

REVIEW ON PATIENT SATISFACTION IN PHARMACY SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

Patient satisfaction is one of the important quality determinants within the globally developing health-care industry. Various sectors of the health industry monitor patient satisfaction and depending on the results, they update their qualifications for better services. Community pharmacies are pharmacy services are one of those indispensable units within the healthcare system. Therefore, it is impossible to ignore patient satisfaction and its monitoring for pharmacy services concomitant to the dynamic improvement of patient needs. Regarding this, within this review study, we made a literature review to find out recent developments on the investigation between the pharmacy services and patient satisfaction. Our findings indicated the basic variables and determinants of patient satisfaction organized through the services provided by pharmacists. Although much of the information is valid, maybe through a century, the data shared on the literature point out that there are certain rules that pharmacists need to follow to guarantee patient satisfaction. Considering the increasing number of community pharmacies worldwide and the trade-based competition among them, it is obvious that those pharmacists paying attention to patient satisfaction will keep standing, since the opposite provides negative effects in competition with other pharmacy stores.

Key words: Patient satisfaction, Pharmacists, Pharmacy services

INTRODUCTION

Patient satisfaction is among the most studied topics in recent years. The basic definition offered for patient satisfaction might be summarized as the measurement of how a patient is content with the care he/she has been given for the exact treatment. (Atkinson, Sinha, Hass, Colman, Kumar, Brod & Rowland, 2004). It can be defined as the extent to which the health care services provided by the health workers are met (Rossiter, Langwell, Wan & Rivnyak, 1989). It is also the result of evaluating the health services or health care workers (Ware, Snyder, Wright & Davies, 1983). Patient satisfaction has been accepted that a crucial determinant to identify the achievement of health care professionals (e.g., doctors, pharmacists, and nurses) (Prakash, 2010). It has been found that patient satisfaction influences patient

compliance, use of health services, continuity of care, health status, clinical results, patient retention, medicinal negligence, claims timely, efficient, and patient-centered delivery of quality health care (Xiao & Barber, 2008; Prakash, 2010). The limit of patient satisfaction is quite large. Indeed, the ability to reach to patient care, the health-care providers and their qualifications, communication, the technical aspects of the healthcare provided are all the pieces of it. These parameters can create 60-70% variability depending on the case. (Ross, Steward, & Sinacore, 1993).

Although, patient satisfaction is a simple yet delicate topic, it varies among individuals. What does each patient actually expect? This is a question to ponder about in an attempt to provide improved quality of life for the beneficiaries of healthcare delivery systems. The outcomes of patient satisfaction measurement contribute to a variety of aspects in health programs provided to patients. The overall assessment of the quality provided, the drawbacks requiring improvement, and helping out the establishments in various aspects of statistics related to the consumers of a health care program are some of those results of the measurement of patient satisfaction (Rubin, Gandek, Rogers, Kosinski, McHorney & Ware 1993; Jackson, Chamberlin & Kroenke, 1997; Weiss & Senf, 1990). Based on these, it is logical to expect that health care systems organized on the evaluation of patient satisfaction not only have the skills to improve current health systems, strategy and decision making but also can make assessment on costs, financial issues, monitoring, health plans, and patient feedbacks (Al-Abri & Al-Balushi, 2014). Overall, all these parameters stating the importance of the results of the evaluation of patient satisfaction make them at the same time the quality indices of the system. (Al-Abri., & Al-Balushi., 2014). A study found that quality in health care is generally known to be a fundamental health service expectation (Naidu, 2009). Since it is important for designing and managing health care, patient satisfaction is the most desirable outcome of health care services (Naidu, 2009).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The recent studies main topic is focusing on the investigation of the relationship between the patient and his/her pharmacist concomitant to the questioning whether the patient has enough understanding on the services provided by the pharmacy. (Malewski, Ream & Gaither, 2015). Although the results of these studies point out variances including the location of a pharmacy unit, the overall measurement indicates the satisfaction of patients (Malewski, Ream & Gaither, 2015). The evaluation also shows a significant issue that the mental status is also another critical parameter directly affecting the satisfaction.

In many studies, the reasons of satisfaction and dissatisfaction from pharmacy services have been mentioned. One of the important milestones on the topic was achieved by a recent study conducted in Malaysia, since the research results found out the critical determinants between the pharmacy service and its resulting satisfaction on patients. It was concluded that the study hours and its availability for patients, the reachability of drugs, particularly including the OTCs, the cost of drugs to patients, and the attitude towards the patient were found as the basic variables (Bahari & Ling, 2010). One of the drawbacks stated by the patients was the period that patients obliged to wait for the preparation of prescriptions (Belcher, Fried, Agostini & Tinetti, 1998). The majority of patients point out their short patience to have their drugs ready to go. Even, there are some ideas requested by patients to ask for pharmacists stay longer time in their pharmacy stores, including evening and weekend periods (Bahari & Ling, 2010).

One another important observation is that patients do not see community pharmacies as just for stores to buy drugs. In other words, patients are not willingly to drive variety of stores to get their needs, and therefore, they want to find out more material in pharmacy stores. These all imply that beside OTC medications, pharmacy stores are expected to have a wide range of readily available pharmacy related goods. Examples of such products include cosmetics, herbal treatments, nutritional supplements as well as dermatological products. Beside, pharmacists appear to have shorter action time to prepare medications to satisfy patience satisfaction (Bahari & Ling, 2010).

Some also resemble pharmacy services as a kind of retailing services, therefore, patient satisfaction and the creative and innovative aspects of pharmacist become critical from this perspective (Nzekwe 2008).

Previous reviews on the determinants of patient satisfaction also revealed that patients are also questioning price variability among the community pharmacies. For this purpose, they visit regional pharmacy stores to investigate prices, particularly for their routine (chronic employed) medications (Bahari & Ling, 2010). This also implies that the level of income or pricing is also important parameter for the customers or patients.

Communication skills are also important parameter for satisfied customers in pharmacy profession as well as in all other professions. Beside the occupational capacity of community pharmacy workers, these people are also expected to have different skills and these must be improved with educational programs (Kamei, Teshima, Fukushima, Nakamura, 2001). This basically includes the improvement of communication skills concomitant to direct and clear expressions of pharmacists to their patients (Kamei et al., 2001).

Additionally, the perceptions of patients about their health status as well as their perceived relationship with pharmacists are important determinants of patient satisfaction with pharmacy services (Malewski, Ream & Gaither, 2015). A pharmacist cannot ignore the basic understandings of patients (i.e., their perception and expectation), therefore it is also pharmacist job to pay extra attention to the requirements of patients (Al-Arifi, 2012). This means a pharmacist is expected to have emotional skills to understand possible hesitations of patient. Based on it, it is important to communicate with the patient at the correct time. It is pharmacist duty to appreciate the needs and the questions of the consumer (Al-Arifi, 2012). There is also a research study comparing the organization of pharmacy stores located either in urban or in suburban places. Accordingly, the appreciation of pharmacists is independent from the location, however, patients state their compliance for easy access to community pharmacies (Malewski, Ream & Gaither, 2015). Patients agree on that convenience of pharmacy stores starts with the convenience of its location (Bahari & Ling, 2010).

In addition to these factors which are the most compelling factors talked about over, another four factors, i.e., offices, convenient area, accessibility of special services and medication record, are likewise fundamental and vital pharmacy functions that influence consumer satisfaction (Bahari & Ling, 2010). The impression related to the appearance is also important. Pharmacists are expected to provide spacious area both for waiting and consultation in their community pharmacies. It is suggested to pharmacists to keep their own records for their patients not only to monitor their improvement with their disease state but also to show their conscious to patience (Bahari & Ling, 2010).

It is noteworthy to express that there are other factors such as the financial status, insurance types of patients that affect the patient satisfaction. Although these create patient variances in terms of their perception, the pharmacists must be aware of these considerations (Lee, Godwin, Kim & Lee, 2015).

Outcomes of Patient Satisfaction in Pharmacy Profession

The loyalty of patients depend on his/her satisfaction and this depends on the total services provided by the community pharmacy. Knowing the possibility of a patient's next visit to the same pharmacy store is related to the measurement of patient satisfaction. (Rigolosi & Reed, 2001). Therefore, pharmacists must be aware of the patient satisfaction concept, that in turn, positively feedbacks the position of the community pharmacy within the total competition present within the health market (Rigolosi & Reed, 2001). There are scientific results that show the positive feedback to pharmacists regarding their follow-up the patient satisfaction measurement. These feedbacks are either financial or promotion-advertisement related both

triggering the economic return to a pharmacy store. Advertising stated here is different; in fact it is costless to the pharmacist, since it is happening through the suggestion of one patient to another. (Luo & Homburg, 2007). These recommendations boost more purchases, resulting in more economic wealth to the community pharmacy. Close relatives, family members, friends, and co-workers of patients are all the pieces of this quiet, costless but very effective advertisement. Although this looks a good situation for pharmacists, the opposite of the case is as serious as positive issues discussed. Patient dissatisfaction is a very threatening issue for the continuation of pharmacy activities. This definitely ends up with the discontinuation of the pharmacy store (Ross, Frommelt & Hazelwood, 1987). Based on this it is easy to say that the organization within the community pharmacy must be patient related rather than considering the business as patient care and quality healthcare should be the sole goal of any healthcare delivery system (Ross, Frommelt & Hazelwood L, 1987). Consumer loyalty toward using the same service providers can be regarded as a measure of patient satisfaction (Odili, Ihenyen & Okhawere, 2017; Sansgiry & Jayawant, 2005). Health care organizations that focus on patient satisfaction demonstrate a willingness to build long-term relationships with their consumers and, thus, achieve a competitive advantage (Odili, Ihenyen & Okhawere, 2017). To monitor their performance for quality improvement and quality management, health care organizations would conduct consumer evaluations on a regular basis (Sansgiry & Jayawant, 2005). Moreover, as a general acceptance for trade-based organizations, the positive feedback obtained from the satisfaction of customers have also remarkable effect on the workers of the establishment (i.e., for community pharmacy this is true for the pharmacist and the employers). Overall, patient satisfaction acquired through the services provided by a community pharmacy result in good patient-pharmacist relationships, loyalty to the same pharmacy store, and a much better treatment of diseases with respect to the intact adherence to medical regiment (Castro & Ruiz, 2009; Crosby, Evans & Cowles, 1990; Ware & Snyder, 1975; Yi, 1990; Bartlett, Grayson, Barker, Levine, Golden & Libber, 1984).

CONCLUSION

Poor patient satisfaction comes with a few less than desirable consequences. According to the study of Medical Executive Council (2016), for every patient who complains, 70 percent of them who receive perceived deficient care will not visit that facility again; 75 percent of dissatisfied health care consumers talk about it, and will tell nine family members or friends. It is proven that great patient satisfaction comes with benefits for the staff too, which includes the possibility to enhance staff satisfaction and quality care, reduce provider malpractice risk, and increase health organizations financial development where patient satisfaction is

completely depend on the services provided by the pharmacy store and the workers of it. It is also known that patient satisfaction saves some costs such as advertising costs and also giving concern to patient satisfaction helps reduce the risk of marketing myopia which makes the pharmacy have a consumer driven service rather than product driven service and in the long run boost its sales and profits as all business is primarily because of profits. Patients who keep visiting the same pharmacy store concomitant to good interaction with the pharmacist are typical clinical examples to patient satisfaction, which in turn, guarantees the adherence to the medical protocol offered by a doctor. While patient's dissatisfaction will lead to the adverse of the satisfaction where by patient would not visit again and lead to decrease in sales.

As still for other areas health industry is also a dynamic area, routinely welcoming new developments. Therefore, patient satisfaction is a routine part of this dynamics. The more pharmacists follow up the patient satisfaction the more will be the quality as the quality is an always ascending parameter. This is the way to reply patient's expectations. As defined by Prakash "a satisfied patient is a practice builder" (Prakash, 2010).

The critical challenge for health care managers is to find and select the appropriate methods to measure overall patient satisfaction and its components. This challenge is made more complex by the fact that the quality of the service product is determined by the individual patient and his or her behavior as well as the technical quality and service quality provided by the organization. Consequently, what is perceived as merely acceptable services by one person may be a "wow" experience to another and totally unacceptable to a third. One note to keep in mind is that quality is not objective, it is personal, and therefore, finding out the right services for the community pharmacy is a challenging process requiring appropriate measurement (Ford, Bach & Fottler, 1997).

To cope with low Satisfaction and enhance better results, some steps should be taken by the pharmacist or other healthcare provider. Health Care providers should understand that improving patient satisfaction is about systems just as much as it is about smiles and that in order to improve, they should strive to create a blame-free environment (Rolig, 2015). Also, healthcare organizations should teach their employees, every single one, how to handle a patient or family member's complaint or concern (Rolig, 2015). Moreover, the correct language and the true communication determine the basics of patient satisfaction. Therefore, pharmacists must pay attention to use appropriate language and good verbal expressions (Jiao, 2015).

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