



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Patient satisfaction with the care received at the UNIANDES Dental Specialties Clinic in the area of General Dentistry

Satisfacción de los pacientes con la atención recibida en la Clínica de Especialidades Odontológicas UNIANDES

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Received: December 22, 2024

Accepted: December 26, 2024

Published: December 29, 2024

Citar como: Salinas-Goodier C, Quishpilema-Rojano KD, Tiban-Herrera AA, Cabezas-González MA. Satisfacción de los pacientes con la atención recibida en la Clínica de Especialidades Odontológicas UNIANDES. Rev Ciencias Médicas [Internet]. 2024 [citado: fecha de acceso]; 28(S2): e6611. Disponible en: <http://revcmpinar.sld.cu/index.php/publicaciones/article/view/6611>

ABSTRACT

Introduction: patient satisfaction is a crucial indicator of the quality of health services, including dental care.

Objective: to analyze the patients' perception of satisfaction with various aspects of the care received in the dental clinic.

Methods: observational, descriptive, cross-sectional study carried out in the reception room on the general dentistry floor of the CEO Dr. Corona Gómez, PhD. A sample of 90 participants was selected on a non-probabilistic, intentional basis, meeting the selection criteria. The application of an ad hoc survey made it possible to obtain information that provided an output for the variables studied, applying descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

Results: 51,1 % (n=46) were men, with an average age of 43,1±15 years. Regarding the educational level of the persons attended, 38 % (n=35) had a basic educational level and 22 % (n=20) had an educational level lower than primary school. Significant differences were found between educational level and satisfaction with the mechanisms for dealing with complaints and suggestions (p=0,001); as well as with the speed of service in the cashier's area (p=0,018) and reception (p=0,014).

Conclusions: the evaluation of patient satisfaction at CEO UNIANDES is fundamental to improve the quality of dental care. The importance of adapting care strategies to the needs and expectations of patients was highlighted, in order to guarantee a satisfactory experience and strengthen institutional reputation.

Keywords: Patient Care; Quality of Health Care; Dental Clinics.

RESUMEN

Introducción: la satisfacción del paciente es un indicador crucial de la calidad de los servicios de salud, incluida la atención odontológica.

Objetivo: analizar la percepción de los pacientes respecto a la satisfacción con diversos aspectos de la atención recibida en la clínica odontológica.

Métodos: estudio observacional, descriptivo, transversal, efectuado en la sala de recepción en el piso de odontología General del CEO Dra. Corona Gómez, PhD. De forma no probabilística, intencional, fue seleccionada una muestra de 90 participantes, cumpliéndose los criterios de selección. La aplicación de una encuesta *ad hoc* permitió la obtención de información que dio salida a las variables estudiadas, aplicándose métodos de estadística descriptiva e inferencial.

Resultados: El 51,1 % (n=46) fueron hombres, teniéndose una edad promedio fue 43,1±15 años. Respecto al nivel educativo de las personas atendidas, el 38 % (n=35) tuvo un nivel educativo básico y el 22 % (n=20) tuvo un nivel educativo inferior a primaria. Se encontraron diferencias significativas entre el nivel educativo y la satisfacción con los mecanismos para atender quejas y sugerencias (p=0,001); así como con la rapidez de la atención en el área de caja (p=0,018) y recepción (p=0,014).

Conclusiones: la evaluación de la satisfacción del paciente en el CEO UNIANDES es fundamental para mejorar la calidad de la atención odontológica. Se destacó la importancia de adaptar las estrategias de atención a las necesidades y expectativas de los pacientes, con el fin de garantizar una experiencia satisfactoria y fortalecer la reputación institucional.

Palabras clave: Atención al Paciente; Calidad de la Atención de Salud; Clínicas Odontológicas.

INTRODUCTION

Healthcare research generally focuses on ensuring and continuously improving the quality of services. There is now a consensus that high-quality dental care cannot be provided without assessing patient satisfaction, which has become a critical quality indicator in many countries. In dentistry, as in other health services, patient satisfaction helps to identify strengths and weaknesses of the service, raising the quality of treatment and improving future planning. Furthermore, this assessment reflects disparities in dental care. Quality, understood as fitness for the intended purpose, is closely related to customer satisfaction. In the field of healthcare, patient satisfaction is a key indicator for assessing and monitoring the quality of hospital services.⁽¹⁾

The representation of the quality of dental health services depends on the priorities of the stakeholders and the attitude towards the health system in general. Both patients and health professionals play an equally important role in the quality of health care. Therefore, the factors affecting the quality of health services are classified into extrinsic, linked to the service provider, and intrinsic, related to patients.⁽²⁾

A study conducted in Canada in 2004 at the Student Health Initiative for the Needs of Endomonton (SHINE) dental clinic. Participating patients reported satisfaction and benefit from treatment in 58 % of cases. In 2021, a comprehensive survey will be conducted to collect information from community health workers who come into contact with potential SHINE patients. Dissatisfaction was correlated with attending the Uniandes Dental Clinic, with attending SHINE without receiving treatment.⁽³⁾ Taking this into account, the present research was carried out, which aimed to analyze the perception of patients regarding satisfaction with various aspects of the care received at the CEO "Corona Gómez, PhD" dental clinic.

METHODS

An observational, descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted in the reception room on the General Dentistry floor of CEO Dra. Corona Gómez, PhD. In a non-probabilistic, intentional way, a sample of 90 participants (patients treated at said institution) was selected, who met the inclusion criteria (patient over 18 years of age, treated at said health facility, who agreed to participate in the research) and exclusion criteria (illiterate patient or with difficulties reading and writing; companions and/or parents of the patients treated; patient who has been treated in another specialty other than General Dentistry). To obtain information, an ad hoc survey was applied, and then responses were collected.

The variables analyzed were: sex (Male, Female), age, educational level (Less than primary, Basic, Secondary-Bachelor, University, University-non-university), and patient satisfaction with the care received (Satisfied, Dissatisfied).

The survey consisted of 22 questions (three sociodemographic questions and 19 from the Lara-Álvarez questionnaire⁽⁴⁾). Each patient was given an explanation of the survey, which consisted of simple questions about different aspects of their visit, such as the friendliness of the staff, the cleanliness of the facilities, punctuality in appointments, and the quality of treatment received. The answers were completely anonymous and helped us identify areas for improvement and ensure quality care. Patients were given the option of completing the survey independently or with the assistance of researchers.

Statistical procedures

A statistical analysis was carried out, starting with the creation of descriptive statistics, including relative frequencies and averages. Subsequently, possible associations were analysed using the chi-square test. A confidence level of 95 % was established and a statistically significant value was established if $p < 0,05$. The statistical programme Stata MP 14,0 was used.

Ethical aspects

This research was designed and carried out in accordance with the ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects, as established in the Declaration of Helsinki. The research was approved by the Scientific Council and the Ethics Committee of the institution in question. Each patient was explained the principle of voluntariness under which the questionnaire was administered. All patients were guaranteed confidentiality. of the information, remaining protected and will only be used for investigative or teachers.

RESULTS

51,1 % (n=46) were men, with an average age of 43,1±15 years. Regarding the educational level of the people attended, 38 % (n=35) had a basic educational level and 22 % (n=20) had an educational level lower than primary. Table 1 shows the satisfaction of the participants according to the different questions included in the questionnaire.

Table 1. Responses given to questions in the questionnaire on satisfaction with care.

Quiz Question	Satisfied		Dissatisfied	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Do you want to be treated in a way that is no different than other people?	90	100	0	0
2. That care is provided in an orderly manner and respecting the order of arrival?	88	97,8	2	2,2
3. Does the treating dentist provide care according to the schedule?	84	93,3	6	6,7
4. Does the Establishment have mechanisms to address patient complaints or claims?	64	71,1	26	28,9
5. Is the service at the checkout area fast?	61	67,8	29	32,2
6. Is the service in the reception area fast?	64	71,1	26	28,9
7. Is the waiting time to be served in the waiting room short?	66	73,3	24	26,7
8. That your privacy is respected during your care at the office?	89	98,9	1	1,1
9. Does the dentist give you the necessary time to answer your doubts or questions about your dental problem?	90	100	0	0
10. Should the dentist or other professional who will treat you perform a complete and thorough examination?	82	91,1	8	8,9
11. That the dentist or other professional who will treat you gives you enough time to answer your doubts or questions about your oral health?	87	96,7	3	3,3
12. Do you feel confident in the dentist or other professional who will treat you?	88	97,8	2	2,2
13. That the dentist or other professional who will care for you treats you with kindness, respect and patience?	89	98,9	1	1,1
14. That the cashiers treat you with kindness, respect and patience?	75	83,3	15	16,7
15. That the reception/security staff treat you with kindness, respect and patience?	81	90	9	10
16. Do you understand the explanation that the doctor or other professional will give you about the treatment you will receive and the care for your health?	89	98,9	1	1,1
17. Are the signs, posters or arrows in the establishment adequate to guide patients?	87	96,7	3	3,3
18. Are the office and waiting room clean and have furniture (benches and chairs) for the comfort of patients?	86	95,6	4	4,4
19. Do the offices have the necessary equipment and materials available for your care?	88	97,8	2	2,2

Statistically significant differences were found when evaluating satisfaction with the mechanisms to address patient complaints or suggestions according to the level of education ($p=0,001$), where people with basic education were more dissatisfied (51 %) compared to patients with other educational levels (Table 2).

Table 2. Satisfaction with mechanisms to address patient complaints or suggestions by educational level.

Educational level	Satisfaction				Total	
	Dissatisfied		Satisfied		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Less than primary school	1	5	19	95	20	22,22
Basic education	18	51,43	17	48,57	35	38,89
Secondary education	5	29,41	12	78,59	17	18,89
Higher education	2	11,11	16	88,89	18	20,00
Total	26	28,89	64	71,11	90	100

Statistically significant differences ($p=0,018$) were found between satisfaction with the speed of service in the cashier area according to the level of education, where people with a basic educational level were in a greater proportion of dissatisfied (51 %) compared to other educational levels (Table 3).

Table 3. Satisfaction with the speed of service in the cashier area according to educational level.

Educational level	Satisfaction				Total	
	Dissatisfied		Satisfied		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Less than primary school	5	25	15	75	20	22,22
Basic education	18	51,43	17	48,57	35	38,89
Secondary education	3	17,65	14	82,35	17	18,89
Higher education	3	16,67	15	83,33	18	20,00
Total	29	32,22	61	67,78	90	100

Statistically significant differences were found according to the level of education and satisfaction with the speed of care in the reception area ($p=0,014$), where people with a basic educational level were more dissatisfied (Table 4).

Table 4. Satisfaction with the speed of service in the reception area according to educational level.

Educational level	Satisfaction				Total	
	Dissatisfied		Satisfied		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Less than primary school	5	25	15	75	20	22,22
Basic education	17	48,57	18	51,43	35	38,89
Secondary education	3	17,65	14	82,35	17	18,89
Higher education	1	5,56	16	94,44	17	20,00
Total	29	32,22	61	67,78	90	100

DISCUSSION

In different regions of Saudi Arabia, education and age were found to be important demographic factors that affected patient satisfaction. Patients who had lower education level tended to report higher satisfaction.⁽¹⁾ Compared to our study, education level was found to be important demographic factors that tended to report higher dissatisfaction, these results are in agreement with those obtained in this study.

In another article, which was conducted by the Central Clinic of the Faculty of Dentistry of the National University of San Marcos in Lima, Peru, it was found that the technical dimension that refers to "the application of medical science and technology in a way that yields maximum benefit to health, without increasing its risks," has an average of 97 % dissatisfaction.⁽⁵⁾ In comparison with our study, it was found that the technical dimension that refers to "That the offices have available equipment and necessary materials for their care," has an average of 97.8% satisfaction, these results agree with those obtained in this study.

In a retrospective descriptive study, patient satisfaction was estimated in the Ministry of Health's specialized dental clinics in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In the domain of personal consultations, patients reported mean satisfaction scores of 82,2 % for cleanliness of the facilities and 67,7 % for comfort in the waiting room.⁽⁶⁾ In comparison, our study showed that cleanliness of the facilities and comfort in the waiting room for patients averaged 95,6 % satisfaction, which is in agreement with the results obtained in this study. In recent times, healthcare organizations have developed to be more patient-centered.

The provision of healthcare has gained increasing importance, as identified by healthcare professionals, patients, and policy makers. To estimate the degree of quality, healthcare organizations employ several metrics. Patient experience assessments have been implemented to evaluate patient care, which has been defined as "respecting privacy and responding to patients' unique preferences, needs, questions, and values."

Previous studies have found that participants identified waiting time before treatment, value of services provided, accessibility of services, privacy and confidentiality as factors affecting the services provided. Various international studies have analyzed patient experiences, recognizing several key factors that contribute to patient satisfaction. These factors include the behavior of dental professionals, the amount of time spent addressing patient concerns, and the length of waiting time.^(7,8,9,10)

The connection between patient expectations and satisfaction is not well understood and may not be related in an explainable way. Satisfaction may be mediated only indirectly by expectations rather than directly. Prior information and experiences, as well as patient characteristics (e.g., socioeconomic status, educational level, age, values, other conditions), may act on the range of different types of expectations in society. Researchers cannot rationalize patients' expectations of dental health services.^(11,12,13,14,15)

CONCLUSIONS

The study carried out at UNIANDES CEO in the area of General Dentistry highlights the importance of evaluating patient satisfaction as a key indicator of the quality of services. Factors such as speed of care, trust in professionals, friendliness of staff and cleanliness of facilities influence patient perception. It was observed that the educational level of patients can affect their satisfaction, suggesting the need to adapt communication and care strategies. The implementation of specific surveys and questionnaires allows identifying areas for improvement and strengthening clinical practices. In short, the continuous evaluation of patient satisfaction is essential to ensure excellence, promote loyalty and improve the reputation of the clinic.

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