PERCEPTION AND EXPECTATION OF PATIENTS TOWARDS PRIVATE HOSPITAL SERVICES IN VIRUDHUNAGAR

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ABSTRACT

Health services refer to the patient care provided by medical professionals, health care personnel, and health care organizations. A patient can receive limitless services health care at home. Depending on the individual patient's condition, health care can range from nursing care to specialized medical services. Healthcare services in India are cost-effective. The low medical cost, along with superior quality healthcare service, is what makes people from all around the world, fly to India for their treatment. Additionally, India excels with state of the art medical facilities, reputed health care professionals, quality nursing facilities and traditional healthcare therapies. Moreover, the government is investing extensively in developing new technologies to improve the infrastructure and healthcare services in India. The present study focuses on the perception and expectation of the patients towards private Hospitals for their health care in Virudhunagar.

Keywords: Health care, Pharmacy, Perception, Aspiration.

INTRODUCTION

Hospitals are essential to lead a quality life of human being. Health is a prerequisite for labour productivity and human development. Everyone in the world wants to lead a healthy life. But in reality, because of so many reasons like changes in food habit, climate, lifestyle, environmental related issues gradually deteriorate the human life. So most of us are patients having some issues physically or sometimes mentally. Visiting

hospital is unavoidable one and hospital is the place where patients met doctors for treatment. The treatment given by the hospital is generally called as Health care services (Kalai Selvi, 2015). Hospital services is a term that refers to medical and surgical services and the supporting laboratories, equipment and personnel that make up the medical and surgical mission of a hospital or hospital system.

Healthcare industry continues to face several challenges from the environment. The ability of the healthcare organization to deliver fast and effective patient care is critical to its success. (Friedenberg, 2017 and Noorjahan, 2018). However, enabling hospitals to provide better healthcare for their patients require a significant other issues like increasing efficiencies in how the staff delivers the service ranging from gate keeper attitudes, admission procedures, billing provisions to discharge of the patients from the hospital.

The following published articles were referred to identify the research gap for this study. Patient satisfaction is actually determined by the interplay of two factors i.e. patient expectations and experience of the real services. If the performance falls short of expectations, he is dissatisfied and if it matches the expectations, then vice versa.

Patient satisfaction is therefore a match of expectations with experiences of the patient during a treatment process. There are multiple reasons to study the concept of patient satisfaction. It is considered as an important outcome of the quality of healthcare. (Kalavathi, 2010).

Getting views of the patients on the care services is a much realistic tool to evaluate and improve the health care services, since it is based on direct experiences of the users. The rising strength of consumerism and quality consciousness in the society with a shift from doctor-to-patient relationship to modern provider-client attitude has highlighted the importance of recording patient views on healthcare delivery. Patient satisfaction results in enhanced compliance of the patients to the medical regimens, appropriate use of medical resources and quick recovery from illness. Besides, evaluation by the patients makes medical staff aware about their shortcomings. (Aryamala, 2020). The employees understand that they will be held accountable to the patients as well as administration. As a result, care providers tend to acknowledge patient's rights and involve them in treatment decisions.

Patients' suggestions also help policy makers and planners to identify bottlenecks in the system, thereby introducing customized

improvements in the services. Its importance increases further as contemporary consumers are more aware due to advancements in information technology. Their expectations from health organizations have increased and priorities changed. However, today's doctor being more dependent on technology is losing the skill of understanding the emotions and perceptions of his patients. (Karthick, 2008).

This is creating a gap between what patients want and what doctors perceive as important. It is imperative as well as quite rational to periodically undertake surveys in healthcare facilities, as often as possible. Patient perceptions are influenced by socio cultural background of patients, their beliefs, attitudes and level of understanding. Hence, the objectives of the study have been planned to analyse the reasons behind in choosing the private hospital in Virudhunagar, to study the respondent's attitude towards the private hospital in Virudhunagar and to offer suggestions based on the findings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected by conducting a sample survey of patients in Virudhunagar private hospitals. Totally 11 private hospitals are functioning effectively to take care of the patients (Table 1). The total number of patients visited

per month was taken and from that average number of patients visited to the hospital per day was computed. All the eight private hospitals are taken into account for the study. For the present study, the sample of 250 patients of private hospitals were chosen proportionately for the present study. The data was collected during the period of December 2022 to February 2023.

Table 1: Private Hospital in Virudhunagar.

Name of the Hospital	Average No. of patients visited per day randomly	Sample chosen
Thiruvengadam Hospital	67	22
Lysander Hospital	204	67
Care AKPS Hospital	39	13
Hari Balaji Hospital	17	6
Shivashankar Hospital	25	8
Dr.Muthusamy Hospital	42	14
MPCN Hospital	108	35
Dr. Kalidoss Hospital	122	40
Lakshmi Clinic	65	21
Thredtha Clinic	28	9
Karthick Hospital	44	14
Total	761	250

Stratified random sampling technique was used for this study. A well-conceived questionnaire was used for the collection of primary data. The respondents (Patients) were met in the hospital during their visit and if they accepted for the survey, questionnaire was sent to them. If they filled the questionnaire immediately, it was collected at

the hospital. Some respondents filled the questionnaire and sent it to the Whatsapp in the form of scanned copy. The secondary data was collected from research publications, standard journals and periodicals, books, websites, etc., The primary data was analysed by using percentage analysis, gap score analysis and Factor analysis. The opinion of the respondents towards the private hospital services was measured by using Likert's five point scaling technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, socio-economic profile of the respondents and their attitude towards private hospital services are taken into account.

Table 2: Socio-economic profile of the respondents

Socio-Economic Variables	Gender	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	97	38.8
	Female	153	61.2
Age (in years)	Below 30	32	12.8
	30-50	64	25.6
	Above 50	154	61.6
Monthly Income (Rs.)	Below 10000	29	11.6
	10000 – 20000	93	37.2
	20000 – 30000	54	21.6
	30000 – 40000	25	10
	40000 – 50000	33	13.2
	Above 50000	16	6.4
Family Size	Below 4	97	38.8
	4-6	103	41.2
	Above 6	50	20
Native place	Inside Virudhunagar	188	75.2
	Outside Virudhunagar	62	24.8

Source: Primary data

Table 2 shows that out of 250 respondents, 61.2% of the respondents are female and 38.8% are male. Madhavan (2015) stated in his study titled "Hospital Services in Government and Private Hospitals – A Comparative Study" that mostly women visited the hospitals more in number. Among these, 61.6% of the respondents are in the age group of above 50 years, 25.6% belong to age group of 30-50 years and 12.8% come under the age group of below 30 years. Respondents in the age group of above 45 years visited the hospitals regularly (Vasanthi, 2017). In the present study, regarding the income, 37.2% of the respondents have earned Rs. 10,000 – Rs. 20,000 per month, 21.6% have earned Rs. 20,000 – Rs. 30,000 per month, 13.2% have earned Rs. 40,000 – Rs. 50,000 per month, 11.6% have earned below Rs. 10,000 per month, 10% have earned Rs. 30,000 – Rs. 40,000 per month and the remaining 6.4% have earned above Rs. 50,000 per month. The data regarding the family members, 41.2% have 4-6 members in their family 38.8% and 20 % have below 4 and 6 members in their family respectively. The residential status 75.2% of the respondents revealed that they resided inside Virudhunagar and 24.8% resided outside Virudhunagar.

The attitude of the respondents towards physician's competence and medical

care, Nursing care, Hospital environment, Add on Facilities (Laboratory, medical shop), billing services, Waiting time and Follow up are measured with the help of Factor analysis. In order to check the internal consistency of the twenty statements, Cronbach Alpha test was used and the results are given in the Table 3.

Table 3: Cronbach Alpha Test Results

Attitude of the Respondents towards Private Hospital Services	No. of Statements	Cronbach Alpha	P value
Hospital Environment	3	0.8402	0.000
Add on Facilities (Laboratory, medical shop)	3	0.9517	0.000
Physician's competence and medical care	3	0.8415	0.000
Nursing care	3	0.9045	0.000
Waiting time	3	0.8396	0.000
Billing service	3	0.7046	0.000
Follow up	2	0.8013	0.000

Source: Primary data

The reliability scale of the 'Add on Facilities (Laboratory, medical shop)' and 'Nursing care' are 0.9517 and 0.9045 respectively which explain that the opinion given by the respondents towards those statements are excellent. The Cronbach Alpha reliability scale of the 'Hospital Environment', 'Physician's competence and medical care', 'Waiting time' and 'Follow up' are 0.8402, 0.8415, 0.8396 and 8013 respectively which show that the opinion given by the respondents towards the those

statements are good. The reliability scale of the 'Billing service' is 0.7046 which explains that the opinion given by the respondents towards those statements are acceptable.

Table 4: Perception of the Respondents towards Private Hospital Services – Factor Analysis

Dimensions / Factor	Item	Factor Loading	Dimension Loading
Physician's competence and medical care	Professional competence of Physician	0.945	0.901
	Professional appearance	0.941	
	Easy approachability	0.936	
Add on Facilities (Laboratory medical shop)	Well-equipped laboratories	0.927	0.844
	Medical shop in the hospital campus	0.916	
	Normal charges for test	0.901	
Nursing care	Qualified nurses	0.913	0.718
	Availability of adequate nurses	0.907	
	Caring behaviour of nurses	0.855	
Hospital environment	Well furnished hospitals	0.838	0.822
	Comfortable for patients	0.823	
	Hygienic environment	0.816	
Billing Services	Proper billing system for physician service	0.903	0.817
	Quick billing system	0.843	
	Provide bills for claim	0.801	
Waiting time	Less waiting time for admission	0.964	0.805
	Less time taken by physician to diagnose the health issues	0.960	
	Medication at regular intervals is in time	0.927	
Follow up	Dates given for subsequent check up	0.915	0.868
	Availability of doctors at the check up dates	0.907	

Source: Primary data

By using Principle Component Analysis (PCA) under Varimax Rotation method, the perception of the respondents towards the eighteen statements are rotated and the results are given in Table 4.

Regarding perception, Physician's competence and medical care (Professional competence of Physician) got a dominant factor loading, followed by Add on Facilities (Laboratory, medical shop), Nursing care (Qualified nurses), Hospital environment (Well furnished hospitals), Billing Services (Proper billing system for physician service), Waiting time (Less waiting time for admission) and Follow up (Dates given for subsequent check up). Kumar and Amuthan (2018) analysed the factors and reported that 'Convenient to meet doctors' is a variable perceived by the respondents followed by 'Multidisciplinary specialty' in private hospitals.

Table 5 states the expectations of the respondents towards private hospital services.

Table 5: Expectation of the Respondents towards Private Hospital Services – Factor Analysis

Dimensions / Factor	Item	Factor Loading	Dimension Loading
Waiting time	Less time taken by physician to diagnose the health issues	0.967	0.915
	Medication at regular intervals is in time	0.955	
	Less waiting time for admission	0.943	
Hospital environment	Hygienic environment	0.972	0.903
	Well furnished hospitals	0.966	
	Comfortable for patients	0.929	
Physician's competence and medical care Nursing care	Easy approachability	0.937	0.847
	Professional competence of Physician	0.932	
	Professional appearance	0.829	
Billing Services	Quick billing system	0.849	0.862
	Proper billing system for physician service	0.830	
	Provide bills for claim	0.812	
Waiting time	Less time taken by physician to diagnose the health issues	0.917	0.840
	Medication at regular intervals is in time	0.899	
	Less waiting time for admission	0.876	
Add on Facilities (Laboratory, medical shop)	Normal charges for test	0.944	0.928
	Well-equipped laboratories	0.921	
	Medical shop in the hospital campus	0.916	
Follow up	Availability of doctors at the check up dates	0.877	0.905
	Dates given for subsequent check up	0.854	

Source: Primary data

Regarding expectation, waiting time (Less time taken by physician to diagnose the health issues) got a dominant factor loading, followed by Hospital environment (Hygiene environment), Physician's competence and medical care Nursing care (Easy approachability), Billing Services (Quick billing system), waiting time (Less time taken by physician to diagnose the health issues) and Add on Facilities - Laboratory, medical shop (Normal charges for test) and Follow up (Availability of doctors at the check up dates). Murugan and Jeeva (2016) have stated that 'Caring nature of doctors and nurses' is aspired by the patients in private hospitals.

Table 6: GAP Score Analysis Between Perception and Expectation of the Patients towards Private Hospital Services

Attitude	Expectation score (ES)	Perception score (PS)	GAP (ES-PS)
Hospital Environment	47.14	42.05	5.09
Add on Facilities (Laboratory, medical shop)	39.56	32.48	7.08
Physician's competence and medical care	40.05	37.93	2.12
Nursing care	27.69	21.37	6.32
Waiting time	55.47	50.37	5.1
Billing service	30.23	28.57	1.66
Follow up	33.28	37.60	4.32

Source: Primary data

Table 6 points out the gap score analysis between perception and expectation towards private hospital services.

Among the seven factors, Gap score is less in 'Physician's competence and medical care' (2.12) and 'Billing service' (1.66) which denotes that the patients are satisfied with two factors. The gap score is high in 'Add on Facilities (Laboratory, medical shop)' and 'Waiting time'. Ruban and Jency (2020) found out that 'Hygienic environment' scored a high gap in the service quality of private hospitals.

On the basis of findings of the study, suggestions are given. The hospitals have to took efforts to reduce the waiting time of the patients as they are sick and not able to sit for a long time. The doctors must treat the patients pleasant and polite. Nurses have to render the service with friendly nature. The patients expect testing centres to avoid travel to other places and medical shops inside the campus of the hospitals to get the availability of medicine.

Patient's expectation is an attitude which determines the quality of the hospital. When the expectation exceeds beyond perception, the hospitals are in the position to improve their services. It is the degree to which an individual regards health-care as useful, effective and beneficial. In other

words it is the judgment of the patients about their needs and expectations met by the care provided, or an evaluation based on the fulfillment of expectations of the user. The patients are expected more involvement of Doctors in their role, if they fail the hospital industry face a big problem because Patients are the king in hospital sector.

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