

Research Article	Pak-Euro Journal of Medical and Life Sciences
DOI: 10.31580/pjmls.v4i4.2160	Copyright © All rights are reserved by Corresponding Author
Vol. 4 No. 4, 2021: pp. 283-290	
www.readersinsight.net/pjmls	
Submission: November 02, 2021	Revised: December 25, 2021
	Accepted: December 31, 2021

PATIENT'S SATISFACTION WITH NURSING CARE IN MEDICAL AND SURGICAL DEPARTMENTS IN KHARTOUM STATE HOSPITALS

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Abstract

Background: Patient satisfaction is the important patient-centered outcome to measure; it can also act as the difference between patient perception and the actual perceived care.

Objective: The study aimed at assessing patients' satisfaction with nursing care.

Methods: The study subjects included the departments of internal medicine and surgery in the main tertiary hospitals in the Khartoum State, Sudan. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design is used. Additionally, a convenience sampling is used to select 300 patients who effectively participated in conducting the current study by using the Arabic version of the Newcastle Satisfaction with Nursing Scale.

Results: The study showed a moderate to high level of satisfaction in nursing care. It is also presented that there was significant correlation with gender, and educational level. In contrast the study showed no correlation with age, and the place of admissions.

Conclusion: Knowing the perceptions and views of the beneficiaries is the mirror through which we stand on the quality of the service we provide and discover the places of weaknesses and shortcomings in them. Such knowledge will enable us to fix them via continuous training and development programs in order to maintain the service at its highest levels.

Keywords: Patient satisfaction, Medical surgical, nursing care, Sudan

INTRODUCTION

Patient's or customer's satisfaction is one of the two main components of service quality, which includes respecting the patient's or customer's, understanding their needs, and then providing the service accordingly (1). Patient satisfaction has become one of the measures that have increased in use. Until it has become a popular measure of service quality, which is measured with a long history in the social sciences, and therefore it is one of the results of service in health care. The level of patient satisfaction with nursing services is considered an effective indicator of the quality of service in hospitals (2).

Nursing care is defined as health promotion, patient support, education, and development by liberating one's own resources. Nursing care is a major component of hospital service. And it represents the specific key to achieving the general satisfaction of patients during their stay in the hospital. It is also considered the most important factor in the patient's assessment of his satisfaction with the health service. In other words, if the patient is satisfied with the health service he has received, this is positive, not only on the personal level but also for nursing and the entire health system (3). Therefore, understanding how things look through the patient's view should be an essential part of the quality improvement process (2). Nursing care has the most prominent role in patient satisfaction, which is the main indicator of the quality of health care and service, and therefore effective in maintaining the level of satisfaction to compete in the health care market (4). Patient satisfaction with nursing service remains the main factor in exploring perceived quality of care (5, 6). Therefore, international healthcare setting must periodically monitor the relationship between nursing care and expectations to support elements of service quality. In addition to that, the results of satisfaction from meeting the perceptions, for example, the highest expectations, such as the decrease in the average service performance that can meet or exceed them with the result that often leads to a low level of satisfaction or even dissatisfaction. And as well as the high perceived performance, as the higher probability



of expectation, will lead to satisfaction (5). The main reason for evaluating patient satisfaction with nursing services is to find out the places for improvement. During the hospital stay, patient satisfaction represents the balance between what is expected and what is received from nursing care. Therefore, patient satisfaction represents the most important measurement tool based on patients to measure, is accepted as a standard measure of service quality and it is steadily gaining in popularity (2).

JUSTIFICATIONS

Patients' satisfaction with nursing services is the most important indicator of the overall satisfaction of any health institution. If we take satisfaction seriously, this will be reflected in the workforce, they will be more present and love their jobs, and the percentage of absenteeism and turnover from work will decrease. In addition, it will help us to identify the problems that represent an obstacle to patient satisfaction, and this will help the officials and decision-makers to find the necessary solutions which lead to improving the quality of nursing care. More than that will also help to build new units and develop alternative nursing care plans for the better (7). In addition, several benefits are accruing to the institution, which is that it will have an increase in the financial return and a healthier one, and it will strengthen its competition while reducing fatigue, attrition, and litigation because the satisfied patient is more willing to recommend the hospital to others. In addition, the results of the study will form the basis for further research in the settings of health care studies and similar studies with the relevant mandate and knowledge of aspects of quality improvement, which facilitates the knowledge and identification of principles associated with patient satisfaction⁽³⁾. Nursing represents a very important group as the largest technical group involved in providing care in hospitals alongside doctors and consumes nearly a third of the cost of the hospital. Therefore, if the nursing care is not characterized by high quality, the hospital will fail to compete for its responsibilities in providing care, even if the hospital is fully established, beautiful in appearance, and complete with devices and equipment (3). When patients are highly satisfied, enhanced trust results in greater compliance as well as a greater tolerance, uncomfortable or frightening procedures. Hence, greater satisfaction means lower stress and less likelihood of complications, placebo effect also has been achieved by influencing the patient's understanding of care, and high patient satisfaction is the likelihood of reduced errors (3).

In Sudan, patient satisfaction with nursing services remains the most important factor in ensuring the quality of health services. And the Sudanese nursing staff remains the experienced and qualified staff in the scope of nursing service and the source of confidence for patients, whether internally or externally, but despite of this fails to achieve satisfaction for patients in many cases due to ignorance of the factors that affect this and the absence of courses Study is one of the materials that help with this and the lack of continuous training for cadres in Sudanese hospitals, or the lack of interest of the staff in that. Therefore, it is not surprising that we notice frequent accidents between the staff in hospitals and patients or accompanying them because they feel unsatisfied with the service introduced to them, which results in insulting the hospital's reputation and the emigration of staff from it. This is what happens rarely in Sudanese hospitals that employ cadres of other nationalities. Due to the lack of previous studies in this field in Sudan, this study came to be the basis for discovering the extent of patient satisfaction with the nursing services provided in government hospitals in Khartoum State.

METHODS

The descriptive hospital-based cross-sectional approach was used to achieve the objectives of the current study. This study was conducted in the main tertiary Governmental Hospitals of three cities in the State of Khartoum. The departments of internal medicine and general surgery were selected from the hospitals: (Omdurman Teaching Hospital, Alnow Hospital, Ombada Exemplary Hospital, Khartoum North Teaching Hospital, Haj Alsafy Hospital, Alban Gadid Hospital, Ibrahim Malik Teaching Hospital, Al Academy Hospital and Basheir Teaching Hospital). The reason for choosing these hospitals is the fact that they represent the destination of most patients from all states of Sudan, even from neighboring countries, as they receive thousands of patients annually to receive care in these hospitals, and the departments of

internal medicine and surgery are the largest of them, with a capacity of nearly a thousand beds. The sample size selected in this study was 300 participants, according to the method in which it was calculated through the mathematical equation. The participants in this study were selected using the comfort-probability convenience method through interviews using the Arabic version of the Newcastle Scale to collect study data. In the end, SPSS was used to analyze the data and chi-square to test the statistical significance of the study hypotheses.

ABOUT THE TOOL

The Newcastle Nursing Satisfaction Scale (NSNS) has been used to assess patient satisfaction with nursing care in several previous studies. It is a measure characterized by simplicity and ease of use and drawing conclusions from it, as it provides very accurate information about the quality of the nursing service from the perspective of patients and about a way that quality can be monitored over time and notice the difference in it, which helps in continuous improvement (5, 8, 9). The Arabic version of it was used to conduct the current study as in the studies (5, 8). Where the Arabic version of the measurement was translated from the English version by Al-Assaad and Ahmed, the translation and the background translation were carried out by specialists, and the correctness of the face and content was verified by a committee of bilingual nursing experts (5). The NSNS composed of two sections, a section of socio-demographic data which consist of 12 questions, and the other section is the scale of the satisfaction with nursing care, 19 items all are scored on a positive 5- Likert scale (1 = not at all satisfied, 2 = barely satisfied, 2 = quite satisfied, 4 = very satisfied, and 5 = completely satisfied). The total result was computed and converted into a percentage of 100 to obtain the level of satisfaction (5, 8). The scores were categorized into three levels: (I) a score less than 60% indicated a low level of satisfaction with nursing care; (ii) a score between 60-80% indicated moderate level of satisfaction with nursing care and (iii) a score of more than 80% indicated a high level of satisfaction with nursing care (8).

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE TOOLS

The NSNS was found to be valid and reliable in previous studies (5, 8, 9). In the current study, the researcher presented the study tool in its initial form after discussion with the supervisor to a group of arbitrators with knowledge, experience, and officials qualified to judge it. According to the arbitrator's opinion, the researcher made the modifications agreed upon by more than three-quarters of them on the study tool. After that, the university approved the tool through organized a small panel for a group of professors and was finally approved by the Ministry of Health in Khartoum State.

After verifying its apparent validity, a pilot study was conducted from 2/6/2019 to 15/7/2019, was composed of 30 patients from the orthopedic section. The finding appeared that the tool is applicable and practicable after some modifications were done in the demographic data.

“Alpha Cronbach” was used to test the reliability coefficient, the value of the questionnaire's alpha Cronbach coefficient is equal to 0.96, which is very high, which means that the respondents' answers to the questionnaire statements are characterized by a high degree of stability; with a coefficient of 0.98.

RESULTS

The study results showed a moderate to high level of satisfaction in nursing care. It is also presented that there was significant correlation with gender, and educational level. In contrast the study showed no correlation with age, and the place of admissions. Total 300 participants were enrolled in the study (male =157 , females=143), out of which n=157 (52.3%) were from medicine ward and remaining n=143 (47.7%) were from surgery ward. According to the age, the participants were divided into five groups (Table I). 35% of the total participants were having basic school education, 27.3% had secondary school level education, 19.3% received University education while 5.7% participants were graduates. The overall data (gender, age, ward and educational level of participants are shown in Table. I.

Table I. Distribution of participant's data (gender, ward, age, and educational level)

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	157	52.3
	Female	143	47.7
	Total	300	100.0
Ward	Medicine	157	52.3
	Surgery	143	47.7
	Total	300	100.0
Age	18-28 y	54	18.0
	29-38 y	60	20.0
	39-48 y	62	20.7
	49- 58 y	55	18.3
	More than 58 y	69	23.0
	Total	300	100.0
Educational level	Illiterate	38	12.7
	Basic school	105	35.0
	Secondary school	82	27.3
	University graduate	58	19.3
	Total	300	100.0

Out of 300 study subjects, n=55 (18.3%) showed low level of satisfaction with nursing care, n=132 (44%) showed moderate level of satisfaction and n=113 (37.7%) showed high level of satisfaction with nursing care Table II. The association between the satisfaction level of study subjects and socio-demographic data has been shown in Table III.

Table II. Patient satisfaction with nursing care

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	55	18.3
Moderate	132	44.0
High	113	37.7
Total	300	100.0

Table III. Association between patient satisfaction and socio-demographic data

Variables	Satisfaction				p-value	
	Low	Moderate	High	Total		
Gender	Male	35	75	47	157	0.048
	Female	23	58	62	143	
	Total	58	133	109	300	
Ward	Medicine	28	71	58	157	.0904
	Surgery	27	61	55	143	
	Total	55	132	113	300	
Age	18-28 y	11	22	21	54	0.155
	29-38 y	11	23	26	60	
	39-48 y	10	25	27	62	
	49-58 y	8	35	12	55	
	More than 58 y	15	27	27	69	
	Total	55	132	113	300	
Educational level	Illiterate	6	16	16	38	0.056
	Basic	21	45	39	105	
	Secondary	10	35	37	82	
	University	17	31	10	58	
	Graduate	4	6	7	17	
Total	58	133	109	300		

DISCUSSION

Over the past two decades, patient satisfaction studies have gained increasing attention as meaningful as primary sources for identifying gaps and developing appropriate plans to improve quality in healthcare institutions.

The health care system is basically a service system based on services, and customer satisfaction is of paramount importance as in any other service-oriented sector. Thus, patient satisfaction and expectations for care are valid indicators of good nursing care (1).

The purpose of this study is to assess patients' satisfaction with nursing care in the main tertiary governmental hospitals in the state of Khartoum, where the data of this study was collected by distributing questionnaires to the participants who were randomly selected during their stay in the hospital, thus, this study reflects the current patient satisfaction as in many previous studies (1, 5, 6, 8, 10-14) where data were collected from patients during their stay in the hospital. And unlike other studies where data were collected from patients after discharge from the hospital, based on what patients remember about the nursing care they received (15, 16).

The current study showed that the majority of patients (44%) had a medium level of satisfaction, while (37%) had high levels of satisfaction, and (18%) were classified as having a low level of satisfaction. The results of this study are similar to the results of many previous studies, in which the rate of Satisfaction is from medium to high (5, 11-13, 15-17). On the contrary, the literature also shows the results of several previous studies, which revealed a low level of patient satisfaction (1, 6, 8). The reason behind the high satisfaction in the current study may be returned to the simplicity of patients, where most of those who visit governmental facilities are from the middle and lower classes. Thus, their expectation of the provided service in such governmental institutions is rather low, and that is why any level of service can simply satisfy their needs. Add to that, a large part of these hospitals, especially the peripheral ones, has become under the management and operation of some universities in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, which has led to an interest in these hospitals in terms of environment and services. Other benefits such as the stability in the workforce; because the presence of students enrolled at the above-mentioned universities for training are also reported, and these benefits have contributed significantly to the provision of nursing care within these institutions. All of the up reasons may have a positive effect on improving patients' satisfaction with medical services in general and nursing services in particular.

The results of the current study also indicated that females are more satisfied with nursing care than males. This result contradicts the results of some previous studies, which found that male participants were more satisfied with nursing care than females (8, 16). Moreover, the results of the current study are similar to other studies that get the same result (12, 13). In addition, many previous studies did not find a significant difference between satisfaction with nursing care and gender (10, 11, 15).

Several previous studies have found that patients treated in surgical departments are more satisfied with nursing services than patients treated in internal medicine departments (13, 16). Whereas, general surgery patients were more satisfied with the information their relatives were receiving, and they were also satisfied when asked about nurses obtaining their informed consent before any treatment and areas of nursing responsibility (13). While the current study proved that there was no significant difference in the degrees of satisfaction between patients who were treated in surgical departments and patients in internal medicine departments, and this result is consistent with the results of some researchers in previous studies in (5, 12). By reviewing the literature, researchers believe that internal medicine patients usually suffer from many chronic health problems that negatively affect their level of satisfaction, while most surgical patients are treated for more severe health problems that have tangible results on their health. Therefore, the researchers advise that this problem requires further exploration, and they believe that the patients' health conditions and the results of their treatment will have a greater impact on their satisfaction rather than the department in which they were treated (5).

The study also presented that the educational level has a positive effect on patient satisfaction with nursing care. Such findings are similar to many studies that found an inversely proportional relationship

between education level and patient satisfaction (10, 11, 13, 16). As the educational level goes up, the satisfaction with nursing services declines, and we can say that through such findings, a higher educational level increases the expectations from the caring functions of nursing services. However, a study conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia found that patients with a primary education level were less satisfied with nursing services, and attributed this to the fact that the low level of education negatively affects the knowledge of their rights and the ability to understand advice and information provided to them by nurses, which affected their Satisfaction with nursing care due to the inability to communicate well as the majority of the nurses were from the Philippines(8). Another study proves that there is no correlation in satisfaction among patients with different levels of education (5).

Recent studies conducted in this field support the results which proved that the level of expectations of elderly patients is lower; therefore, they are more satisfied with nursing services than other age groups (10, 13, 15, 16). However, there was no significant correlation between patient satisfaction with nursing care and different age groups in the current study. And this result was supported by the results of many previous studies (8, 11, 12).

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the level of patient satisfaction with nursing care was moderate to high. The study also proved that gender and level of education have a significant effect on patient satisfaction, while age and place of admission have no effect on patient satisfaction either.

Recommendations:

- The result of the study could be used by stakeholders to improve the specific effect of nursing care highlighting the main areas in which patients were less satisfied.
- Continuous control of patient satisfaction through investigating several comparable studies periodically is highly requested.

Conflict of Interest:

Authors have no conflicts of interest associated with this publication. As a corresponding author, I confirm that the manuscript has been read and approved for submission by all the named authors.

Ethical Consideration:

This study was approved by Karary University and then approved by the Research and Development Committee of the Ministry of Health in the Khartoum State, which in turn sent letters of approval to the hospital administrations selected to conduct the study. After that, the written and verbal consent of the study participants was obtained for each separately with the right to voluntary participation and understanding the purpose of the study in simple and clear words. He also has the right to maintain his privacy and confidentiality and not to harm him, and to benefit from the researcher's knowledge and skills in education and answering his inquiries and questions, as well as the ability to withdraw from the study at any of the various stages of the study without any deprivation of his rights

Acknowledgements:

My deepest gratitude goes to all of my family members, and my lovely friends who supported me through thick and thin. I also extend my sincere thanks to my teachers, and the SIDRA Group for nourishing my mind with continuous knowledge and replicating my frequent consultations.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all the participants who kindly participated in the research.

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