

## Original Research Article

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# Satisfaction levels of patients visiting primary health care centers in border areas of Jammu division

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Patient satisfaction surveys are one of the most important feedback systems for any hospital to understand patient concern and take necessary corrective measures. The study was done in primary health centers in border areas of Jammu division to know the satisfaction among the patient and describe their socio-demographic profile.

**Methods:** Study was cross-sectional questionnaire based study conducted among the inpatient of the primary health center, Paragwal from 01 July 2018 to 30 November 2018. Data was collected using a pre-tested questionnaire and entered in an excel sheet and analysed using SPSS 20.

**Results:** A total of 110 respondents participated in the group. The mean age of the study subjects was  $43.4 \pm 9.7$  years and majority (86%) of the respondents was married, higher proportions of males (71%) and majority subjects (77%) were illiterate. According to Kuppuswamy scale, 66% of the study subjects belong to low socio-economic status (SES). There was no statistical significant association of socio-economic status, age, literacy. Female gender was associated with satisfaction regarding explanation of illness.

**Conclusions:** In the present study, we found that majority of the participant were satisfied. However, the areas like congestion and time management needs improvement.

**Keywords:** Patient satisfaction, Primary health centre, Border areas

## INTRODUCTION

Due to increase in education and awareness level in patients, it cannot be presumed that patients to be ignorant of their rights and hospital services. Medicine being a service profession has its own disadvantages. The number of patients and their expectance of recovery and results in accordance with payment are significantly increasing now a day. Patient satisfaction surveys are one of the most important feedback system for any hospital to understand the patient concern and take necessary corrective measures to further improve hospital

services.<sup>1,2</sup> Also satisfaction surveys are important to initiate new services as per the requirement of patients, to improve patient care and to reduce the focus on services which are not utilized by patients so that overall hospital services can improve.<sup>3</sup>

In the care of the suffering, doctor needs a scientific knowledge, technical skill, and human understanding to give quality care to the patient.<sup>4</sup> Satisfaction levels of patients visiting hospital are mainly based on services provided by hospitals to them. It is difficult to quantify the quality however studying the customer satisfaction levels may indicate the quality of the patient care.<sup>5</sup>

Primary health center, Paragwal is situated at Molu which just before International boundary of India with Pakistan. It is the last medical facility before the International border begins. There is a reason to believe beneficiaries of the services provided by these establishments belong to the same section of population which usually utilizes their services. It is to be appreciated that majority of the typical consumer of this hospital are probably of the type that seldom voice their opinions, grievances, and complaints. The present study is an attempt to probe into some aspects of grievances satisfaction levels of patients of primary health center, Paragwal.

## METHODS

The present study was carried out at primary health center, Paragwal on admitted patients in hospital from 01 July 2018 to 30 November 2018 period, only individual above 18 years of age included and subjects who refused to participate in study were excluded. It was descriptive cross sectional study mainly to study satisfaction levels of the IPD patients, questionnaire used to collect data from patients. Approval of local ethics committee was obtained prior to the conduct of the study. Pilot study of respondents carried out. Pilot-tested questionnaire was administered to each participant. All patients were interviewed with single investigator. Each respondent was explained the purpose of the interview. Each respondent was reassured that the information obtained was solely for the purpose of research and would be kept confidential and would not in any way affect future services to that individual. Percentage and frequency distribution were used to analyze demographic data of study subjects. Percentage used to assess the satisfaction level. The data was entered in the excel sheet and analysis were done using SPSS 20.

## RESULTS

A total of 110 respondents were included in the study. Bio-data profile of respondents included in the study sample shows representation of all age groups, the mean age of the study subjects was  $43.4 \pm 9.7$  years and majority (86%) of the respondents was married, higher proportions of males (71%) and majority subjects (77%) were illiterate. According to Kuppuswamy scale, 66% of the study subjects belong to low socio-economic status (SES).

### Pattern of visit

Patients visit pattern studied, whether first time, specific purpose or regular. It was observed that 39% responded that they regularly visit hospital for medical consultation, as they were satisfied with the care provided to them (Table 1).

### Congestions in hospitals

Respondents were asked opinion about the hospital space, (Table 2) only 36% respondents mentioned that space is very congested while as per remaining patients hospital space is reasonably good or quite spacious.

**Table 1: Visiting pattern of respondents (n=110).**

S. no.	Visiting pattern	Respondents	
		N	(%)
1	First time	40	36.36
2	For specific illness	27	24.54
3	Regularly	43	39.10

**Table 2: Feelings of respondents about hospital space (n=110).**

S. no.	Hospital space	Respondents	
		N	(%)
1	Very congested	40	6.36
2	Reasonably good space	52	7.27
3	Quite spacious	18	6.37

### Waiting time

In hospital due to the patient load and various reasons patients spend their time at various locations. Respondents were asked about the excessive time spent at different locations/departments, the multiple responses were received. It was observed that 36.36% of respondents spend their maximum time at registration and admission place, while 30% of patients spend their time waiting for doctors (Table 3). 27.27% respondents spend their times in different investigations purpose. However it is seen that 19.1% of respondents spend their time at laboratory and 10.9% of respondents spend time for X-rays. It was seen that maximum time spent by respondents at registration/admissions counter.

**Table 3: Time spent at different locations (multiple responses) (n=110).**

S. no.	Locations	Respondents	
		N	(%)
1	Registrations/admissions	40	6.36
2	Waiting for doctor	33	30
3	Laboratory	21	19.1
4	X-rays	12	10.9
5	Other investigations	30	27.27

### Satisfaction

Satisfaction levels of patients visiting hospital are mainly based on services provided by hospitals to them. Satisfaction level of the patients in r/o four factors was studied in this study mainly: a) time required to complete checkup and tests, b) Doctors explanation regarding

illness, c) regarding the treatment and d) cleanliness of wards and other facilities available in hospital. These four factors in r/o satisfaction were compared with the patient characteristics mainly age, sex, socioeconomic and literacy status. The results were as given below.

**Relationship between satisfaction and patient characteristics stratified by age group**

It is observed that overall satisfaction for the four factors was more in the age group >60 years patient compared to patients <60 years, though the same was not statistically significant (Table 4).

**Table 4: Relationship between satisfaction and patient characteristics stratified by age group.**

	≤60 years (83) (%)	>60 years (27) (%)	P value
<b>Time required to complete checkup and tests</b>			
Satisfied	58 (69.6)	21 (77.7)	0.428
<b>Doctors explanation regarding illness</b>			
Satisfied	34 (40.8)	16 (59)	0.097
<b>Regarding the treatment</b>			
Satisfied	64 (76.8)	22 (81.4)	0.633
<b>Cleanliness of wards and other facilities</b>			
Satisfied	60 (72)	20 (74)	0.856

**Relationship between satisfaction and patient characteristics stratified by sex**

The difference is statistically significant (females are more satisfied) for doctor explanation regarding illness (Table 5).

**Table no 5: Relationship between satisfaction and patient characteristics stratified by sex.**

	Male (79) (%)	Female (31) (%)	P value
<b>Time required to complete checkup and tests</b>			
Satisfied	57 (72)	22 (71)	0.901
<b>Doctors explanation regarding illness</b>			
Satisfied	30 (38)	20 (64)	0.012
<b>Regarding the treatment</b>			
Satisfied	61 (77)	25 (80)	0.695
<b>Cleanliness of wards and other facilities</b>			
Satisfied	58 (73)	22 (71)	0.795

**Relationship between satisfaction and patient characteristics stratified by literacy status**

When the satisfaction level compared between Literate and Illiterates it was observed that Illiterates satisfied for time required to complete checkup and tests, doctors explanation regarding illness and overall cleanliness of wards and other facilities more than literates however less

satisfied regarding the treatment part as compared to literates (Table 6).

**Table 6: Relationship between satisfaction and patient characteristics stratified by literacy status.**

	Literate (%)	Illiterate (%)	P value
<b>Time required to complete checkup and tests</b>			
Satisfied	15 (60)	64 (75)	0.135
<b>Doctors explanation regarding illness</b>			
Satisfied	9 (36)	41 (48)	0.28
<b>Regarding the treatment</b>			
Satisfied	18 (72)	68 (68)	0.395
<b>Cleanliness of wards and other facilities</b>			
Satisfied	17 (68)	63 (74)	0.546

**Relationship between satisfaction and patient characteristics stratified by social class group**

Satisfaction for all the four factors observed more in lower socio economic (SE) class compared to middle SE class, however the same was not statistically significant (Table 7).

**Table 7: Relationship between satisfaction and patient characteristics stratified by social class group.**

	Middle SE class (%)	Lower SE class (%)	P value
<b>Time required to complete checkup and tests</b>			
Satisfied	25 (67.5)	54 (75.6)	0.481
<b>Doctors explanation regarding illness</b>			
Satisfied	17 (46)	33 (46)	0.941
<b>Regarding the treatment</b>			
Satisfied	26 (70)	60 (84)	0.153
<b>Cleanliness of wards and other facilities</b>			
Satisfied	25 (67.5)	55 (77)	0.387

## DISCUSSION

Information obtained from respondent interview phase was analyzed to find out the frequency, nature and types of respondent problems with respect to various types of services provided by various section of the hospital. The results of our analyses are similar to the findings of other studies that patient satisfaction is associated with the respondent characteristics such as age, sex, educational status and socio economical class.<sup>6</sup>

In the area of Paragwal and surrounding locations, there is sizeable population belong to lower class which usually use government medical services. This perhaps is the reason for comparatively higher representation of these in the sample.

Nearly 40% patients are regularly visiting the hospital for their medical problems suggest that the patients are happy with the services available at the hospital. According to

more than 60% respondents the space in the hospital not congested. Maximum time spent (waiting time) at location of registration/admission procedure as per respondents, compared to other locations such as X-rays, laboratory and waiting for doctors.

As observed in various studies that the older patients satisfaction score tend to be higher as compared to younger patients, in our study also it was seen that age group more than 60 years more satisfied compared to age group less than 60 years, similar to the global trend.<sup>6,7</sup>

Satisfaction level in gender differs depending upon the different satisfaction criteria's, as doctors explanation and treatment level females are more satisfied compared to male.

Literacy status of respondents also reflects in the satisfaction level, overall satisfaction in the illiterate respondents was significant compared to literate respondents, similar observations are noted in other studies also.<sup>8,9</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In the present study, we found majority of the participant were satisfied. There is a sex difference in the satisfaction. Other variable like age, socio-economic status have no association with the satisfaction. The areas like congestion and time management needs improvement.

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