

Patients' quality assessment of ambulatory obstetric and gynaecological services

Bojar I*, Wdowiak L, Ostrowski T

Management and Economics of Health Care Department, Lublin Medical University, Poland

Abstract

Purpose: The quality could be assessed from two perspectives: internal and external. From the internal perspective the quality means being consistent with particular conditions and standards. The external perspective is based on relative assessment of the product made by a client who is also aware of other competitors' offer. Despite the professional assessment which is focused on providing health services according to medical and managerial correctness, patient's assessment is also relevant. Measuring patient's satisfaction is additional method of health services quality assessment.

The aim of the study was to estimate patients' opinion on quality of ambulatory obstetric and gynaecological services.

Material and methods: The study was conducted in 11 obstetric and gynaecological out-patient clinics of Lublin in September and October 2003. The study tool was an author's questionnaire. Patients were asked to assess such areas as registration before visit, their relationship with nurses and gynaecologists and other aspects of services provision like intimacy assurance and respecting Patient's Rights. The collected data was statistically analysed.

Results: 635 patients took part in the study. The biggest groups in the studied population were women at the age of 20-30 years, married, living in cities and secondary educated. It was found that around half of the population is satisfied and 2.2% of them are unsatisfied with the fact that they have chosen particular out-patient clinic. More than 70% of women had positive opinion of following aspects

influencing general opinion about service quality: politeness of reception desk staff, opening hours, the length of time before a patient is seen by the specialist, intimacy assurance and respect for Patient's Rights in the practice. 80% of patients were satisfied with the relationship with nurses and 3.3% were unsatisfied with it. Eight patients out of ten were satisfied with gynaecological care, less than 2% were unsatisfied. The studied women had also high opinion of the course of visit. More than 90% of studied patients trust their gynaecologists.

Conclusions: More satisfied with the services provided by the obstetric and gynaecological out-patient clinics were women living in cities than in villages and those visiting nonpublic than public practices.

Key words: quality assessment, obstetric and gynaecological services, patient's satisfaction.

Introduction

The quality could be assessed from two perspectives: internal and external. From the internal perspective the quality means being consistent with particular conditions and standards. The external perspective is based on relative assessment of the product made by a client who is also aware of other competitors' offer. Despite the professional assessment which is focused on providing health services according to medical and managerial correctness, patient's assessment is also relevant. Measuring patient's satisfaction is additional method of health services quality assessment.

Present interest in quality of health care is connected with standardization of offered services, patient's right to choose, increased patients' expectations and increasing requirements of auditing organisations regarding health care services.

The aim of the study was to estimate patients' opinion on quality of ambulatory obstetric and gynaecological services.

* CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Management and Economics of Health Care Department,
Lublin Medical University
ul. Chodźki 1, 20-093 Lublin
Tel/Fax: +48 81 7405752
e-mail: ibojar@poczta.onet.pl (Iwona Bojar)

Figure 1. Patients' satisfaction with the choice of out-patient obstetric and gynaecological clinic

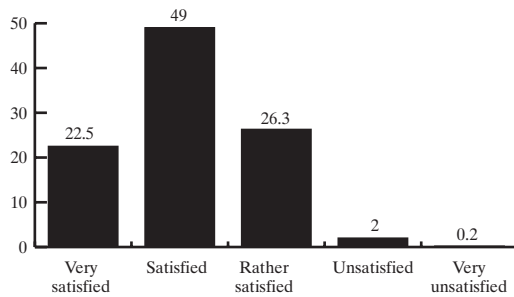


Table 1.

	Opening hours	Possibility of phone registration	Awaiting time for a visit	Politeness of reception desk staff	Intimacy assurance	Respect for Patient's Rights
Yes	92%	87.7%	80.9%	87.7%	95.8%	87.6%
No	8%	12.3%	19.1%	12.3%	4.2%	12.4%

Material and methods

The study was conducted in randomized obstetric and gynaecological out-patient clinics of Lublin in September and October 2003. Public (5) and non-public (6) clinics that had contract for 2003 with Lublin Department of National Health Fund were included in the study. The study tool was an author's questionnaire. Patients were asked to assess such areas as registration before visit, their relationship with nurses and gynaecologists and other aspects of services provision like intimacy assurance and respecting Patient's Rights. The collected data was statistically analysed using computer programme Statistica 6.0. Chi-square test was used to find significant correlation between two values. P value < 0.05 was set up as being statistically significant.

Results

635 patients took part in the study. The biggest groups in the studied population were women at the age of 20-30 years, married, living in cities and secondary educated. Before detailed analysis of satisfaction with various aspects of organisation functioning patients could estimate their general satisfaction with the choice of particular obstetric and gynaecologic clinic they made. Around half of the population (49%) is satisfied, some of them even very satisfied and 2.2% are unsatisfied with the fact that they have chosen particular out-patient clinic (Fig. 1).

More than 70% of women had positive opinion of following aspects influencing general opinion about service quality: politeness of reception desk staff, opening hours, the length of time before a patient is seen by the specialist, intimacy assurance and respect for Patient's Rights in the practice (Tab. 1).

In patients' opinion the most inconvenient aspect is too long waiting time before a patient is seen by a specialist.

Figure 2. The relations with nurses and midwives in patients' opinion

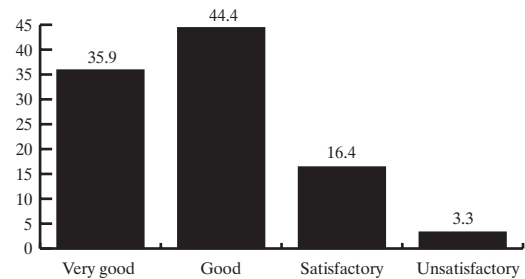
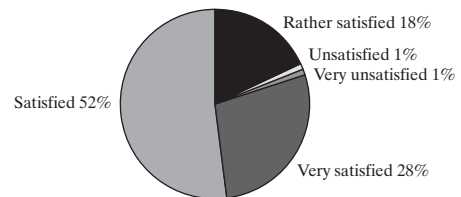


Figure 3. Patients' satisfaction with gynaecological care of out-patient clinics



In most patients' opinion the relationship with nurses of out-patient clinics (e.g. in treatment room) is good (44.4%) or very good (35.9%) with. For 16.4% studied women the relationship is satisfactory and 3.3% patients are unsatisfied with it (Fig. 2).

All divorced and widows had no remarks on nurses and midwives' work. Single patients were more critical than the others regarding nurses ($p < 0.05$).

University and elementary educated women are the most satisfied with nurses' work. Less satisfied were secondary and technical educated women ($p < 0.05$).

More patients living in voivodship city and any other city than those from villages considered that relationship with nurses of clinics were only satisfactory ($p < 0.05$).

Most patients of non-public clinics evaluated the relationship with nurses and midwives as very good (41.83%) whereas patients of public clinics evaluated it as good (47.85%).

Eight patients out of ten were satisfied with gynaecological care (28% – very satisfied), every fifth woman is rather satisfied less than 2% are unsatisfied (Fig. 3).

The studied women had also high opinion of the course of visit. Almost all patients considered that a doctor carefully listened to them during a visit (93.5%). Nearly 92% of women are always informed about planned treatment and 94% patients said that a doctor gives information on how to take prescribed medications. Patients had a little worse opinion on examination during the visit. Every third said that a doctor not always examined her by during the visit. More than 90% of studied patients trust their gynaecologists.

The most satisfied with the services provided by the obstetric and gynaecological out-patient clinics were women living in voivodship city, less satisfied were those living in any other cities and women coming from villages were the least satisfied. Also those who have good financial conditions were more satisfied with the quality of gynaecological care.

The type of out-patient clinics had an influence on patients' satisfaction with obstetric and gynaecological services. Patients visiting non-public are generally more satisfied with services than patients of public clinics. It can be seen both in higher satisfaction with the choice of particular clinic and general satisfaction with gynaecological care.

Discussion

Most patients of obstetric and gynaecological clinics (88%) said that the staff of reception desk was nice and polite. These opinions are better than those observed in the study carried out by CBOS in which half of the population has no critical remarks on health care administrative workers attitude towards patients. 40% of patients said that they were treated politely and nicely. However, 9% of women are unsatisfied with the way they were treated by administrative staff of health care organisations [1].

The relations with nurses and midwives of clinics were evaluated as good and very good by most patients. The results are similar to those obtained in the study of CBOS in which 60% of population said that they were always treated properly by doctors and nurses, 36% considered that the way they were treated was usually proper. Few patients have critical opinion about medical staff attitude towards them (3%). [1] It should be emphasized that according to U.S. studies nearly 80% of patients' satisfaction depends on nurses [2].

Patients expect professionalism and kindness from a doctor which is emphasized by different authors [3,4]. The ability of accurate communication with a patient has greater meaning than duration of visit and their recurrence. Patients satisfaction – measure of quality of care is closely connected with doctors' communicative skills [5].

The course of visit was evaluated quite high by patients. The results are similar to those obtained in CBOS study in which 90% of studied group said that they were always or usually clearly informed by physicians, nurses or other health care workers [6].

According to Hupert [7] 94% of patients considered that a doctor of out-patient clinic is friendly and disinterested and

examines patients thoroughly and those aspects were evaluated higher than in the author's study [7].

The patients' opinion about trust in their doctors were very positive. These results are far better than those obtained in 2001 by CBOS where 16% of people declared very high trust in their doctors, 64% quite high, 13% quite low, 1% very low and 5% could not describe their trust in a doctor [8].

Conclusions

Patients are generally satisfied with the services of out-patient clinics.

High and very high opinion about functioning of out-patient clinics is connected with:

1. high and very high opinion of registration desk work organisation,
2. high and very high opinion about relation with nurses and midwives,
3. high satisfaction with gynaecological care,
4. high opinion about gynaecologist's qualifications and trust in physician.

References

1. Opinie o stosunku do pacjentów w placówkach opieki zdrowotnej. Komunikat z badań. Warszawa: CBOS; 2001.
2. Eriksen LR. Patient satisfaction: an indicator of nursing care quality? *Nurse Manage*, 1987; 18(7): 31-5.
3. Cieślak P. Personel medyczny w oczach pacjentów. *Służba Zdrowia*, 2002; 5(8): 3101-2.
4. Kabacińska B. Satysfakcja pacjentów hospitalizowanych na oddziałach chirurgicznych i internistycznych w szpitalach województwa wielkopolskiego – analiza wybranych aspektów. *Zdrowie i Zarządzanie*. 2002; IV(3-4): 85-7.
5. Marcinkowski JT, Stachowska M, Maciejewski S. Priorytetowe znaczenie umiejętności komunikowania się z pacjentem w praktyce lekarskiej. Materiały pokonferencyjne Międzynarodowego Sympozjum Naukowego Dni Medycyny Społecznej i Zdrowia Publicznego „Między Profilaktyką a Medycyną Kliniką”. Poznań, 2003.
6. Informowanie pacjentów o stanie zdrowia i sposobie leczenia. Komunikat z badań. Warszawa: CBOS; 2001.
7. Hupert Z. Jakość w opiece medycznej koncepcja pomiaru, IMW. Lublin, 2003.
8. Opinie o błędach medycznych i zaufaniu do lekarzy. Komunikat z badań. Warszawa: CBOS; 2001.