

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

PATIENTS'S SATISFACTION REGARDING PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES IN URBAN AREAS OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Aim and objective: The objective of this study was to evaluate patient's satisfaction about physiotherapy services in urban areas of Pakistan. **Materials & Methods:** A cross sectional survey study was conducted on 278 patients receiving physiotherapy services at different tertiary care hospitals in urban areas of Pakistan. Simple random sampling technique was used to collect data. The participants were assessed using semi-structured questionnaire. Reliability of questionnaire was also assessed with cronbach's alpha value (0.9). Data was presented through frequency and percentages of patients responses. Data analysis was done using SPSS. **Results:** The results of the study showed that out of 278 patients 237 (85.25%) were overall satisfied with the physiotherapy services. **Conclusion:** This cross sectional survey showed that most of the patients are satisfied with physiotherapy services provided to them at different hospitals in urban areas of Pakistan. The study results concluded that ambiance, duration of treatment session, effectiveness of the treatment and instructions regarding home program were the important factors that affect satisfaction of the patients with physiotherapy services. **Keywords:** Physiotherapy, satisfaction, physiotherapy services, physiotherapy modalities

INTRODUCTION

Satisfaction is basically "the state of being gratified and act of fulfilling one's need or desires". when we talk about satisfaction related to health services then it is the reaction of recipients or the perception they developed related to the quality of care⁽¹⁾. Satisfaction of patients actually shows the patient's attitude about the health care services and how patients perceive about health services or health care providers^(2,15).

Patient satisfaction determines the value and importance of health care. Level of satisfaction is a predictor variable that can help in evaluation of health care services and behavior of health care providers⁽³⁾. Physiotherapy is a field of rehabilitative medicine with purpose of improving mobility, relieves pain and helping patients to maintain and recover physical abilities and improves the quality of life. Physical therapists aimed at treatment, prevention and rehabilitation to promote the wellbeing of individuals. Physiotherapy includes the treatment of functional dynamic disorders and its prevention that affects the body organs and systems, caused by acquired diseases and trauma. So the important role of physiotherapy is the recovery of patients and re-introduces the patients into social interactions^(4,5).

In physiotherapy, satisfaction level of patients is relatively under-utilized outcome measure^(6,7). The satisfaction level of patients plays important role in monitoring perceptions

about quality of health care services.⁽⁸⁾ Health care quality assessment services usually based on three dimensions i.e. structure, process and results. The evaluation of structure depends upon the materials and resources present in health care organization and the number of health care professionals. The evaluation of process depends upon the way of giving health care services or working procedures. The assessment of results concerns the outcomes of received care⁽⁹⁾. Besides these three aspects, patients and health care providers' relationship, accessibility and financial problems are also the important factors that help in assessment of health care quality⁽¹⁰⁾.

The satisfaction level of physiotherapy services by users determines the quality of care or services provided in both private clinics and government hospitals. The patient's level of satisfaction has an economic impact on the physiotherapists. Mostly satisfied patients remain loyal to the physiotherapists and offer good feedback to other patients or people about physiotherapists that can lead to the success of therapist or even hospitals. The link between adherence to treatment and satisfaction results in improved cost effectiveness of care.

Dissatisfied patients may cause potential economic harm because dissatisfied patients spread negative views and may not return for care and seeks another physiotherapist for better services^(2,10). Considering all these aspects, Physical therapists should struggle to identify the items or factors that are closely linked to satisfaction of patients.

Common observation in Pakistan the patient's satisfaction is mainly being affected by timing issues of therapist as limited therapist are available for more patients and this can affect professionalism and due to patient burden therapist are unable to apply skills that can affect the satisfaction level of patients to a greater extent. Scheduling of appointments, easy access to the service area are some other factors affecting the satisfaction of patients. This study was conducted to explore the level of satisfaction of patients using physiotherapy services and identifying the areas lacking in physiotherapy services that will be helpful in the betterment of physiotherapy services and in achieving higher degree of patient satisfaction.

MATERIAL & METHODS

A Cross sectional survey was conducted at different hospitals of urban areas of Pakistan after the approval from ethical committees of related hospitals. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 278 patients receiving physiotherapy. The study is completed over time period of five months from March 2016 to July 2016. The male and female patients who are above 18 years of age were included in the study and patients having any type of speech, comprehension or cognitive impediments were excluded from the study. Semi-structured likert scale was used to collect the data regarding satisfaction of patients. Cronbach's alpha value of scale was 0.9, which indicates a high level of internal consistency for scale. Anonymity and confidentiality of participants' data was maintained throughout the research. Informed consent was obtained from all the study participants prior to recruiting in the study. SPSS ver. 21 was used to analyze the data and frequencies and percentages were used to present the results of the study.

RESULTS

The mean of the study participants was 40.45 ± 15.6 years. From the total sample size $n=170$ (61.2%) were females and $n=108$ (38.8%) were males in the study. There were $n=208$ (74.8%) married people who participated in the study and $n=70$ (25.2%) unmarried people and it indicates that the percentage of the married people is higher. There were 80 (28.8%) patients between the ages of 18-28 years, 49 (17.6%) patients between the ages of 29-38 years, 60 (21.6%) patients between the ages of 39-48 years, 48 (17.3%) patients the ages of 49-58 years, 30 (10.8%) between the ages of 59-68 years, 9 (3.2%) patients between the ages of 69-78 years, 2 (0.7%) patients between the ages of 79-88 years. This indicates the highest number of patients receiving physiotherapy services is between the ages of 18-28 years.

The results showed that 68 (24.5%) patients were with no education at all, 29 (10.4%) had 5 years of education, 9 (3.2%) had 8 years of education, 40 (14.4%) had 10 years of education, 30 (10.8%) had 12 years of education, 59 (21.2%) had 14 years of education, 43 (15.4%) had 16 years of education. Majority of the patients who participated in the study had no education at all. 21 (7.6%) patients who participated in the study took treatment for neck region, 69 (24.8%) patients took treatment for shoulder, 16 (5.8%) took treatment for elbow, 14 (5%) took treatment for wrist, 3 (1.1%) took treatment for hand, 69 (24.8%) took treatment for lower back, 12 (4.3%) for hip, 37 (13.3%) for knee, 7 (2.5%) for foot, 1 (0.4%) for TMJ, 6 (2.2%) for stroke, 21 (7.6%) for spinal cord and 2 (0.7%) for nerve injury. The majority of patients who participated in the study were taking treatment for shoulder and lower back.

128 (46) patients who participated in the study were referred by the orthopedic specialist, 18 (6.5%) by neurologist, 54 (19.4%) by general practitioner and 78 (28.1%) self-approached. This shows that highest numbers of patients were referred by the orthopedic specialist and had musculoskeletal problems. 76 (27.3%) patients received manual therapy, 21 (7.6%) received electrotherapy, 150 (54%) received combination of manual and electro therapy, 14 (5%) received combination of manual therapy and medicine, 1 (0.4%) received a combination of electrotherapy and medicine and 16 (5.8%) received a combination of manual therapy, electrotherapy and medicine. 132 (47.5) patients received treatment from the male therapist and 146 (52.5%) received from female therapist so the no of patients receiving treatment from female therapist is higher. The patient's satisfaction regarding physiotherapy services are presented in table 1.

DISCUSSION

The study was carried out to determine the satisfaction level of patients receiving physiotherapy services. The result of study showed greater number of patients were satisfied with physiotherapy services.

The study results demonstrated that most (24.8%) of the patients participated in study were receiving treatment for shoulder and lower back. There were 46% participants who were diagnosed by orthopedic specialist. The study results showed that only small percentage mentioned that they have faced problem regarding availability of physiotherapy services. A study conducted by Machado NP et.al on Brazilian population showed that 14% were dissatisfied with the services because of increase waiting time for treatment sessions⁽⁴⁾.

The results of the study showed that older patients were completely satisfied with the physiotherapy services. The

result of this study was supported by McKinnon et.al, who

Table 1: Satisfaction of study participants regarding physiotherapy services

	Mean±SD	Very satisfied n(%)	Satisfied n(%)	Neither n(%)	Dissatisfied n(%)	Very dissatisfied n(%)
The location of the physiotherapy department was convenient for me	1.82±.74	89(32)	164(59)	15(5.4)	6(2.2)	4(1.4)
I was seen promptly when i arrived for the treatment	1.95±.90	89(32)	142(51.1)	25(9)	17(6.1)	5(1.8)
The physical therapist gave me enough time during the session	1.79±.84	116(41.7)	120(43.2)	28(10.1)	12(4.3)	2(7)
My physical therapist understood my problem or condition	1.71±.67	115(41.4)	132(47.5)	29(10.4)	2(0.7)	-
I am getting good results with the procedures that the physical therapist performed.	1.83±.90	120(43.2)	107(38.5)	31(11.2)	19(6.8)	1(0.4)
I encountered no interruptions during the treatment session.	1.68±.70	120(43.2)	133(47.8)	20(7.2)	4(1.4)	1.(0.4)
My privacy was respected during my physical care	1.56±.60	136(48.9)	130(46.8)	10(3.6)	2.(0.7)	-
The atmosphere of the physiotherapy unit was calm and relaxing.	1.74±.69	106(38.1)	146(52.2)	20(7.2)	7(2.5)	-
The physical therapist gave me detailed information regarding the treatment and the home program.	1.82±.75	97(34.9)	144(51.8)	30(10.8)	5(1.8)	2(0.7)
My physical therapist was courteous and considerate.	1.63±.67	130(46.8)	124(44.6)	22(7.9)	1(0.4)	1(0.4)
Overall satisfaction	17.5180±5.37	128(46)	109(39.2)	34(12.2)	6(2.2)	1(0.4)

reported that older patients showed more satisfaction towards particular aspects of physiotherapy services⁽¹⁰⁾.

The study results showed that majority of patients agreed that location of physiotherapy department was convenient for them. Casserley-Feeney et.al reported in his study that some of the participants showed negative feedback related to the location of the physiotherapist's clinics⁽¹¹⁾.

The study findings demonstrated that 91.3% participants were satisfied, 7.9% were remained neutral and only 1.08% were not satisfied about the behavior of the physiotherapist. The results of the study also showed that 90.2% of the participants were satisfied with the ambiance of the physiotherapy department. The study conducted by Chetty Verusia et.al in South Africa about satisfaction and adherence of patients reported that all of the participants (100%) were satisfied with the physiotherapist's kind and caring behavior and 85.7% showed satisfaction related to the setting or environment of the physiotherapy clinic.⁽¹²⁾

The results of the study demonstrated that majority (84.8%) of the patients were satisfied with the time the physiotherapist spent with them during treatment. Current study was supported by a study, conducted in Kenya about satisfaction level of patients with low back pain concluded that 83.6% patients were comfortable with duration of session and there is strong association between time factor and satisfaction of patients. The study also reported that 86.1% were agreed and 16.4% were not agreed about instruction of physiotherapists regarding home programme⁽¹³⁾

The study results showed that out of 278, 7.1% patients were disagreed, 11.3% were neutral and 81.6% were

agreed with the effectiveness of treatment. Machado NP et.al⁽⁴⁾ concluded in his cross sectional descriptive study that 97% users showed complete satisfaction with the services because they were receiving better results.⁽⁴⁾

The findings demonstrated that all the participants showed complete agreement with the competence of physiotherapists. Patients were agreed that physiotherapists understood their condition or problem. Results of another study conducted in intensive care unit showed that patients had complete satisfaction with the knowledge, skills and competence of physiotherapists. The study results showed that only 2 females were disagreed about the privacy respected during physiotherapy care. 99.2% patients were completely satisfied with the privacy during session. A study was conducted by Stiller K on satisfaction level of ICU patients about physiotherapy services and he reported that 33 out of 34 patients (97.0%) were satisfied with the privacy and reported that physiotherapists had respected their privacy and dignity⁽⁶⁾.

The findings of the study showed that 84.2% males and 85.88% females were overall satisfied with the physiotherapy services so it is concluded that male patients were less satisfied as compared to the female patients. Hills R et.al concluded in his systematic review that female's patients were more satisfied as compared to the male patients⁽¹⁴⁾.

CONCLUSION

The study results showed that most of the users are satisfied with physiotherapy services they received.

Patients showed a high degree of satisfaction with the accessibility, availability and time duration of the services. Results also showed a high degree of satisfaction with the competence and efficiency of the therapist. Majority were satisfied with the effectiveness of the treatment, privacy, ambiance of the physiotherapy unit, communication and behavior of the therapist. They results also showed that majority of the participants were overall satisfied with their experience with physiotherapy services.

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