

Patient Satisfaction in Comprehensive Clinic in a Private Dental College.

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I. Introduction

Patient satisfaction is a multidimensional concept.[1] As teaching institutions dental college clinics must constantly strive to find a balance between meeting the needs of the students and the patients. Patient satisfaction with the treatment done in a dental hospital clinic is very important because it will influence their service utilization pattern.[2][3] Dental schools are teaching facilities and usually the traditional system is only followed with the students rotating through different clinics. The patients in traditional system have to go to different clinics for each treatment. This was very difficult for the patients and also time consuming. So most of the patients prefer the comprehensive system, because of its convenience. The comprehensive system is patient oriented. This study is done to assess the satisfaction of the patient in a comprehensive clinic.

II. Materials and methods

It is a descriptive cross - sectional study. An interviewer administered pre- tested questionnaire was prepared and distributed to the patients attending the comprehensive clinic in the dental hospital. The sample size was taken as 90.

Inclusion criteria: Out patients visiting the comprehensive clinic who are above 18 years.
Exclusion criteria: Subjects who are not willing to participate in the study.

The questionnaire was distributed to the patients and they were asked to give feedback. The questions were pertaining to the treatment time, number of visits, waiting time etc. Questions were also asked to assess the dentist-patient relationship in this system.

III. Results

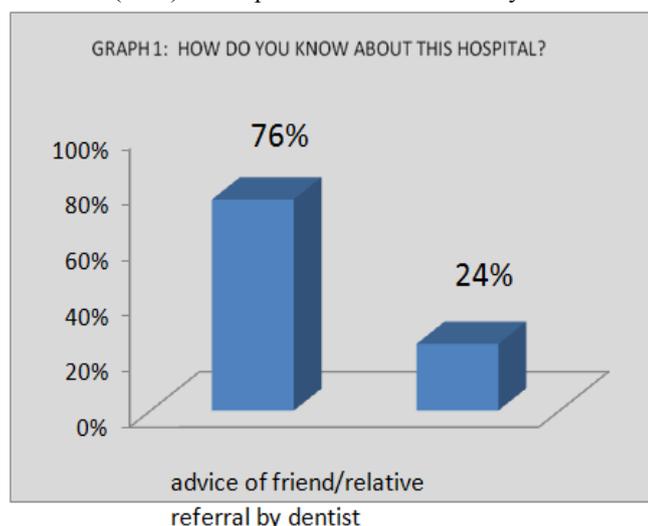
A total of 90 questionnaire was distributed to the patients out of which 83 were returned. The response rate was 92%. Out of the 83 responses 42 were males and 40 were females.

Table 1:

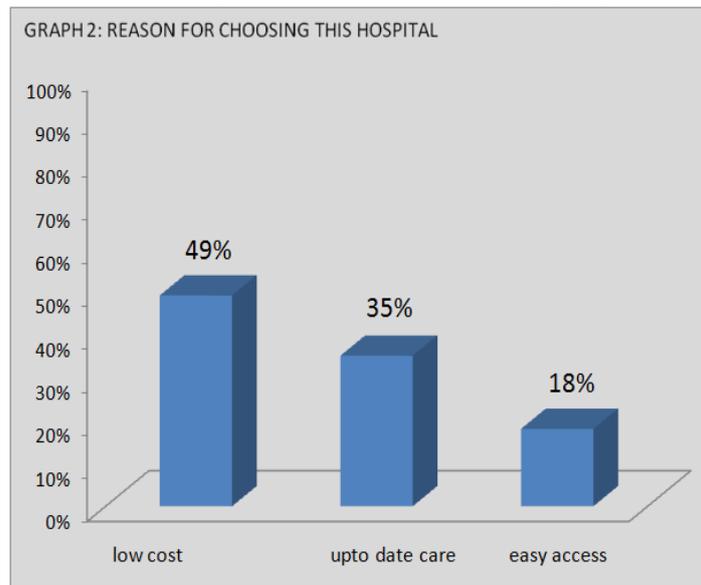
	Number(n)	Percentage (%)
Male	42	51%
Female	41	49%
Total	83	100%

Graph 1:

Out of the 83 patients, 63 (76%) patients mentioned that they decided to come to the dental hospital because of the advice from a friend/relative. 20(24%) of the patients were referred by other dentist or physicians.

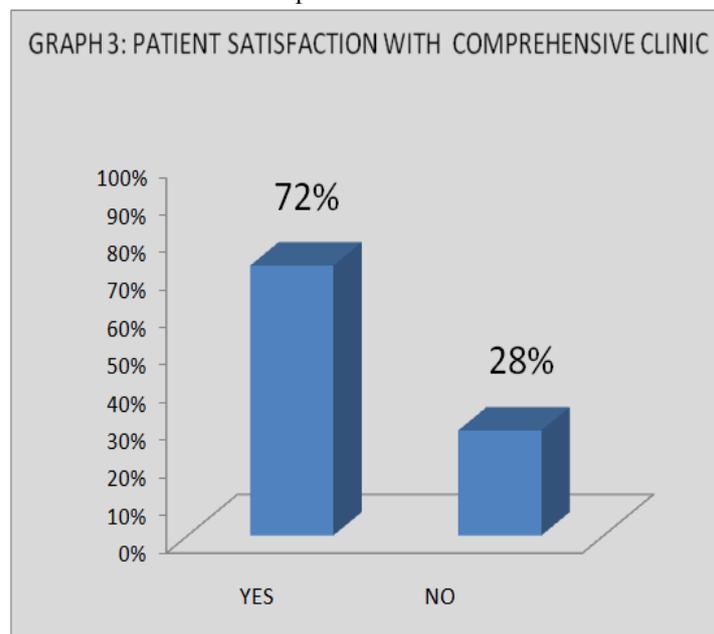


Graph 2: The most reported reason for preferring a dental college hospital for the treatment was low cost(49%) . The second most reason was up – to – date care(35%) followed by easy access(18%).



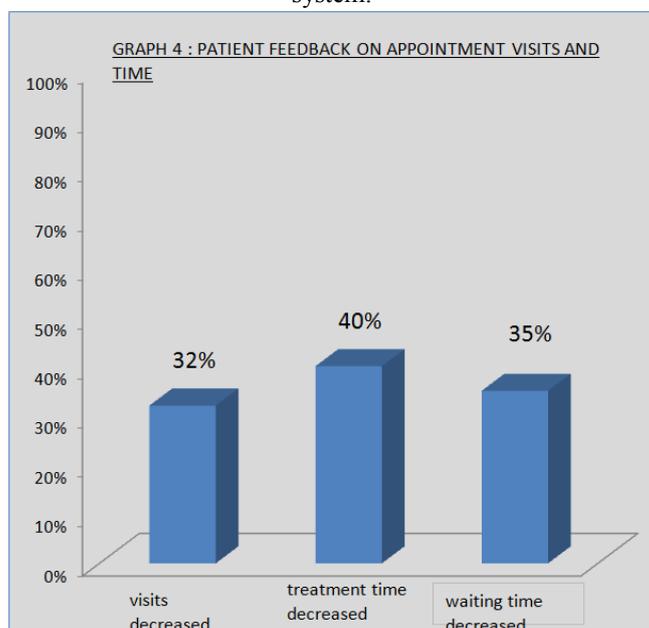
Graph 3:

As per the responses got from the patients 60 (72%) patients were satisfied with the treatment provided by the comprehensive clinic.



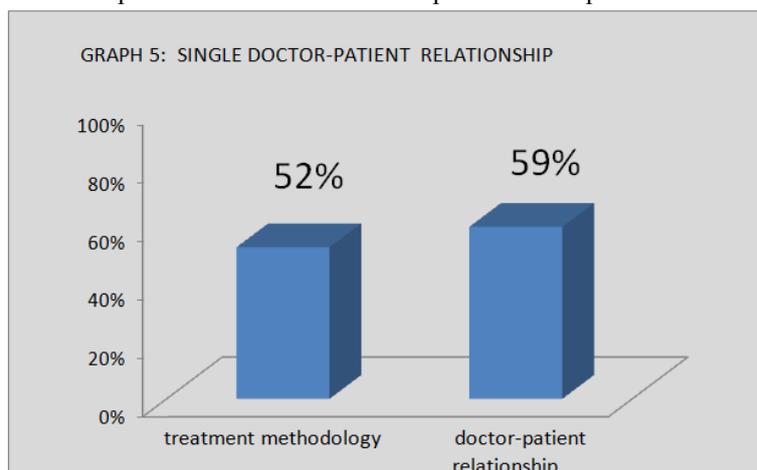
Graph 4:

When asked about the number of visits they make for the dental treatment 42 (50%) patients reported that the visits they have to make for the treatment completion have been considerably decreased. Regarding the time taken for the individual treatment, 27 (40%) subjects reported that the waiting time has been decreased whereas 18 (22%) of the patients felt that, there is no change in the waiting time. 27 (32%) patients felt that the time taken for individual treatment has been decreased in the comprehensive clinic when compared to the traditional system.



Graph 5:

43 (52%) of the study subjects felt that the single doctor patient treatment methodology followed in the comprehensive clinic was much better than the management by multiple doctors in the traditional clinic system. When asked about the doctor patient relationship 49 (59%) of the patients reported that there is a good relationship between the doctor and the patient in comprehensive clinic.



IV. Discussion

There is now a common consensus that care cannot be viewed as high quality unless the patient is satisfied.[4] Measurement of patient satisfaction is therefore seen as a vital aspect of evaluating the overall quality of care. Human satisfaction is a complex concept that is related to a number of factors including lifestyle, past experiences and future expectations, and the values of both the individual and society.[5] This study achieved a response rate of 92%. A similar study was conducted by the dental college of King Saudi University(2003), they achieved a response rate of 82%[7]

The primary reason for patients coming to this dental college is low cost. Lafont et al. (1999) also found that low cost was the main reason followed by up to date care.[8] The main reason for increased patient

flow in a dental college is because of the low cost. even the patients below the socio-economic status are able to get a proper treatment in a dental college and hospital.

Around 72% of the patients were satisfied with the treatment provided by the comprehensive clinic in dental hospital. Lafont(1999) in his study he found that 87% of the respondents were satisfied with the progress of their treatment.[8] The comprehensive clinic is more patient oriented. Since a single doctor will be providing all the treatment for a patient the success rate of the treatment is more and the patient is also very much satisfied.

In the present study 32% of the respondents reported that the time taken for the treatment was decreased. In a study conducted by Siddiqui N et al (2007) [9] and Madan Kumar et al [10] stated that increased treatment time leads to dissatisfaction by the patient. The patients come to the dental clinic with pain and discomfort. In such a case if the patient is attended late or if the treatment procedure prolongs the patient will surely be dissatisfied even if the final result was good. In comprehensive clinic the patients are attended much faster and the time taken for the individual treatment is also decreased.

Since a single doctor will be treating the patient, the doctor patient relationship is also good when compared to the traditional system where multiple doctors treat a single patient. But a study conducted by College of Dentistry, The Ohio State University(1997) showed that there were no difference in the satisfaction level of patients between the two dental care delivery modes.[4]

V. Conclusion:

The survey provided a means of assessing satisfaction of patients currently receiving treatment in a comprehensive clinic in a private dental college. the comments and suggestions also provided useful information about issues important to the patient. Further study is required to explore the reasons for selection and effectiveness of the comprehensive clinic in detail.

Reference

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