

Determinants of patients' satisfaction at a tertiary care rheumatology out-patient service

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Introduction

Patients' satisfaction is increasingly recognised as an indicator of quality of care. This study aimed to objectively assess patients' satisfaction and its determinants.

Methods

Fifty out-patients diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis were selected randomly and enrolled to the study at the rheumatology clinic. All participants completed the Leeds Satisfaction Questionnaire (LSQ) to report their satisfaction regarding clinical care. Mean scores in key domains of patient care were analysed and correlated with demographic factors.

Results

The majority of patients were female (43, 86%), married (46, 92%), and were between 60-70 years (range 25 – 79 years). The duration of arthritis ranged from 8 months to 28 years. 44% of participants did not have a monthly income. The majority were educated up to ordinary level (32, 64%). Mean scores in individual domains were – general satisfaction – 3.32 (66.4%), giving of information – 3.33 (66.6%), empathy – 3.26 (65.2%), technical quality and competence – 3.43 (68.6%), attitude towards patient – 2.93 (58.6%), access and continuity – 3.06 (61.2%). The mean of overall satisfaction was 3.26 (65.2%). Patients were least satisfied that they were not seen by the same doctor – 2.08 (41.6%) and most satisfied that they were treated well by the staff – 4.04 (80.8%). One-way ANOVA revealed that overall satisfaction did not significantly vary with gender (p - 0.647), education level (p- 0.602) and monthly income (p – 0.606).

Conclusion

Whilst out-patients with rheumatoid arthritis were more satisfied with technical quality and competence and giving of information, satisfaction regarding access and continuity and attitude of the staff were rated less favourably suggesting more scope for improvement. Gender, education level and monthly income were not determinants of overall satisfaction.