

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Patient Feedback Analysis For Evaluating The Quality Of Health Care At Physiotherapy Institute In India: 5 Years Longitudinal Study¹Dr. Suvarna Ganvir(PhD) , ²Dr.Reshma Shete, ³Dr.Shyam Ganvir(PhD)

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: Patient is the main stakeholder in the quality of treatment provided by any health care center. Their perception of health care or quality of treatment is the most influential factor in optimizing quality care. Hence it is important to quantitatively estimate patient's perception so that it can be compared over a time period and to understand factors responsible for patient satisfaction and enable to take corrective measures from time to time.

Methods: A prospective study was conducted for 5 years (2014-2018) with the help of a locally developed questionnaire. Patients receiving physiotherapy treatment for minimum 15 days were included in the study. Questionnaire consisted of questions related to treatment quality of treatment provided at the physiotherapy center. **Results:** There was an overall improvement in the number of patients responding to the questionnaire. Number of patients approached for physiotherapy on their own and reported minimal waiting time before treatment. 80-90% of patients reported satisfaction with treating physiotherapists and rated the department grade 3 on a scale of 1-4 (1- Average and 4 - Excellent). **Conclusion:** 5 years feedback analysis reveals a positive trend of improving the quality of treatment provided to patients in terms of less waiting time, optimal treatment duration, satisfaction with doctor's behavior and overall rating of grade 3 on a scale of 1-4.

Key words: Patient satisfaction , Physiotherapy, Quality of treatment.

Received 16th Dec 2019, Accepted 30th Dec 2019, Published 31st Dec 2019www.vimsptcr.in**CORRESPONDING AUTHOR**

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INTRODUCTION

Major stakeholders in health care are patients. Patient satisfaction is affected by the patient's expectations and cares received¹. Their perception about the health care can contribute maximally for improving the quality of health care as they are the ones who have experienced the process themselves². Patients are more likely to choose health care services based on the satisfaction level. There is also a higher likelihood that a satisfied patient will recommend the public health facility to others. Unlike any other outcome measure, standard tools for recording the perceptions are not available^{3,4}.

The questionnaire is a commonly used satisfaction survey instrument⁵. An array of questionnaires has been developed to measure patient satisfaction with hospital care including the Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ-18), European Task Force on Patient evaluations of General Practice (EUROEP instrument) and Primary Care Assessment Survey 5,6. But, apart from being a generic tool these tools were developed for western populations with different parameters. For example, the PSQ-18 though concentrates on technical aspects, soft skills, it does not include questions related to accessibility, basic amenities such as toilet, drinking water, hygiene which are important issues in developing countries⁷.

Hence those who are willing to listen to these perceptions need to develop local tools for obtaining patient's perception⁸. This development of a tool is a tedious process since it involves a thorough observation and personal involvement of the health care professional⁹.

At our institute one such outcome measure was developed in the form of a questionnaire in the local language. This questionnaire was developed by adopting the process of questionnaire development⁵. The aim of this study was to know the perception of patients about the health care given at our institute. With this information at hand, it was also aimed to take corrective measures so that the quality can be improved over time. Considering the longitudinal nature of this study

METHODOLOGY :

Design

A prospective study of patients attending Physiotherapy Clinic at Dr. Vitahlarao Vikhe Patil College of Physiotherapy, Ahmednagar India. Data was collected through a representative sample of patients in the year 2014 through 2018.

Participants

Stratified sampling technique was used in the study. Patients who received Physiotherapy treatment for a minimum of 15 days were included in the study. Both adult and paediatric patients were included in the study. In the

case of Paediatric patients, information from parents was sought.

Patient feedback form - A feedback form in the local language was prepared through 3 focus group discussions of three stakeholders i.e. students, patients and therapists, the complete process is described in an unpublished monogram. Considering rural set up of the clinic, different socio cultural issues, attitude towards the health care, it was necessary to develop this feedback form rather than using the established questionnaire which may not be appropriate for our population. This feedback form contained 10 questions related to patient care. Each question had 3-5 options in words. For example How long do you need to wait before the treatment? The options were in minutes such as 5-10 mins, 10-15 mins, 15-30 mins and 30-45 mins. Use of a Lickert scale was avoided as more descriptive information was desired so that the quality of health care can be improved accordingly. The responses given by participants were recorded in a data collection sheet comprising of demographic information and the questionnaire. It had an open ended question in the end in which the participants were asked to provide a description of the treatment experience at the physiotherapy department.

PROCEDURE

Consecutive patients reporting to the Physiotherapy department for a minimum of 15 days were included in the study. Students posted in the unit and therapist treating the patients identified such patients. They were provided with a patient information sheet and consent was obtained. After recording the demographic and basic clinical information (except the name), a questionnaire was provided and the participants were asked to fill up the information. In case if the participant was not able to read, a student who was neutral for the research was asked to read out the questions and responses were sought. It was then kept in an envelope which was then handed over to the investigator. The procedure was done through out the year for five years and it is still continued.

DATA ANALYSIS

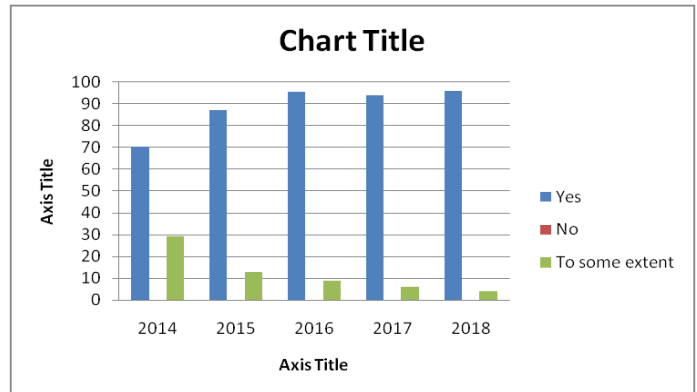
Data was analysed every year and a composite report of all 5 years was prepared. Descriptive analysis was performed and year wise comparison was made. Participants' age range was 3 months to 65 years. The variables described here are type approach of the patients, waiting time before the treatment, satisfaction with the behaviour of doctors, satisfaction with treatment, overall grades. There were few more variables such as encouragement of other patients for treatment here,

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No of patients	34	46	67	82	97
Average no of days	29	31	45	65	109

Table 1 – No of patients from whom feedback was taken from 2014- 2018 and average no of days of physiotherapy treatment in the year 2014-2018.

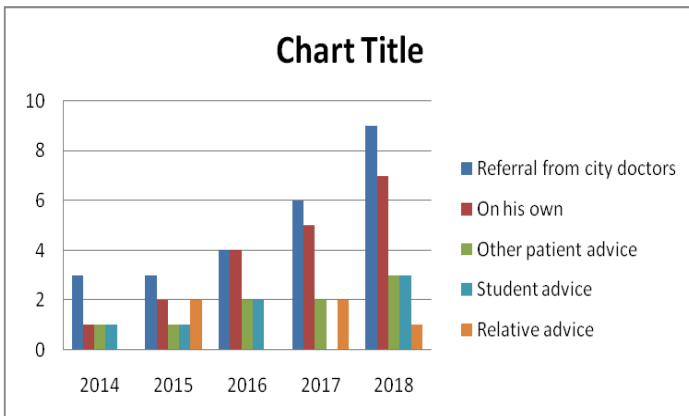
Graph 4 – Patient satisfaction (in percentage) with the quality of treatment given at the department. It shows an increase in patient satisfaction from 2014-2018 with nil patients reporting their dissatisfaction from 2015 to 2018.

Q.7 patient satisfaction with the behavior of doctors

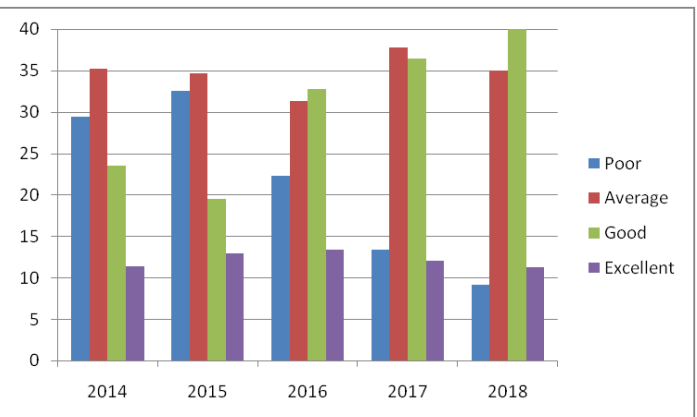


Graph -5 – Shows patient satisfaction with the behavior of therapists during the treatment. There is a consistent decrease in patient dissatisfaction (green bar) from 2014-2018.

Q. 10 ratings of department



Graph 1 - various ways of approaching to our center apart from referral by own hospital doctors.

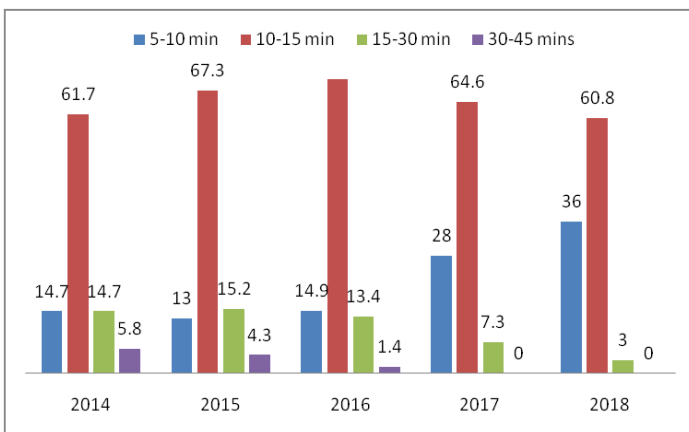


Graph 6 It shows the ranking of the department by patients from poor to an excellent grade. There is a constant increase in Good grade (green graph) to a great extent and in excellent grade (violet graph) to comparatively less extent.

Open ended question provide both positive and negative features of the treatment experience at our institute. Positive features included the cleanliness in the department, support staff

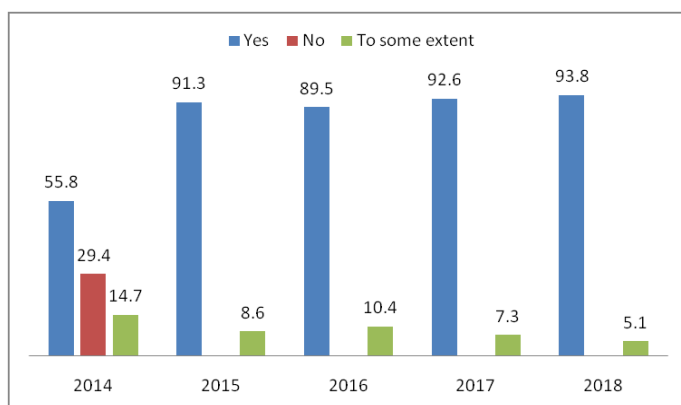
Discussion

This was the institution based cross sectional longitudinal study over 5 years, investigating the perception of patients about the quality of treatment received by them and strategies that were employed to improve the quality of treatment. Though in the earlier phase of this study primary aim of the collecting the feedback was to understand the patients' perception of treatment, in the later part of study attempt was made to investigate the effectiveness of



Graph 3- Average amount of time for which the patient had to wait before getting the treatment in percentage. With improved appointment system, there was a gradual decline in waiting time over the years 2014-2018.

Q.6 Patient satisfaction with the quality of treatment



strategies used to improve the quality based on the feedback collected every year.

Discussion

This was the institution based cross sectional longitudinal study over 5 years, investigating the perception of patients about the quality of treatment received by them and strategies that were employed to improve the quality of treatment. Though in the earlier phase of this study primary aim of the collecting the feedback was to understand the patients' perception of treatment, in the later part of study attempt was made to investigate the effectiveness of strategies used to improve the quality based on the feedback collected every year.

There was a steady increase number of patients in these 5 years which is also evident from the number of patients from whom feedback was obtained every year. This can be due to various factors such as increased awareness about physiotherapy, the better quality of treatment over the time, the improved reputation of the institute, an increased referral from physicians, positive personal experiences of existing patients. An average number of days for which patients received the treatment also increased. This shows a better follow up of patients. In Physiotherapy treatment, regular treatment on a daily basis is the key for optimal recovery. Number of days for which treatment is needed for a given patient may differ from condition to condition. Patients with neurological dysfunction such as Spinal Cord injury, Stroke, Cerebral Palsy, Gullian Barrie Syndrome may need long term physiotherapy care, in months together. Patient as well as Therapist needs to show patience during such long term care and good communication between two is the crucial factor for adherence to treatment programme^{10,11}. Patient satisfaction and rating of the department also improved during this time which are interrelated features of patient care. Patient satisfaction refers to the degree of conformity between patients' expectations and the reality regarding their experience of medical services, the quality of received health care, feelings related to diagnosis and treatment, and consensus about the treatment program.¹² Patient satisfaction is related to the behavior of doctors, less waiting time, more time for treatment and many more factors^{12,13}.

This study resulted in developing in quality policy at institutional level as a byproduct. Quality policies are the rules and regulations for streamlining the delivery of treatment^{14,15}. While taking measures in response to the feedback, systematic placement of therapist at different units of the institution was started. Also the appointment system was developed in order to reduce the waiting time before receiving the treatment. As a result Patient therapist interaction, quality of treatment was improved as optimum time

was available with a therapist. While analyzing the feedback thoroughly, it was learnt that inadequate instruments were also one of the reasons for the delay in treatment. Hence, adequate instruments were made available.

The questionnaire used in this study contains descriptive answers which make statistical analysis cumbersome. It has now been converted into a numerical form which is being currently used for obtaining feedback.

Conclusion

Patient feedback is found to be a powerful tool for analyzing and improving the quality of treatment care at our Physiotherapy institute.

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