



A Study on Patient Satisfaction with Healthcare at the Respiriology Department at Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation

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Abstract

Background: Patient satisfaction is a key indicator of the quality of health care delivery and plays a vital role in improving patient outcomes, fostering trust, and enhancing the reputation of health institutions. In respiratory care settings, where patients often require ongoing follow-up and comprehensive management, measuring satisfaction helps identify gaps in service provision and provides guidance for continuous improvement.

Objectives: This study aimed to assess patient satisfaction within the Respiriology Department at Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC), to identify areas for improvement, and to emphasize the importance of patient satisfaction in enhancing departmental performance.

Methods: A mixed-method exploratory cross-sectional study was conducted among 133 patients attending the respiratory clinic at GPHC between July 1st and July 15th, 2023. A structured questionnaire was used to evaluate satisfaction across four domains: appointment process, waiting time, turnaround of laboratory and diagnostic results, staff attitude, and overall services provided. Data were recorded, cleaned, and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS software.

Results: Findings revealed a high overall patient satisfaction rate of 91.1%. Patients expressed satisfaction across all assessed domains, although specific areas requiring improvement were identified, particularly in reducing waiting times and enhancing service delivery efficiency.

Conclusions: The study highlights that while patient satisfaction levels are high, targeted modifications to existing processes could further elevate satisfaction rates to 99%. Ensuring patient satisfaction is essential for improving health outcomes, reducing litigation risks, and strengthening the hospital's public image.

Keywords: Patient Satisfaction; Respiratory Clinic; Respiriology Department; Georgetown Public Hospital; Health Care Quality; Cross-Sectional Study

Introduction and Background

Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, Guyana’s only tertiary and main referral hospital, is very keen on the quality of services provided to its patients [1]. One of its key performance indicators is patient satisfaction [2].

According to Eisenberg, 2020, patient satisfaction is a measure of how please a patient is holistically with the medical and non-medical service(s) that is/are provided by the health care institution. Eisenberg, 2020, further stated that patient satisfaction is achieved when the expectations of a patient are met [3]. Patient satisfaction is important to all stake holder within the hospital [4], to the clinical staff, patient satisfaction leads to patient compliance with treatment which leads to better health outcomes, a reduction in no show rate at follow-up appointments and better communication which leads to a good patient-healthcare provider relationship [5]. Patients leave the healthcare institution feeling better mentally, emotionally, and physically. To the hospital administration, a satisfied patient, is a satisfy customer which leads to patient loyalty, competitive advantage, less medical malpractice suits among others [3].

Patient satisfaction goes beyond the medical care provided to the patient i.e., test and medication. Every single interaction the patient has from the time he or she step onto the hospital grounds is critical to patient satisfaction. From their first interaction with the receptionist, the way they are being spoken to, the clothing the receptionist is wearing [6], the respect given, kindness and empathy extended to them and their relatives, to the time they wait in the waiting area to seeing the doctor, how the doctor interacted with them, how keen he was in explaining what is happening, in respecting autonomy, being empathetic, how pleasant and efficient he is, to the diagnostic assessment [7]. Patients assess how long they wait at the lab, the attitude and behaviour of the phlebotomist or the lab technician or radiology technician to the pharmacist or

the admission staff, cleanliness, responsiveness of the health care personnel to their wants and needs [3], among the other stake holders that are involved in the patient care. All aspects, all areas, all encounters the patient has with healthcare, satisfaction is being measured by the patient.

This paper aim to assess if the follow-up patients that visits the Respiriology Clinic at Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation is satisfied with the health care service their received and to provide recommendations on how to improve this service where necessary.

Objectives

- To determine the level of patient satisfaction at the Respiriology Department at Georgetown Public Hospital
- To develop processes that can be implemented within the department to improve patient satisfaction.
- To highlight the importance of patient satisfaction to the Respiriology Department.

Methodology

A mixed method exploratory cross-sectional study using both qualitative and quantitative design was used. The population selected for this study was the patients that visited the Respiriology department i.e., clinic, asthma/COPD education session and spirometry lab at Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation within the period of two weeks. 113 patients were selected randomly based on the inclusion criteria. Once consent was given from the participant, a survey questionnaire was given to fill using a five-point Likert scale while they wait to see doctor in the waiting room. Upon completion, the participant was asked to drop it in a collection box. At the end of the 14 days, the questionnaires were gathered, and the data recorded and cleaned (checking for errors) using excel spread sheet. The data was analyzed using SPSS software.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All patients who visited the department within the study time (2 weeks) and have an established diagnosis of asthma, COPD, interstitial lung disease, pulmonary hypertension, obstructive sleep apnea, pulmonary fibrosis, bronchiectasis, occupational lung disease, pulmonary embolism, and chronic bronchitis. • Must be 15 years and older. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients on their first visit • Patients that cannot read and interpret the questionnaire on their own. • Visitors to the department such as family or friends accompany the patient. • Persons there for a refill of medication • Consent was not obtained.

Table 1: Showing the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The independent variables looked at for patient satisfaction in this study are:

- Appointment – this is the time from referral to the department to first consultation, the time the patient spends in the waiting room to see doctor, the time between follow-up, the time waited for a spirometry test and the time from diagnosis to having an education session.
- Waiting time on the laboratory and other diagnostic results for: spirometry, bronchoscopy, sputum culture, chest x-ray, CT scan of the chest, blood work, electrocardiogram.
- Attitude of the staff
- Clinician care – this aspect looked at if the patient felt the physician cared, if their condition were explained by the physician, given the ability to make informed decision, empathy and respect shown by the doctor, sufficient time spent with the physician and if the physician listen to the patient and address all his/her concern(s) and if a complete physical examination was done.
- Nursing care – this aspect will look at the nurse’s attitude towards the patient, if they listen to the patient and address their concerns and if the patient is satisfied with nursing care given.
- Hygiene of the Department – this looks at how clean is the clinic rooms, spirometry lab and the patient’s washroom.
- Process of receiving the medication from the pharmacy – this covers refilling prescription and waiting time at the pharmacy to refill meds.

The dependent variables are:

- Quality of medical care received.
- Meeting patient expectation
- Returning for follow-up care
- Recommending this service to family and friends with respiratory disease

Results

The patient satisfaction surveyed at the Respiriology Clinic, Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation examines various aspects of patient experience, from appointment scheduling and check-in processes to waiting times, staff attitude, and the overall quality

of care. The analysis relies on statistical methods, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, Chi-square tests, and T-tests, to identify key factors influencing patient satisfaction.

Key findings

- **Patient Demographics:** Most patients are older adults, with chronic lung diseases being prevalent.
- **Age Distribution:** The age distribution of survey patients ranges from 15 years and older; with a dense patient population noted in age greater than 65 years old hence the flat negatively skewed distribution with a mean of 4.28.
- **Respiratory Diseases:** The most common lung disease noted is interstitial lung disease followed by asthma, COPD, and pulmonary fibrosis.
- **Overall Satisfaction:** Overall, patients are highly satisfied with the clinic.
- **Appointment Process:** 72.6% of patients are very satisfied and 19.5% are satisfied with making follow-up appointments.
- **Waiting Time:** Most patients are generally satisfied with waiting times. However, some dissatisfaction arises when waiting times exceed 15 minutes. The normal waiting time for spirometry/doctor consultation is 15 minutes.
- **Staff Attitude:** Patients are pleased with the attitude of the staff. Most parameters of the attitude of staff, doctors, and nurses were rated satisfied or very satisfied by more than 75% of the patients.
- **Quality of Care:** 61.9% of the patients were very pleased and 29.2% were satisfied with the quality of medical care received.
- **Return for Follow-Up Care:** 92.1% of the patients will return for follow up care.
- **Recommending the Clinic:** 91.1% of the patients will recommend the clinic to someone else suffering from respiratory disease.
- **Receiving Medication:** The pharmacy plays a significant role in patients uplifting their medication. The respiriology patients uplift their medication from central pharmacy which channels 200 – 300 patients per day.
- **Key Satisfaction Drivers:** Factors such as the health professional’s carefulness during examinations, nursing care,

and the ability to make informed decisions are significantly correlated with overall patient satisfaction.

- **T-Test Results:** T-test analysis (Table 38 and 39) identifies the most and least important correlated factors in patient satisfaction.

Areas for improvement

The process of booking an appointment for spirometry has been shown as the least correlated factor and waiting times at the pharmacy.

Patients were generally satisfied with all the services provided, especially the attitude of the staff, including the doctors and nurses, clean environment, and the results of blood, sputum, etc. turnover time. Patients were satisfied with the appointment process except for the spirometry test. Furthermore, they expressed mixed satisfaction levels for the process at the pharmacy. Nevertheless, on average, over 85% of the patients were satisfied with the healthcare service received, would return for follow-up care, would recommend the department to others, and said that the services they received met their expectations.

Discussion

For descriptive analysis, the data was negatively skewed with variation from steep to low. Showing patients were satisfied and very satisfied with the appointment process, waiting time, attitude of staff and services delivered.

Based on correlation analysis, the correlation between the process of booking an appointment and the quality of medical service received is 0.018 indicating a negatively weak correlation

The regression coefficient analysis showed that for all the independent variables, "The {doctor/other health professional} was very careful to check everything when examining you" is the most significant factor (<0.001) that determine patient satisfaction in the quality of health care received.

Chi-square analysis highlighted the association the different variables with their statistically significant along with their dependent variable. These are:

- The process of booking an appointment with the doctor and location

- Returning for follow-up care and gender
- Time doctor spent with the patient and ethnicity.
- Physical examination and education level
- Quality of medical care received and educational level.
- The time the doctor spent with the patient and location.

The one sample T-test highlighted the five most important and correlated factor to be:

- Echocardiogram
- The nursing care received from our nurses.
- Consider your complete experience with this clinic, how satisfied are you with recommending us to a friend or colleagues with respiratory symptoms.
- The quality of medical care received.
- Spirometry results

While the least correlated factor/important factor in patient satisfaction is the process of booking an appointment for Spirometry.

One-sided and two-sided T-test both showed P value of <0.001 for all the different variable thus indicating that all the questions used in the survey were correct or significant.

Patient satisfaction is very important as it is a marker to assess performance and quality of service. A satisfied patient will return, recommend the services to others, better health outcomes as they will adhere to treatment and advises/recommendations and present for follow-up care. Patient satisfaction is vital to the continuous success and survival of any healthcare institution.

This surveyed highlighted the following:

- The appointment process for spirometry and uplift medication at the pharmacy are areas that need improvement.
- Waiting time is not too troublesome an area but should be looked at as a KPI and as such reduce it as much as possible for the patients.
- Strengths include clean environment, attitude of healthcare staff, and turn over time for laboratory and other diagnostic results.

- The areas that need improvement may be a challenge, but it is not impossible to achieve a more efficient service/flow.
- Generally, the patients from the respiratory clinic express satisfaction in the healthcare service they received.

Recommendations

Government recommendations (Ministry of Health)

- Add unavailable respiratory medications to the national formulary and create strategies for importers to provide these medications.
- Decentralize the respirology department to district hospitals to alleviate patient overload and physician/nurse burnout at the main clinic in Guyana.

Administrative recommendations

- Adjust procedures for booking tests like spirometry to allow for earlier scheduling.
- Increase equipment and staff to handle the patient load for spirometry tests.
- Offer spirometry tests within 2 weeks of the request.
- Establish mini-pharmacies within the respirology department for easier access to medication.
- Implement an electronic appointment system for online booking and result access.

Respirology Department Recommendations:

- Conduct frequent patient satisfaction surveys.
- Perform SWOT analyses to assess department status.
- Individualize the standard consultation referral timeframe based on patient symptoms and urgency.

Central Lab Recommendations:

- Ensure timely blood test and sputum culture reports are available in-patient charts.
- Implement an electronic system (Electronic Health Record) for uploading and viewing patient results.

Conclusion

Overall, the patients are satisfied with the service received from the Respiriology department at Georgetown Public Hospital. More than 90% satisfaction was achieved for the areas tested:

appointment process, turnover time for laboratory and other diagnostic results, attitude of staff and service provided. A direct question was asked if patients were satisfied with the service, 91.1% of patients were satisfied.

Despite this significant satisfaction rate, there are people who encounter some dilemmas during their visit. It is important to note areas where patients referred being dissatisfied about and develop or modified processes within the department that will aid in improving patient satisfaction.

It is important to achieve patient satisfaction as it ensures patients will return for follow-up care, will adhere to treatment, follow all advice and recommendation given thus improving patient outcome. Other people suffering from respiratory illness can get help as satisfied patients will recommend patients to utilize the service. Once patient expectations are met, less lawsuit and complication with the media, gossip, and innocent tarnishing of institutional and departmental character.

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