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Assessment of public relations and patient satisfaction: A cross-sectional survey

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***Abstract*---**In hospital administration, the aspect of the expectations that the patient and their loved ones have regarding hospital work, acquires a very large relevance. It aims to assess the problems faced by the patients while getting treated in a Hospital and to find out the relationship between patient's satisfaction and public relations in hospital and to identify the methods for improving the quality of treatment to bring about a good and healthy doctor-patient relationship. The present study was a descriptive cross-sectional survey conducted among the patients visiting the comprehensive

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clinic of Bharati Vidyapeeth Dental Hospital, Sangli after obtaining the clearance from Internal Ethical Committee. The data was collected by secondary investigators. Patients who did not give consent were excluded from the study. In rating 1 & 2 columns highest scoring has been given to question no. 7 which was 28 & 39 patients respectively which indicates that patients are unable to locate the different departments easily. In rating 3 column highest scoring has been given to question no. 10 i.e. 48 patients which indicates that patients are not quite satisfied with the appointment they get for the treatment. In rating 4 column highest scoring is for question no. 15 i.e. 44 patients which indicates that overall impression about hospital is good. In rating 5 column highest scoring is for question no. 6 i.e. 57 patients which indicates that the patients are satisfied with the hospital facilities. Public relations and patient satisfaction, assumes a great importance in Hospital set-up. Thus, a hospital must become service oriented especially for patients who are under physical and emotional stress

***Keywords*---**hospital, patient satisfaction, emotional stress.

Introduction

A hospital is one of the most important links in the achievement of a state of health.To give proper patient care, the hospital must keep in mind all the phases of treatment and do its utmost to help the patient in each one of them. A crucial and frequently employed metric for assessing the quality of medical care is patient satisfaction. Clinical outcomes, patient retention, and medical malpractice lawsuits are all impacted by patient satisfaction. It has an impact on the prompt, effective, and patient-centered provision of high-quality healthcare. Thus, patient satisfaction serves as a stand-in yet is nonetheless a very reliable indicator of how well hospitals and doctors are doing[1]. The hospitals also must be humanized and must establish co-ordination and functional relationship with other departments. Thus, patient satisfaction and public relation plays an important role in hospital, which I would like to discuss in my project which was done in comprehensive clinic department of "Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed to be University, Dental College and Hospital, Sangli". The world health organization has defined health as –*"A complete state of Physical, Social and Mental well-being and not merely absence of diseases or infirmity."* The hospital contributes significantly to socioeconomic growth [1]. A good and successful doctor owes a significant portion of his success to proper administration, a reality that he may have been unaware of. In hospital administration, the aspect of the expectations that the patient and their loved ones have regarding hospital work, acquires a very large relevance[1]. The hospital must operate under the guiding principle that the patient is always number one. A systematic process is required to respond to the questions of patients, their family members, and friends and to be able to clarify some information concerning diagnosis, therapy, operations, etc.

Aims

To assess the problems faced by the patients while getting treated in a Hospital.

Objectives

To find out the relationship between patient's satisfaction and public relations in hospital and to identify the methods for improving the quality of treatment to bring about a good and healthy doctor-patient relationship.

Materials and Methods

The present study was a descriptive cross-sectional survey conducted among the patients visiting the comprehensive clinic of Bharati Vidyapeeth Dental Hospital, Sangli after obtaining the clearance from Internal Ethical Committee. The data was collected by secondary investigators. Patients who did not give consent were excluded from the study.

- Questionnaire forms: A self designed questionnaire survey was conductedto get the feedback from the patients in the form of questionnaire forms which were distributed to 100 patients. Filled forms were collected and then analysis was made.
- Suggestion Box: A suggestion box was kept outside the comprehensive clinic for collecting the valuable suggestions of the patients which was opened and written suggestion slips were analysed.

Results and Interpretation

Questionnaire forms consisting of 14 questions which were given to patients which had rating from 1 to 5. The filled forms were collected, the feedback of the patients was observed and then we arranged the number of patients according to the ratings they suggested for the questions in the tabular form which was as follows:-

	RATINGS					
Question no.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	-	4	37	40	19	
2	10	15	35	26	14	
3	-	-	30	47	23	
4	-	6	29	33	32	
5	SUGGESTION BOX					
6	-	-	3	40	**57**	NO OF PATIENTS
7	**28**	**39**	15	8	10	
8	3	3	7	40	43	
9	6	25	38	23	8	
10	17	3	**48**	25	7	
11	-	-	34	23	43	
12	-	1	30	39	30	
13	15	18	21	33	13	
14	-	3	29	30	38	
15	-	5	39	**44**	12	

We did our interpretation by calculating the maximum no. of patients in each column of rating from 1 to 5 vertically and did the following analysis: -

- In rating 1 & 2 columns highest scoring has been given to question no. 7 which was 28 & 39 patients respectively which indicates that patients are unable to locate the different departments easily. But now we have proper signboards on each floor for patients and lift facility is available for the patients with liftman to direct patients to different departments.
- In rating 3 column highest scoring has been given to question no. 10 i.e. 48 patients which indicates that patients are not quite satisfied with the appointment they get for the treatment. But now, as the staff is covering maximum no. of patients in the allotted duty hours, the appointment waiting is reduced and modern treatment modalities are practiced to fasten and improve the qualities of treatment.
- In rating 4 column highest scoring is for question no. 15 i.e. 44 patients which indicates that overall impression about hospital is good. Patients are happy and satisfied with the treatment given and behavior of the staff.
- In rating 5 column highest scoring is for question no. 6 i.e. 57 patients which indicates that the patients are satisfied with the hospital facilities.
- Suggestion Box – We got following suggestions from the box –

1. When the doctor is busy doing one patient and if they ask any questions, no one else concentrated on them.
2. When there are more patients for OPD, they were not explained about the treatment properly.
3. Treatment is carried out at time.
4. Appointments scheduled are late.

Discussion

It is said that the motto of a hospital should be *"To cure sometimes, to relieve often, but to comfort always."* In any branch of social service especially in a democracy where the *"Government is of the people, by the people and for the people",* success cannot be said to have been really achieved, unless the public is satisfied. It is the people for whom the hospital exists, it is they who make or break its reputation, its very existence. Every member of the hospital staff is a member of the public relations department of the hospital. Either as an individual or as a body they are responsible for projecting the image of the hospital. Hence, there is great emphasis on good relations for maintenance of the image and prestige of the hospital. Higher patient satisfaction leads to benefits for the health industry in several ways, which have been supported by different studies [1] Customer (patient) loyalty is a result of patient satisfaction. The Technical Assistant Research Programs (TARPs) claim that if we successfully retain one patient, the word will spread to four more. If we lose one customer, we lose ten, and if the issue is severe, even more. Therefore, to maintain parity, we must please three additional patients for every one that we irritate. Ref number should be changed. [1] Price conflicts are less likely to affect them. There is enough data to support the claim that businesses with high customer loyalty may charge more without suffering a loss in profit or market share. [2] Many medical facilities are starting to pay attention to patient experience and satisfaction. According to a recent survey, more than half of healthcare practitioners admit that patient satisfaction is one of their top three priorities. [3] Reduced staff turnover and higher employee morale both boost productivity. Additionally, there is a reported negative relationship between patient satisfaction levels and medical malpractice claims. [4] Concerns with accreditation – It is now generally acknowledged that all accreditation organizations, including the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), the National Accrediting Board for Hospitals (NABH), and others, concentrate on issues with service quality. Increased personal and professional satisfaction - patients who improve with our care make us happier. [4,5] The happier the doctor, the happier will be the patients. Among all the patient-related difficulties, problem solving is arguably the most crucial. A hospital needs to have a strong mechanism in place for dealing with complaints if it wants to be accredited by groups like JCAHO, NABH, ISO, etc.

According to the JCAHO manual:[6]

- There must be a system in place for receiving complaints.
- Patients must be made aware of this procedure and their ability to file complaints.
- Patients cannot be punished for complaining; the organisation must respond to substantial complaints and take appropriate action.
- All healthcare facility staff members are required to keep track of patient complaints and their resolutions.

In order to determine the financial impact of unsatisfied consumers, the TARP ran a poll to estimate the loss endured by a firm. The report claims that if 150 complaints are made in a year, 26 more complaints go unvoiced for every one that is. This indicates that there were 3900 complaints during that time, or 150 x 26.

[7] About 1 out of 5 complaints are serious. Accordingly, out of 3900 complaints, 780 are considered to be significant. When they next require a service, 390 people will likely select a different doctor or hospital if 50% of those who have major concerns go elsewhere. In the upcoming year, hospitalisation is expected to be required for 40 percent of these patients or members of their immediate families. The doctor and the organisation will therefore be overwhelmed by the financial implications. [7] Therefore, one should always endeavour to accept and admit the error with grace when there is a flaw in the service provided. One expresses sorrow solely for the process when they acknowledge a mistake. A sincere apology does not imply guilt acceptance. To prevent similar breaches from happening again, action should be taken.

Improvements Suggested

1. Taking above suggestions into consideration training the nursing and non-teaching staff to act as a bridge between the doctors and patients and to give an idea to the patients regarding the treatment plan and cost when the doctors are busy was suggested.
2. The In-charge of the Department should conduct meetings of staff on regular basis for improving the quality of treatment and by discussing various topics like modern treatment modalities for faster work. So, that the waiting time can be reduced.
3. Staff meetings should also be held by the Principal for good patient satisfaction, discipline of the staff, concessions to the patients, etc.
4. Patient input helps to enhance the work of the doctors, the setting, and the system. Despite the benefits of self-evaluation, doctors rarely have a system in place to monitor and assess the level of care provided in the office. Feedback from patients can be gathered by patient surveys, follow-up phone calls, suggestion boxes, referral physician surveys, etc. There are currently a variety of online portals available that are made to conduct patient satisfaction surveys and answer to the demands of doctors by giving information to individual doctors to assist them in improving the quality of patient perceptions of doctor quality. The information can be utilized to create practical plans for enhancing the effectiveness of patient treatment.

Conclusion

Public relations and patient satisfaction, assumes a great importance in Hospital set-up. Thus, a hospital must become service oriented especially for patients who are under physical and emotional stress. The patients should be treated with utmost care and priority and should be considered as human first and not simply as clinical material.

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