.625
Bed linens, pillows and duvets cleaning	4.42	0.824
Noise level in the room	3.29	1.032
Lighting, heating and air conditioning of the room	4.33	0.752
Cleaning of toilets and bathrooms in the clinic	4.16	0.954
Patient meals	3.89	0.970
Bakery, canteens and cafeteria services	3.66	1.486
Television and music systems	3.72	1.404
Hair dressing services at the clinics	1.97	2.139
Car park services	2.54	2.041
Postal services	2.22	2.193
In-hospital transport services	2.66	2.171
Banking services	2.80	2.143
The adequacy of the information services and direction signs in the hospital campus	4.17	0.798
Landscaping of hospital (flowers and trees)	4.35	0.754
Security measures at the hospital entrances in terms of safety of the patient and the hospital	4.59	0.610

Satisfaction levels of the outpatients in supportive services in terms of socio-demographical characteristics and their statistical comparisons are provided in Table 4. Statistically significant difference was obtained between the satisfaction levels from supportive services depending on the ages and educational statuses of the outpatients. It was concluded that the difference obtained as a result of the Bonferroni adjusted post-hoc test (Bonferroni adjustment α /number of comparison = $0.05/15 = 0.003$) applied to determine in which age group the age related difference was available was not significant ($p > 0.003$). It was concluded that the difference was obtained as a result of the Bonferroni adjusted post-hoc test (Bonferroni adjustment α /number of comparison = $0.05/6 = 0.008$) on education level. This difference was basically arised from between the primary/elementary school graduates and university graduates ($p = 0.005$) and between the primary/elementary school graduates and holders of master's degree ($p = 0.001$). It is observed that as the education level increases, the satisfaction level with the supportive services decreases.

Table-4. The level of outpatients satisfaction with supportive services and statistical comparisons

Characteristic	Group	Mean ± Standard Deviation	t-value	p
Age	≤ 20	3.69±0.93	$\chi^2=4.077$	0.001
	21-30	3.43±0.79		
	31-40	3.41±0.71		
	41-50	3.38±0.72		
	51-60	3.74±0.73		
	≥ 61	3.72±0.69		
Gender	Male	3.52±0.78	$\chi^2=0.988$	0.324
	Female	3.46±0.72		
				<i>Continue</i>
Education Level	Primary / Elementary School	3.69±0.75	$\chi^2=6.210$	0.000
	High School	3.52±0.73		
	University	3.41±0.75		
	Holders of master's	3.17±0.77		

Satisfaction levels of the inpatients in supportive services in terms of socio-demographical characteristics and their statistical comparisons are provided in Table 5. Statistically significant difference was obtained between the satisfaction levels from supportive services depending on the genders of the inpatients.

Table-5. The level of inpatients satisfaction with supportive services and statistical comparisons

Characteristic	Group	Mean ± Standard Deviation	t-value	p
Age	≤ 20	3.91±0.86	$\chi^2=2.268$	0.05
	21-30	3.49±0.75		
	31-40	3.45±0.80		
	41-50	3.49±0.71		
	51-60	3.82±0.75		
	≥ 61	3.84±0.64		
Gender	Male	3.68±0.79	$\chi^2=2.657$	0.008
	Female	3.40±0.70		
Education Level	Primary /Elementary School	3.65±0.77	$\chi^2=1.459$	0.227
	High School	3.67±0.79		
	University School	3.46±0.72		
	Holders of master's	3.29±0.86		

4. DISCUSSION

With this study, the effect of supportive services offered at GMMF Training Hospital on the satisfaction levels of patients was evaluated. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the satisfaction level in supportive services varies depending on the genders and educational levels of patients. As the education level increases, needs and expectations of the individuals also increase. The education level of the patient is an important factor in emergence of the expectation.

Expectations from health care services show differences between a primary school graduate and a university graduate [6]. Kılıç and colleagues evaluated the hospitality services at a state hospital, and they suggested that the satisfaction level in hospitality services at the hospital (especially sanitary services) decreases by the increase in the education level [7].

With this study, we showed that male patients had higher satisfaction level than females in supportive services. Furthermore, male patients were two fold higher than females. Numerous studies concluded that gender is not an effective factor on the perceived service quality or satisfaction levels [7-9].

It was obtained that the most satisfied criterion was cleaning of the clinics and the rooms in supportive service for inpatients at GMMF Training Hospital. In the study by Kılıç [7], 70,7% of the patients considered that the clinic and the rooms were clean while in the study by Kıldak [8], most of the patients (90%) considered that the clinic and the rooms were not clean [8]. In our study, cleaning of the clinic and the rooms comes in the forefront as the most satisfied factor with.

In a study conducted by Zerenler and Öğüt [10] to measure the perceived satisfaction level of patients in health care services at 10 hospitals (6 private, 4 state) operating within the borders of the Metropolitan Municipality of Konya, "unavailability of noise at the hospital environment (4.38 ± 0.88)" was the most satisfied factor while "noise level at the polyclinics area (2.79 ± 0.85)" was the least satisfactory factor in our study.

In the study by Zerenler and Öğüt [10], while the satisfaction level in "canteen services at the hospital" is low (2.88), the satisfaction level of both inpatients (3.66) and outpatients (3.31) in pastry, canteen and dining hall services was higher [10].

5. CONCLUSION

Supportive services at hospitals are directly related with creating a clean hospital environment, offering quality health care services, comfort and easiness of personnel, patients and visitors and their level of morale, motivation and satisfaction. Moreover, supportive services hold a great level of importance in evaluation of hospitals in terms of quality standards.

As a result of this study, it was obtained that the general satisfaction level of both inpatients and outpatients in supportive services offered at GMMF Training Hospital was high (3.54).

However, it was determined that improvement is required in especially "car park services", "noise level at the polyclinics area", "hair dressing services at clinics" and "postal services" that cause dissatisfaction or lower the satisfaction level at GMMF Training Hospital.

The study results are limited with GMMF Training Hospital and we suggest that the study could be repeated at other secondary and tertiary medical organizations and the results could be compared.

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